



NHS Marketing Communications Survey

Data Report

Prepared by T Media in conjunction www.nhsmarketing.co.uk

Released 20/05/09

Foreword

This paper shows the data only gathered from the April/May 2009 NHS Marketing Communications Survey.

A second "Findings and Interpretations" report will be available to download at www.nhsmarketing.co.uk by end of June 2009.

Thank you to all of the contributors to this survey – your time and interest is very much appreciated.

John Gilbert, Marketing Director



About this Data

We invited 206 NHS employees working within a strategic and/or marketing/communications role to participate in this study.

These findings were collated from 28 respondents across 25 PCTs, 2 Mental Health Trusts and 1 Acute Trust.

The data was collated via an online survey at www.nhsmarketing.co.uk during April and May 2009.

The data in this report is split into three parts:

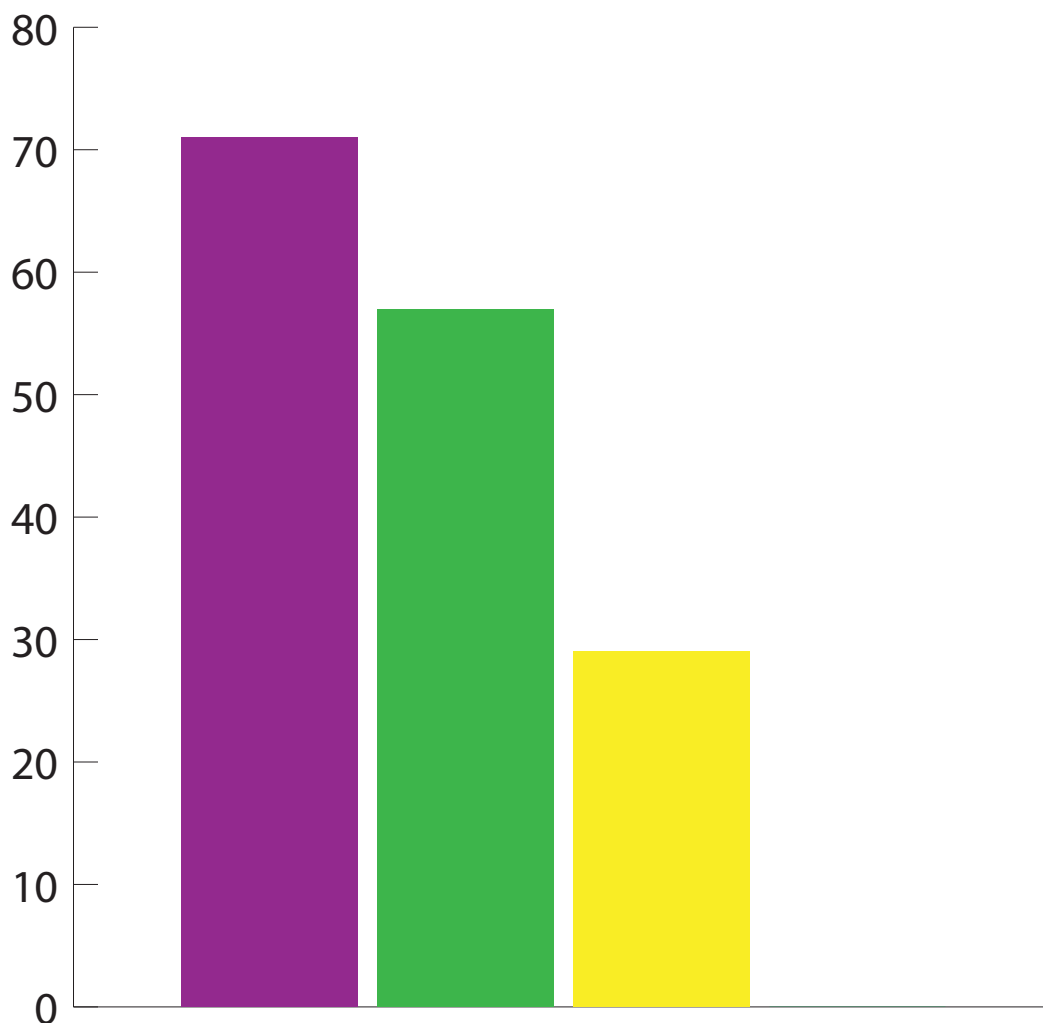
Part 1) External Communications



Part 2) Internal Communications

Part 3) Qualitative Comments

Part 1) External Communications

What are the biggest communications issues the NHS will be facing in 2009?

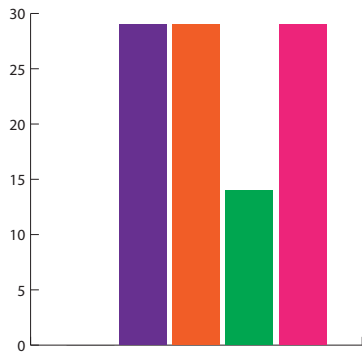


-  1.01 71% of respondents felt that patients becoming desensitised to communications, was one of the NHS's biggest communications challenges in 2009
-  1.02 57% of respondents felt that "patient information overload" was one of the NHS's biggest communications challenges in 2009.
-  1.03 29% felt that "keeping up with new technologies" was a key challenge.
-  1.04 No respondents felt that a changing population was one of the biggest challenges.

Which of these external communication approaches have you used in the past 2 years?

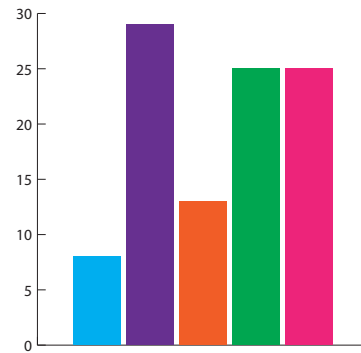
1.05	Printed Materials, e.g. Posters, Booklets, etc.	86% of respondents used this approach	67% of which rated this as effective 33% rated this as ineffective
1.06	Focus Groups	71% of respondents used this approach	85% of which rated this as effective 15% rated this as ineffective
1.07	Websites	61% of respondents used this approach	50% of which rated this effective 25% rated this neither effective, nor ineffective 25% rated this ineffective
1.08	Printed Newsletter	57% of respondents used this approach	50% of which rated this effective 20% rated this neither effective, nor ineffective 30% rated this ineffective
1.09	Public Discussion Forums	57% of respondents used this approach	71% of which rated this effective 29% rated this ineffective
1.10	Interactive Online Form	43% of respondents used this approach	100% of which rated this effective
1.11	Email Newsletter	43% of respondents used this approach	83% of which rated this effective 17% rated this ineffective
1.12	Outdoor, e.g. billboards	29% of respondents used this approach	100% of which rated this effective
1.13	SMS / Text Messages	4% of respondents used this approach	100% of which rated this effective
1.14	Social Media Marketing, e.g. Facebook	0% of respondents used this approach	
1.15	Touch Screen Kiosks	0% of respondents used this approach	

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



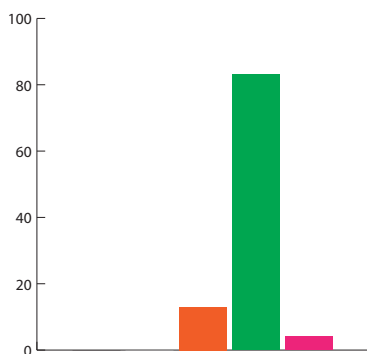
1.16 Conventional promotion via posters and flyers is no longer a viable form of communication

0% Strongly Agree
 29% Agree
 29% Neither Agree nor Disagree
 14% Disagree
 29% Strongly Disagree



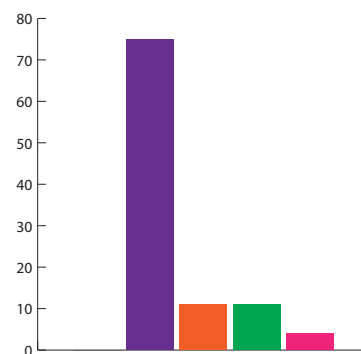
1.17 One of the main challenges we face in communications is that changing situations force us to be reactive in much of what we do

8% Strongly Agree
 29% Agree
 13% Neither Agree nor Disagree
 25% Disagree
 25% Strongly Disagree



1.18 There is little or no place for commercial marketing principles within NHS communications

0% Strongly Agree
 0% Agree
 13% Neither Agree nor Disagree
 83% Disagree
 4% Strongly Disagree



1.19 One of the main barriers to effective communications is that many people don't understand how the NHS works

0% Strongly Agree
 75% Agree
 11% Neither Agree nor Disagree
 11% Disagree
 4% Strongly Disagree

Part 2) Internal Communications

Please note: this was not applicable to 29% of respondents.

2.01	Intranet	70% of respondents used this approach	50% of which rated this as effective 50% rated this as ineffective
2.02	Email Newsletter	65% of respondents used this approach	25% of which rated this as very effective 75% rated this as effective
2.03	Printed Materials, e.g. Posters, Booklets, etc.	65% of respondents used this approach	70% of which rated this effective 30% rated this ineffective
2.04	Printed Newsletter	50% of respondents used this approach	85% of which rated this effective 15% rated this neither effective nor ineffective
2.05	Focus Groups / Discussion Groups	50% of respondents used this approach	10% of which rated this very effective 90% rated this effective
2.06	Interactive Online Forms / Surveys	15% of respondents used this approach	100% of which rated this effective

Part 3) Qualitative Responses

- 3.01 "If the NHS wants to initiate behaviour change such as healthier lifestyles and improved access to services it needs to empower individuals from within harder to reach communities to lead change. Posters and patronising top down TV campaigns do not work!"
- 3.02 "Our biggest challenge is being able to target specific groups of people. Social marketing is now big business and there is much emphasis being put on picking out smaller, more specific groups of people and influencing them, rather than the mass 'one size fits all' comms we've been used to doing.
Tied to this is prevention. There's a real shift going on to move to promoting prevention and staying well, as opposed to communicating what to do when you are ill. Again, this may require some different thinking e.g. targeting different places or using different media if the nature of the messages are different."
- 3.03 "The new competitive environment which is emerging, e.g. where patients can now choose which hospital they go to, will make marketing and PR even more important for those provider organisations such as hospital trusts who want to get patients to choose them (and therefore bring 'their money' (i.e. PCT funding) with them."
- 3.04 "Internal comms challenges are likely to be very different to external – things like the separation of provider (front line) services such as health visiting and district nursing will pose challenges in terms of keeping staff up to speed and letting them know how their roles will change in both provider and commissioner organisations in the brave new world."
- 3.05 "The comms role generally is changing – we used to be the kind of people who just churned stuff out and were content when the pile of leaflets had disappeared or we'd got an article and photo in the local paper. We, and this goes for the organisation as a whole as well as comms, are being much more closely performance monitored and asked to demonstrate how effective our work actually is. So, for example, if we send out a media release we need to keep track of where it's been reproduced, how many people were potentially exposed to the messages, was it reported on positively or negatively etc. The same is expected of marketing and social marketing activity, and this might demonstrate itself for example by people quoting a particular website or leaflet when contacting a service. The need to demonstrate reach and effectiveness and, where possible, audience influence, is great.
- 3.06 "Communications capacity is a big issue and the NHS' attitude to communications needs exploring more."
- 3.07 "We are being told to focus on proactive activities, which is fine until something big happens, such as H1N1 and this all has to stop whilst we deal with this."
- 3.08 "The other thing for me is national direction and the need for us to a) be aware of and b) to use what national campaign work is happening to our advantage e.g. timing our own campaigns to coincide with/ follow/use the same branding in order to gain maximum impact. This isn't something we've always done and DH aren't always very good at letting us know what they're doing and invariably we only find out about stuff at conferences! So some linkage there would be good."

- 3.09 "Unfortunately a lot of our marketing ideas don't see the light of day because there is a fear that the local media will twist it and use it against us. More often than we'd like we end up playing it safe."
- 3.10 "Our comms team are great people, though very set in their ways. I'm trying to change the way we do things; though sometimes it feels like an uphill struggle."
- 3.11 "The teams I work with know what we need to do and we aren't short of good ideas. Our issue is that of capacity. We don't always have the people with the time or skills needed to give on the ground communications the drive it really needs."
- 3.12 "This is a key time for communications in PCTs. Traditionally, we have been dealing with the media and messages on the information we send out, though increasingly we have to learn new skills. Most of the time this is a good thing."
- 3.13 "We'd really like to explore the possibilities around social media, though one of the problems is on our IT system all of the websites are blocked!"
- 3.14 "I honestly feel that some people involved in communications and marketing need to do more shouting about the positive achievements of the NHS. Beyond dealing with the media, writing booklets, etc. its important to have pride in the NHS when speaking with colleagues and even friends and family. The NHS is an easy target for those that criticise it, and it's down to us to defend the brand."
- 3.15 "In my previous job, I always felt that the executives saw communications as just being media relations. A lot of the time we weren't "in the loop", which was part of the reason why I wanted a change."
- 3.16 "There is a debate at the moment about whether we should have a marketing director represented on the Board. I'm interested to see if that will happen."

End

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