The communication and promotion policies of the medical organizations in the marketing of Romanian healthcare services

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Abstract: The interdisciplinarity of the marketing department is due to the application of concepts, methods and marketing technics specific both to service and to social marketing. In addition to this fact, the attempt of the social services to satisfy the patient’s needs places the health care domain at the border between social and economic, between profit and non-profit orientation. However a lot of the notions from the marketing field (competition, promotion, strategy, need, supply, cost etc.) acquire new meaning when used for defining the rivalry between the distinct medical organizations, the advance of the health care services, the development and implementation policies in medical marketing, the increasingly acute demand for treatment, the use and the supply of health care services as well as the cost that it requires.

Conclusion: These above described microscopy method can be used to distinguish between benign and malignant thyroid nodules, based on different degree of the capsular collagen fibers orientation.

Keywords: communication policy, promotion policy, marketing mix strategy, Romanian healthcare services

INTRODUCTION

Medical organizations communication policy towards the health care market through constructive and favorable relationships are an important objective that every health care provider should promote. Primarily communication strategies target the following aspects:
- Promoting the service offering of medical organizations in order to attract new potential clients;
- Persuasion of the potential clients for the necessity of purchasing these services by presenting the positive advantages of the respective health care procedures. Communications possess an important role in the buying process, taking part both at the pre-sale and sale, and also post sale stages [1-4].

DISCUSSION

Communication is a constituent of a great importance in the marketing mix (product – cost – distribution – development) aiming at establishing and maintaining

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a steady relationship with the patients. It represents the tool with which an entity participates in the informational exchange with the different business field’s components, to inform about its presence, the products and services it provides, to create a positive attitude and to stimulate consumers to buy products and services.

**Figure 1: Communications and healthcare services marketing [5].**

The instruments of the communicational mix are based particularly on interpersonal communication, yet at the same time on the adaptation and enrichment of the classical techniques via the concept of marketing integrated communication resulting in complex communicational programs. The marketing mix in the health care services sector includes as well staff politics, represented by two segments which must be approached differentially as follows: the employees of the company providing services and the consumers.

The principal methods and ways to communication, that can be adopted by a medical organization in order to orientate the patient in their referring to a certain health care service or to build and reinforce a favorable image of that sanitary unit on the market, constitute the promotional mix of the medical institution.

The achievement of an optimal promotional mix, which satisfies the patients’ needs and fulfill the best objectives of the promotional communication, is one from the key points in obtaining the attributions distinctive for a marketing specialist.

There are two ways by whom a medical organization can communicate with its patients (Figure 1):

a. On the outside through:
   - advertising
   - promoting sales
   - public relations
   - direct marketing (inclusive online)

b. On the inside through the employed medical personnel during the specific activities.

The advertising activity has clear purpose in preparing the target public for favorable receiving of the medical unit’s offer. Three types of marketing objectives are to be distinguished from one another depending on their purpose as follows: informing, convincing and reminding. To advertise and broadcast the commercial message the medical organization can make use of different communicational channels: newspapers, magazines, the press, printing materials (flyers, brochures, catalogues), external publications (billboards, posters, leaflets, stickers), internet, radio, television etc. Through advertising activities the medical organization succeeds in informing the potential patients about its work and services with the
aim of influencing their decision for adherence to this services.

The direct relationship between the medical staff and the patients favors a particular manner of communication: personal sale – the potential patients can be notified and persuaded to subscribe for services at the medical unit. Consequently the medical contact personnel plays an important role for increasing the sell’s volume in the medical system. They must be very well prepared professionally and respond promptly to the patients expectations. Additionally the immediate connection with patients represents the main way for informing them about the benefits, offers, promotions, advantages, performance conditions, health care services prices etc. of the medical organization they belong.

A lot of the authors specify a clear distinction from the concept of “team” and of “teamwork”. The “team” concept is referring to persons who work together for common purpose, while the “teamwork” concept – to a certain environment from a larger organization, which creates and sustain relations of trust, support, respect, interdependence and collaboration.

It must be mentioned that in sanitary organizations – particularly in the hospitals – team communication possess an increasingly important role. A good team communication, understanding the advantages, disadvantages, “principles” of teamwork, contributes to identifying the proper solutions to the inherent problems. In multiple cases where it is necessary to work as a team, encouragement and orientation of the team members can improve the sanitary organization’s results via: their motivation, use of the team member’s ideas and personal capabilities, acquiring support from their side, improving the performance. Through guidance, the quality of health employee’s performance can be made better, while the tasks are accomplished properly by them.

Promoting is one of the forms of communication. The difference between the two notions are made at the level of the sent message. So that promoting to have the desired effect, the messages received by the patients must be clear and reflect what the organization has to offer. Promoting, as a variable from the marketing mix, occupies place apart in the case of medical services, because it is essential for the development and maintenance of durable relations with the target public. Marketing politics aims to inform the target public as much as possible about the health activities and the services offered by the respective medical organization, but at the same time also for the information received by them to have a positive impact.

A particular case of promoting of medical organization is represented by spreading the “mouth to mouth” advertisement, from patient to patient, extremely productive, as demonstrated fact in the practice of health care service with results in growth of consumers addressability in these services (“one satisfied patient brings more patients”).

Client services in the field of health care relates to the benefits offered to the patients – or the public in general – further than the product itself, including its nontechnical and nonclinical aspects. The connection between client services and other elements of the marketing mix is one of completion and support. The efficient client services reduce the cost due to patients and improves the access to health services [4-6].

**CONCLUSIONS**

Promoting sales imposes the use of all procedures and stimulation techniques and increasing the sales of medical services of the organization. If advertising has a role in offering purchase motivation, conversely the sell promotion has a role in the sells’ stimulating process for the potential patients by the means of consecrate methods in promoting sales, in the form of promotional presents (watches, calendars, agendas, pens, notebooks, umbrellas with inscription of the medical organization etc.), with the aim of image promoting on the target market.

Public relations have a part in setting trust relations with the patients, ensuring protection, planning, organizing and controlling the whole actions unfolded by a medical organization for achieving its objectives. The methods used in the activity of public relations for obtaining the marketing goals (informing the patients
about the advantages of the organization, stimulating the sales volume, keeping the investment in promotional materials at minimal level) consists in organizing events with scientific subject (congresses, conferences), giving interviews, publishing brochures, profile publications, promoting through press conferences, participating in medical markets and exhibitions etc. The coordination of a public relations project with the other elements from the promotional mix can be beneficial for the increase in prestige of the medical organization.

The core of the marketing strategy in the field of health care is presented by the quality of services, quality which in its turn results from: precision of performance, promptitude and professionalism of the employees, kindness and politeness towards the patients. Creation and implementation of a coherent and productive medical marketing strategy as well as defining the value system of a sanitary organization consists a vital necessity for the organizations, whose purpose is executing top health services.

In the field of health care services the marketing strategy represents actually the attitude of the sanitary organization towards the marketing environment and simultaneously its behavior in regard to its components.

Communication of the organization with the marketing environment is an essential condition for achievement of its activity objectives. The fulfilment of the organization mission assumes concentrating marketing efforts in the direction of achieving a permanent and efficient communication with the external surroundings, with the market and with the patients.

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