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PERSONAL MARKETING OF DOCTORS IN CONTEXT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

Case
study

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Abstract

More than ever doctors are beginning to recognize that beyond impeccable professionalism shown to the patient, equally important became part of communication, and in one century of the Internet, the most effective communication process moves online, in the social networks.

It is important for doctors to develop a personal brand because a reputation, passed with internet speed can only have a positive effect. In a century in which patients make the decision to see a particular doctor, largely based on recommendations and research the forums online discussions, doctors are beginning realize the importance of a strong presence, constant and reliable environment through online networks social priority.

Introduction

The most comprehensive description of the general context which requires, one form or another, doctors creating a personal brand is to be found in Iordache Iordache and Breda (2013), which refers to:

- Technological context: access to technology, both the patients and doctors, can become a competitive advantage more important than knowledge gained by the doctor. And, as technology becomes more widely available, the doctor will be differentiated through something else to his colleagues, to attract patients to services provided by him;
- The global context: in Romania it has begun to talk about medical tourism. It is known that Romanian doctors reputation went far beyond the country;
- The local context: everything that happens in the political, social, economic and financial environment, even in the media serves to influence the Romanian health system. Doctors should therefore take into account these changes to build a better picture as among patients;
- Informational background: the Internet and social media allow potential patients access to information: practically every patient thinks he knows everything about his illness, about the most effective treatments, about doctors, about healthcare providers, and consequently these patients appear before the doctor with a certain level of expectation.

Methodology

The working instrument used was a questionnaire, applied to practicing doctors in state hospitals in Iasi, to St. Mary's Hospital, the Neurology Hospital, Hospital St. Spiridon and Cardiology Hospital and Private Center Sanatatea 2000, to individual offices of family doctors and private offices.

The results achieved

Figure 1 shows the distribution on categories of types of information that the surveyed doctors post on their own pages on social networks. In the top of posts professional information is leading (35.41%), followed by personal information (they refer to family, children, friends, personal photos, etc.) that is found on every wall in 33%. There are not omitted the posts with statutory nature information (laws, official measures, quality standards), which are a percentage of 8.33%, information about services provided (6.94), information about the institution's premises where the doctor operates (location, map, contact details) at a rate of 5.55%, information on prices, at the rate of 2.08%.

The permission to post comments on the socializing page was another important point in the questionnaire, and the situation of responses is represented by Figure 2. In the overwhelming proportion of about 94.4%, respondents allow comments on their social page. This signifies an openness to customers, to patients and at the same time confidence. It is equally true that there exists also the reverse, in the sense that it allows comments, but those that could have a negative impact on the brand may be removed by the site administrator.

When questioned concerning social networks mostly used for personal brand communication, doctors at a rate of 60.41% chose social network Facebook, as results from the Figure 3. This response was one predictive, Facebook presenting to its users a number of advantages, which are based on a network that is free, easily accessible from most devices smartphone, tablet, laptop, allowing a range of settings to notify the administrator as soon as a post appeared on his wall or when placed comments. Facebook has also the quantitative component of interest which refers to quantifying the number of views, distribution and appreciation for a particular post. Another advantage of this social network is represented by possibility of mass communication in relatively short time.

A very important role in promoting a personal brand or of a doctor or other type of professional, it has the person or entity that manages the social account. This is why one of the questions made reference to the study of this issue and the answers situation can be found through Figure 4. The vast majority of respondents (70%) stated that they handle personally the page on the social network. In relatively equal percentage, 15% of respondents chose to give this responsibility to someone else: a friend / someone in the family or a social media communication specialist.

Figure 5 illustrates the proportions concerning the time spent on social networks, to promote personal brand. Most respondents (60%) stand between an hour and an hour and a half on network. During this time, they communicate with patients, post and view new activity on their wall. Regarding Posting activity, as shown in Figure 6 doctors believe in proportion of over 60% that their patients and their customers, those who come in contact through social networks, are interested in professional information. In other words, doctors believe that patients are interested in their work performed, on part of medicine, and only to a lesser extent other information.

In the same context of postings on social networks, Figure 7 illustrates the situation of responses to the question on the frequency of posting new information on social networking accounts. Most doctors have considered that a

100% new post on their own wall occurs about once a week, but there are doctors who post daily news.

The correlation between the use of the online environment as the main means of communication with patients and type of page on which this communication takes place is illustrated by Figure 8 and it shows the following aspect: the respondents that see the online environment as the main channel of communication with patients over 60% socialize from their personal page, not the institution / company for which they work.

Figure 9 illustrates the correlation between the type of information posted online and the instrument mainly used. We note that most of the doctors who choose to post information about their collaborators have chosen as a communication tool social networks and personal websites (the greatest extent). The personal information about themselves is posted especially by those physicians who have chosen that their tool from online communication with patients to be represented by social networks. Doctors who choose to communicate information to patients through personal blog, mostly post there information on services provided and prices. On the other hand, those who chose the site to communicate with patients are the ones who most often post information about the location of where they operate, contacts, map, etc..

The correlation between the online environment mainly used and the daily allotted time to this activity is illustrated by Figure 10. We see that those who chose social networks or personal site spend less than an hour a day online. In contrast we find the category of those who believe in the effectiveness of communication through a blog, but in these conditions they give more than two hours daily for this activity.

Of those who allow comments on social networking sites, personal pages, mostly, 90% spend more than an hour on the computer with the purpose of personal promoting. At the opposite, i.e. in the category that does not allow comments on their own socialization page, most spend between one half and two hours in the online environment.

Identifying a correlation between preference for a particular social network and the person who manages that page in the doctor's name is found in Figure 11. More than three quarters of respondents who have chosen Facebook as the main social network handle their own management. Most of those who use the services of a professional in this field are those who prefer LinkedIn or Instagram's website.

In terms of time spent on social networks with the purpose of promoting personal brand, the situation, shown by Figure 12, is as follows: 60% of respondents spend more than an hour on

Facebook, while approximately 15% spend the same time on LinkedIn, and a lower percentage of 10% is allocated to each network followers Twitter, Instagram and other networks.

Conclusions

The use, as much as possible, of social networking is of high interest to specialists and HR recruiters because a consultation of a potential employee account can pencil a portrait of the candidate before meeting. This may be a motivation for those looking for a job in order to create uniform accounts through which to convey the same idea, through different types of information (information on education, professional information, social information).

The main advantage that social networks involve (and most important from the perspective of some) is that vis-à-vis costs: at least so far social networks are leverages of free communication with a huge degree of spreading (visibility).

Top three most accessed social networks with a high degree of popularity are: Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

The advantages of social networks lie mainly in potential interaction with specialists in the field concerned, obtaining new information proposals for collaboration etc..

The doctors who have chosen most often as a process of communication with patients to achieve through social network Facebook, spend half an hour every day for this activity. The ones who spend more than two hours in the online environment are the doctors who chose LinkedIn network as a communication tool. Twitter and Instagram require the administrator of the page a time between one hour and one hour and a half.

The correlation between the use of the online environment as the main means of communication with customers and age, main job and type of activity, highlighted a number of issues such as young doctors with age until 40 years working primarily in hospitals state and private offices and the type of activity placed in category specialists are those who use the online environment as a means of communication with patients.

With reference to the type of information posted by doctors in the study we notice that personal information, such as those related to family, friends, etc., are posted with predilection via the social network Facebook, as information of a professional nature (scientific). From the perspective of doctors, educational information (courses completed, schools attended, international recognition) find the best place on LinkedIn and Twitter, while medical information found their place on all social networks considered in the study.

Social networks allow doctors to disclose certain information about collaborators of professional or personal information (family, friends), and information on services. From this point of view, studies show that patients are interested in the same type of information and the curiosity about this kind of information determines some of them to seek information about the doctor in advance of the visit.

It should be noted an issue regarding the behaviour of doctors in Romania, compared to those who operate outside the country. The specialty literature points out that the doctors in the European Union in the case of innovations or operations / medical operations with a high novelty, immediately promote the activity through intensive use of social networks, documenting it most of the time with photos and short films, while the doctors in Romania tend not to publicize success, but on the contrary.

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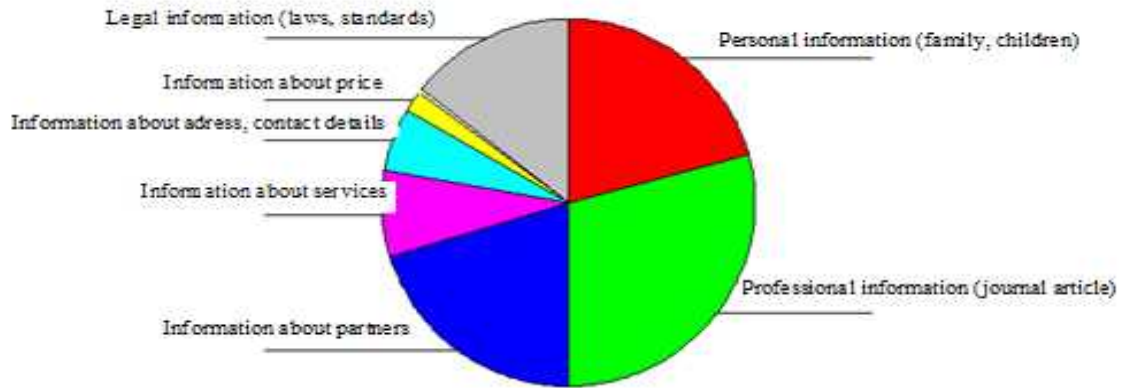


Figure 1 - The type of information posted on social networks

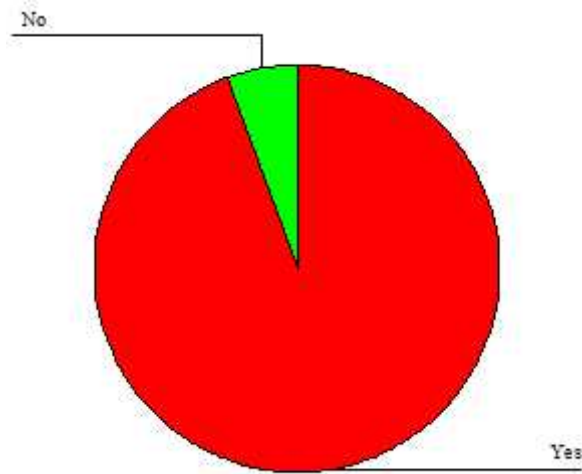


Figure 2 - The permission to post comments on social page

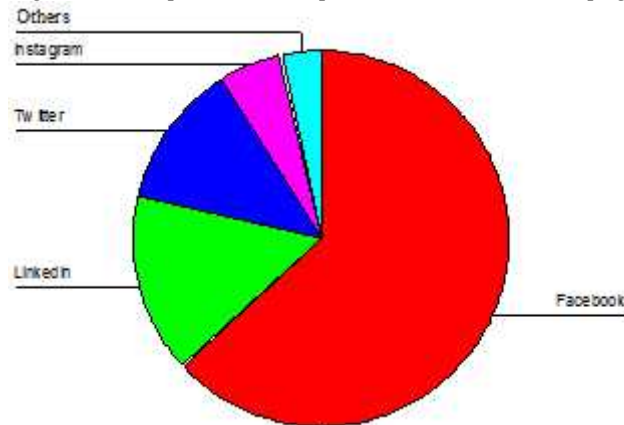


Figure 3 - Situation of social networks on which are posted most often



Figure 4 - The situation of those dealing with social account management

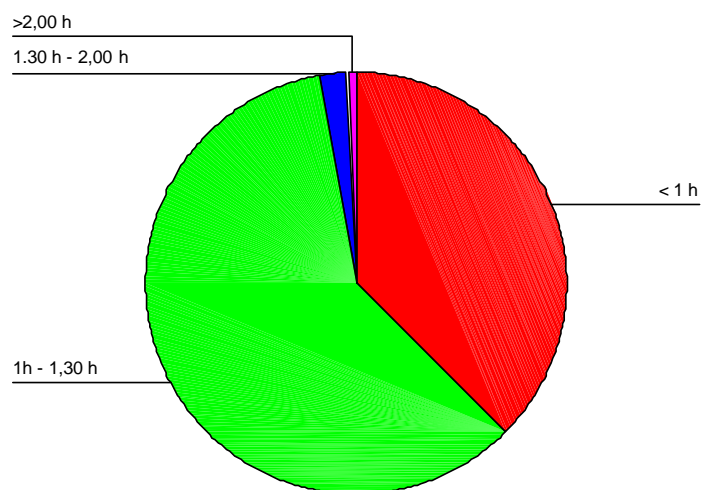


Figure 5 - Time spent daily on social networks

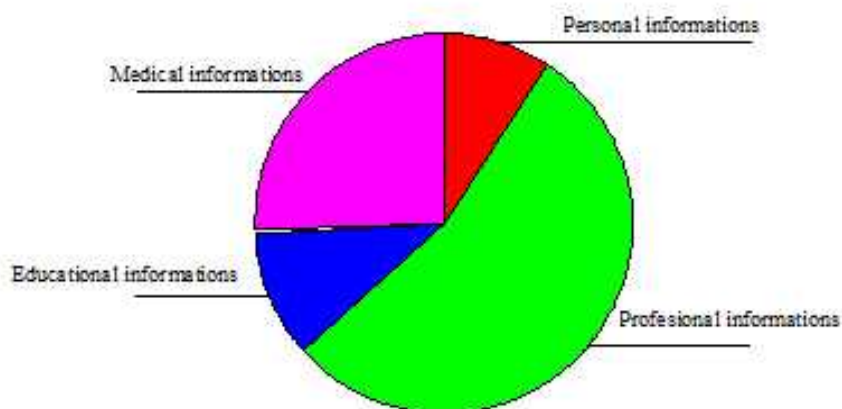


Figure 6 - Types of interesting information for patients, from the perspective of the doctor



Figure 7 - Frequency of posting of new information on social accounts

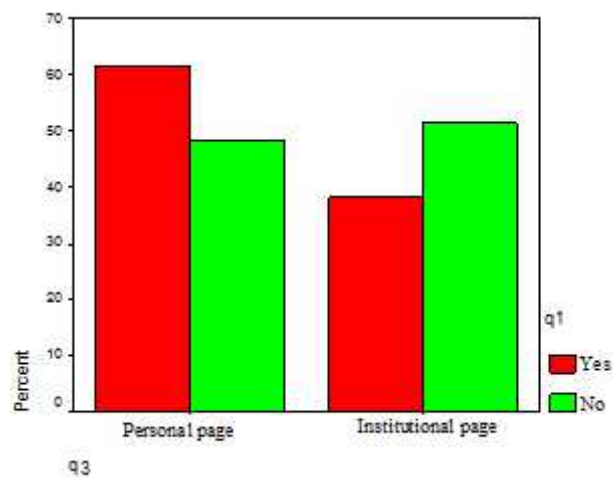


Figure 8 - Evolution of responses regarding the use of the online environment as the main means of communication with patients and type of page on which this communication takes place

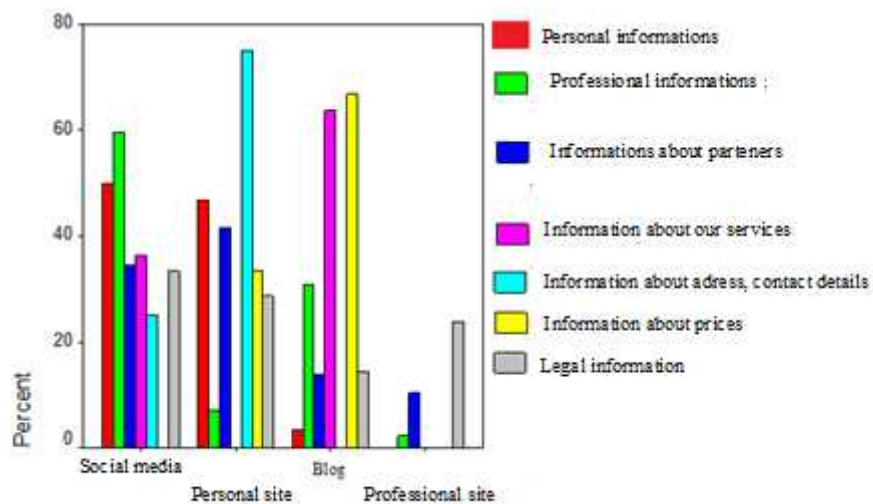


Figure 9 - Evolution of responses on the type of information posted online and communication channels used predominantly

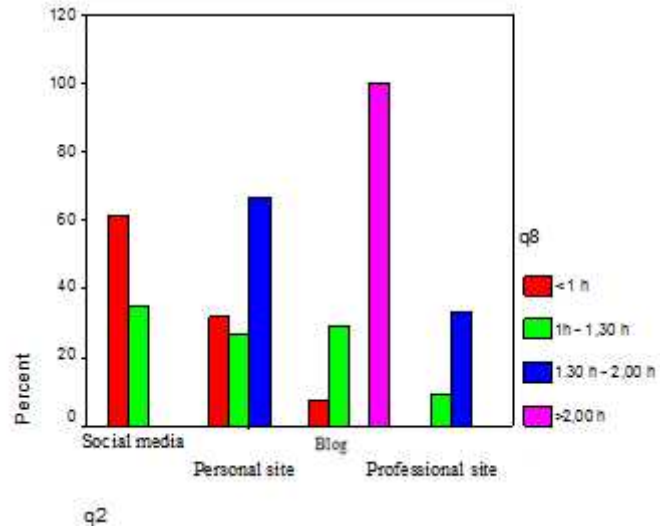


Figure 10 - Evolution of responses concerning the environment mainly used and the time allotted daily

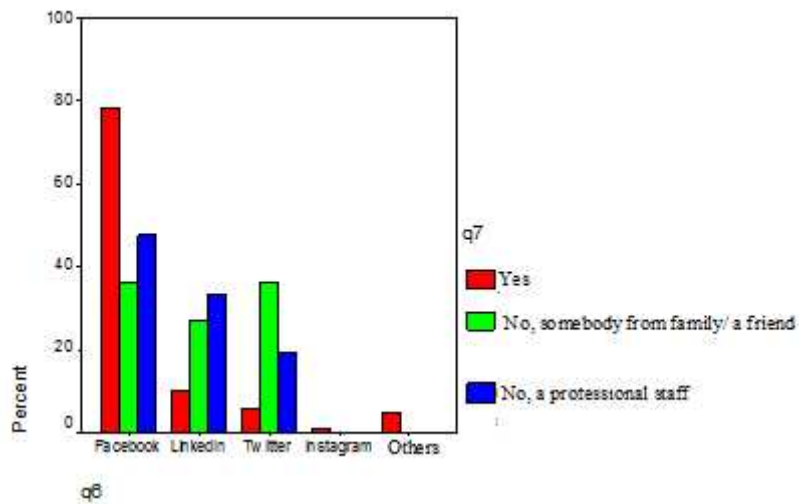


Figure 11 - Evolution of responses concerning the social network mainly used and the page administrator

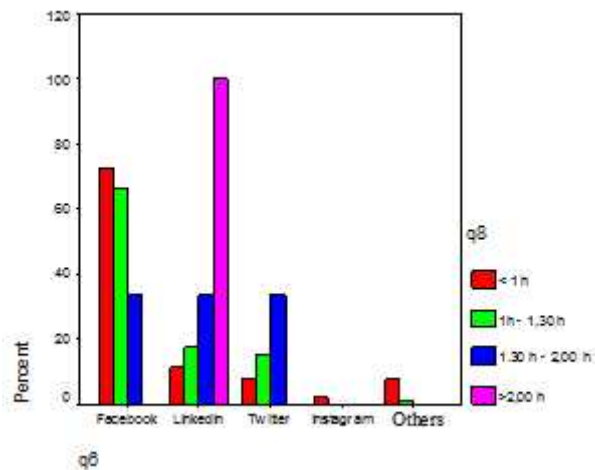


Figure 12 - Evolution of responses concerning social networks most often commonly used and time spent for this purpose