



Responding to Coronavirus: For Healthcare and Pharma Advertisers

The novel coronavirus outbreak, also known as COVID-19, is posing new changes and challenges to the healthcare industry everyday. In a difficult and overwhelming time, it is essential that marketing professionals manage expectations of patients, communication to patients, and advertising efforts, on behalf of the hospital or healthcare facility.

Although efforts may need to be adjusted or shifted, now is not the time to stop communication and advertising all together. Many patients have more time than usual on their hands, and they are looking to healthcare professionals and institutions for guidance.

Every hospital and healthcare facility is experiencing a different and unique situation, so Digilant is committed to closely monitoring the impact of coronavirus on patient behavior in order to provide the best digital advertising recommendations to healthcare advertisers during this time of uncertainty.

In this guide, you'll find five things you should consider to stay connected to patients during this challenging time and to prepare for the eventual bounce back and changes in the healthcare industry.



01. TAILOR YOUR MESSAGING

In this time of uncertainty, many people will turn to medical and healthcare professionals for answers and reassurance. Using your position of authority to inform patients and act as a sounding board will be very positively received by your audience. There are certain tactics to use at the front of your messaging that will re-enforce your mission and showcase the care you have for your community.

- **Post a notice** on your website (and if appropriate social media pages) about how your healthcare practice or hospital is responding to the current situation. Your patients should be aware of how your efforts and practices correspond with stopping the spread of coronavirus and if applicable treating patients that have fallen sick to the virus. This might be communicating that you are stopping non-essential procedures and appointments to reserve protective personal equipment for those in the front lines.
- **Use leaders** in your community to spread messages. As mentioned above, people are looking to authority figures for information and answers to their questions to feel more at ease. You can also use these people to share information about the staff regarding their safety and well-being.
- **Make sure your creative messaging is appropriate** for our new reality. Stay sensitive to people's emotions and worries, so double check to make sure all your advertising messaging is thoughtful and appropriate.
- **Post your hours of operation** in a clear section of your website, along with directions regarding when and how to reach their doctor or healthcare professional. This is a simple tactic to make your patient's lives easier and simplify your patient's lives.

QUICK STAT

77% of respondents expect companies to be helpful in what has become "the new everyday life."

source: Kantar

QUICK STAT

Year-over-year, the health and pharma space experienced the largest traffic growth of any category - it exploded with **62% growth**.

