We're Engaged!: How The Health Information Center Adapted to New Marketing Trends

Kelsey Grabeel, MSIS, AHIP, Assistant Director of the Health Information Center / Assistant Professor; Martha Earl, MLS, AHIP, Director / Associate Professor; Jennifer Luhrs, Library Supervisor; Rachel Roberts, Administrative Coordinator, Preston Medical Library / Health Information Center, University of Tennessee Graduate School of Medicine / University of Tennessee Medical Center.

Objective: To demonstrate the changes implemented in the Health Information Center’s (HIC) marketing plan to further engage patients, family members, and the community at the University of Tennessee Medical Center (UTMC).

Methods: After being open for four years, the HIC expanded their marketing strategy by directing their focus on engagement. With a dual goal of inviting the community into the library as well as increasing the library's exposure within UTMC, the Assistant Director, Library Supervisor, and Administrative Coordinator formed the HIC Engagement Task Force. The Task Force met with the hospital marketing department to change the HIC’s website design. Another focus included improving the atmosphere by adding a display table at the entrance, a new display chalkboard outside the door, and seasonal decorations. The team also received permission from hospital marketing to use a video monitor to advertise library services and to engage patrons with healthy tips related to monthly health observances. In addition, the team developed the Traveling Health Information Center to bring the HIC to the waiting rooms throughout the hospital during the work week.

Results: By collaborating with hospital marketing, the new HIC website is up and running. The website had an average of 283 users per month before the change. After the website changes, the average number is 849 users. The new table at the entrance of the HIC is inviting, and the chalkboard continues to engage people and bring them into the HIC to ask for health information. The video board has been consistently updated for the past 7 months. Requests have averaged 90-100 per month.

The Traveling Health Information Center has visited the Cancer Institute’s waiting rooms three times and has had 15 interactions with patients and family members. The Traveling HIC has also visited the Inpatient Surgical Waiting Lounge, Day Surgery Waiting Lounge, and the NICU. The success of this has led to the Cancer Institute inviting the Health Information Center to display their information and book collection details on their wall. Due to the marketing updates, the circulation of HIC books increased 58%.

Conclusion: The changes in the marketing strategy have made the HIC more visible within the UTMC community by showcasing the services offered. As a result, engagement has increased significantly.

References: