**Marketing Medical Devices**

The medical device industry comprises a rich and interesting mix of companies that combine world-class engineering and product design with cutting-edge innovation. Developing products that improve the lives of millions of people across the globe, it is an industry that, more than most, has compelling stories to tell. So why does it feel like these stories aren’t being heard?

Uninspiring brands, poorly designed websites, and boring marketing campaigns are features of an industry ripe for marketing innovation. Following is a preview of Ashfield Digital & Creative’s latest whitepaper, **[Future Directions in Medical Device Marketing](https://start.ashfieldhealthcare.com/acton/fs/blocks/showLandingPage/a/25577/p/p-00e2/t/page/fm/0%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**, in which eight key areas medical device marketers should be focusing on are highlighted. In the whitepaper, I examine lessons from the global pharmaceutical industry alongside trends from non-healthcare companies and considers how they could be applied to medical device marketing.

**1. Investing in Corporate Branding**
In such a competitive market, often with little distinction between products, a strong company brand can be the differentiator that helps a customer choose one device over another. As such, developing, reviewing, and strengthening corporate brand identity is essential to marketing efforts. Device manufacturers need to make it clear what they stand for and carve out a unique position in their market. This will support new product launches and help businesses when developing products in new specialty areas.

**2. Innovating on Product Launches**
Product launches are important events, eating up a lot of marketing budget, and it’s vital a new product makes the biggest impact possible. Marketers need to begin their campaigns by building a rapport that helps to prepare customers for the product when it arrives and heightens anticipation. The real opportunities, however, lie in using new technologies, such as virtual or augmented reality, to deliver a truly personalized customer experience.

**3. Focusing on Value**
The medical device industry differs from the pharmaceutical industry in a number of key ways. One such difference is the shorter product lifecycles of medical devices. As a result, there is a need to reach, connect, and engage a variety of stakeholders in a short timeframe. While stakeholders will conduct a rational assessment of the available data supporting a product, their purchase decisions will often be rooted in emotional cues. As such, device marketing campaigns need to be rooted in the value that devices bring to the customer, not just their features, and use more emotive storytelling to convey these messages.

**4. Elevating Congress Experiences**
Congresses remain a crucial channel in the marketing mix for medical device companies as they provide a rare opportunity to get face-to-face with existing and potential customers. Allowing physicians or other healthcare professionals to get hands-on with new products, receiving feedback on current technologies, and providing education and training in the use of a device are invaluable engagement opportunities. Device marketers need to deliver unique events by creating “virtual delegate” areas, sharing rich content online and using technology to deliver more interactive experiences.

**5. Making More of Digital**
Marketers must invest time in making their digital campaigns more effective. This is especially important at a time when customers can select from more online content than ever before and are becoming increasingly empowered to filter out content that doesn’t meet their needs. Using data to devise and deliver compelling online content campaigns is a must-do for device marketers.

**6. Supercharging Websites**
Company websites are the central pillar of digital marketing efforts. Not only is it a place to provide company information, websites are the primary location to showcase devices and their features. Increasing competition and price pressures mean it is more vital than ever for marketers to ensure their website is working optimally. Marketers must improve the visibility of their website through a targeted mix of pay-per-click, affiliate, content, and SEO campaigns leveraging interactivity, video, and animation to enhance brand and product perception.

**7. Improving Education**
Pharmaceutical companies are just waking up to the potential digital brings to medical education, and this is of even greater importance to device companies which rely on people being able to use their devices correctly for success. Marketers should be harnessing video learning, social curation, gamification, and mobile optimization to create next-level education portals and meet the growing need for on-demand education that allows for self-guided, personalized learning.

**8. Embracing Distributor Relationships**
Distributors are an essential partner in getting a product to market in certain countries and they have a significant influence when it comes to how a brand is ultimately communicated to its end customers. Businesses as a whole must ensure they place as much effort into understanding, supporting, and communicating with their distribution partners as they do with end customers. By providing tools and education on features and benefits and ensuring they have everything they need to sell a product effectively, distributors can become brand advocates.

**Conclusion**
There are huge opportunities for marketers to stand out from the crowd in the device industry. Companies willing to invest in harnessing digital, connecting in a more meaningful way with their customers, and developing innovative marketing campaigns will gain a significant advantage over their competitors in the coming years.

Reference: <https://www.mpo-mag.com/contents/view_online-exclusives/2019-05-20/8-key-focal-points-when-marketing-medical-devices/>