source: SimilarWeb

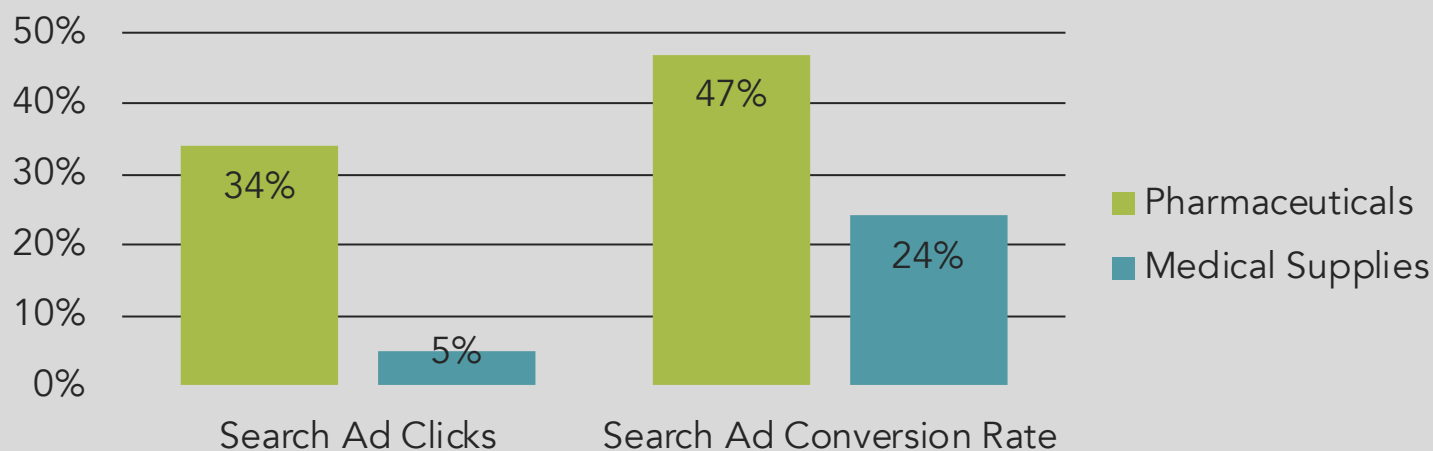
02. UTILIZE PAID SEARCH

As people flock to the internet for answers regarding health, prevention, immune system boosting remedies and overall safety tips to protect themselves from coronavirus, medical advertisers are seeing a strong spike in performance. If your company is in the position to provide the information and resources that consumers are seeking it's important that your messages be in the right place at the right time with the right message. Using Paid Search to pair your ads with high-trafficked search inquiries is the most direct and transaction-oriented advertising tactic that you can use.

There are many complexities regarding paid search and Digilant can help you navigate through them. Our team of specialists analyzes search signals, keyword intent, and data to understand where, when and how consumers are searching across the Google and Microsoft ecosystems. We build strategies with the future of search marketing and evolving marketing goals in mind.

MEDICAL ADVERTISERS SEEING A STRONG SPIKE IN PERFORMANCE

*Increase since COVID-19 outbreak



QUICK STAT

The health category saw a **38% increase** in paid search traffic since the COVID-19 outbreak.

source: SimilarWeb

* source: IRI

03. GO VIRTUAL

With thousands and medical and healthcare conferences each years, in-person events and conferences are a major touchpoint for many healthcare and pharma companies, The spread of the coronavirus has caused many of these events to be canceled or postponed. Because of this, companies have pivoted their strategy and opted for virtual events instead.

Even outside of the current context, digital conferences have a lot of advantages over in-person events—they're easily scalable, and the hosts can have greater control over the proceedings. Early evidence also suggests consumers are willing to attend less high-profile virtual events. As an example, Virtual exhibition platform V-Ex reported that **over 50,000 people** have recently visited its online digital trade shows and sales environments. It's important to make the shift to virtual events now as the platform will become more popular.

QUICK STAT

V-Ex, a virtual exhibition platform reported that over 50,000 people have recently visited its online digital trade shows and sales environments.

04. TELEHEALTH IS GROWING QUICKLY

Before March, NYU Langone Health in New York had about 50 virtual visits a day through its urgent care telemedicine platform. During the week of March 23, the hospital system is averaging about 900 a day. (Kaiser Health News)

Healthcare advertisers should pursue the implementation or promotion of tele-health. While receiving healthcare guidance via phone or video is not a new idea, the coronavirus outbreak has led to a great increase in telehealth use. Millions of Americans are seeking help from a doctor virtually, and many for the first time.

As appointments are being re-scheduled and patients are feeling less comfortable coming into the doctor office, incorporating virtual appointments can help you meet the needs of patients. If your hospital or healthcare facility is has already started using tele-health services, now is a good time to start communicating this to your patients.

QUICK STAT

In 2019, prior to the coronavirus outbreak, 66% of patients said they would be willing to try tele-health.

source: Amwell

QUICK STAT

Telehealth services have seen a 312% increase in demand from New York patients amid the coronavirus outbreak.

05. BE PREPARED FOR A BOUNCEBACK

The human and economic toll of COVID-19 is already profound. When this crisis eventually passes there will be great changes in the healthcare sector. For healthcare and pharma advertisers, now is the time to communicate with the public to help them understand what is going on. The best way to prepare for the eventual bounce back, is to keep your brand, storyline and messaging strong throughout the coronavirus outbreak.

Likely, the brand story you are telling today will not be the story you tell coming out of the current downturn. Advertisers must now anticipate what matters (and will matter) most to patients and deliver brand messaging precisely. Marketing analytics and attribution tools can help make this process simple. Digilant's real-time analytics and attribution dashboards allow you to understand what's happening on your websites, advertising campaigns (both running and historic), and see how different media investments contribute to the patient journey. With those insights, you can react to what's happening quickly and adapt your marketing so that you can come back stronger than before.



Questions?



There's a lot going on right now and healthcare facilities and hospitals are at the frontlines of impact. During this time, not only do you have to worry about your health and the health of your family, but you have to find the best path forward for pursuing your company's objectives for the year.

At Digilant, we are (and have always been) optimists and believe that we will get through this together.

We are with you for the long haul and will continue to provide relevant insights and guidance as you navigate this new normal. You can reach us with any questions or concerns at digilant.com/contact or info@digilant.com.