MEDICAL TOURISM BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: How to Enter the Marketplace
INTRODUCTION: What it takes to go “global”
YOUR STORY

Chances are very high that someplace in the world, you work in the healthcare sector in an independent medical practice, a private hospital or clinic setting and compete for market share or are employed by an academic institution or public health hospital that serves locals and trains new clinicians.
For most of you, the "marketplace" upon which you focus your brand promotion is regional or local

• Physicians and Dentists establish themselves among colleagues and local patients
• You earn appointments and referrals for consultation and surgery
• You earn revenues, and
• You live your lives.
OUTSIDE YOUR REGION…

Few know of your existence, your outcomes or your unique style of medical or dental care delivery
OUTSIDE YOUR REGION...

Few know of your desire for global recognition, trust, or specialised authority
Do You **BELIEVE** You Can Establish a **GLOBAL BRAND** by Publishing a Website?
GROWING A GLOBAL HEALTH TOURISM BRAND & PRODUCT

What it takes to go “global”
1. What is special about YOUR BUSINESS and YOUR SERVICES?

2. What Special Differentiated PRODUCTS OR PACKAGES will you promote?

3. Overarching “PROGRAM” DEVELOPMENT

4. HOTEL SITE INSPECTIONS and benchmarks, DRIVER STANDARDS (ancillary support/integration)

5. LOGISTICS: How will they get to you? (Travel & tourism planning)

6. Managing non-standard CONTINUITY OF CARE (operations, quality, safety)

7. REGULATORY COMPLIANCE
   - international business, marketing, and consumer protection regulations
   - visa and immigration rules and regulations and constraints
BRAND UNIQUE STORY DEVELOPMENT

ABOUT YOU

1. Clinicians: WHO are you?
2. What’s YOUR STORY?
3. Why should anyone CARE if you exist?
4. Who/Where are Your IDEAL CUSTOMERS?
5. What Do They GET If They CHOOSE You?
4. What STORYTELLING VALUE do you provide to BRAND AMBASSADORS?
5. How do you ESTABLISH TRUST from afar?
6. How do you keep people SAFE AND SECURE?
7. What VALUE do you provide to your customers and how is it MEASURED AND COMPARED with competitors?
1. WHAT do you want?
2. HOW will you define and measure global renown?
3. HOW MUCH market share should you expect to claim?
4. WHICH MESSAGE will you choose:
   • VALUE DRIVEN pathway (quality & service)?
   • LOW COST pathway (choose to be sold as a commodity product)
   • DIFFERENTIATOR / INNOVATOR pathway (the road least traveled)
5. HOW will you TRANSMIT your message?
6. WHICH CHANNELS will you select for transmission? Why?
THE BLUE OCEAN
OF OPPORTUNITY
DIFFERENTIATE WITH A BLUE OCEAN STRATEGY

WHAT DIFFERENTIATES YOUR HEALTHCARE BUSINESS?

Three things:

• a wider horizon of thinking
• a way to motivate "people" to support the option you chose, and
• to have the "market-creating" tools to transform your dream into a product that is attractive to customers and referral partners.
YOU PROBABLY WON’T DISCOVER MANY MARKETING AND REFERRAL AGENTS IN THAT DEEP BLUE SEA

1. For one reason, they don't know it exists.
2. They are too busy swimming with sharks in the daunting red ocean of sameness and ineffective competition.
3. They don’t know how or where to swim or how to assess the tides
4. They don’t have adequate startup capital to afford good equipment and seize existing opportunities.
ARE YOU PREPARED TO SWIM?
Surgeon

Are you:

• Prepared to hire the talent you need to differentiate yourself to succeed?
• Seeking collaborators to advertise, market and refer patients in exchange for kickbacks that are illegal in many countries?
• Ready to convert leads presented to you into customers?

Marketing Agents / Facilitators

Are they:

• Prepared to accept the risks associated with marketing your brand without compensation?
• Adequately experienced such that they won’t damage your brand or appear unprepared or ignorant to meet customer’s needs?
• To whom do the customers belong?
A RARE BREED OF SURGEON READY TO SWIM THE BLUE OCEAN TO SUCCESS

1. Has a product fully developed
2. Has an effective and sustainable promotional and branding strategy
3. An effective means to connect with the market
4. Adequate capital for a new expanded business venture and
5. Competent and qualified advisors to guide them to fill their knowledge gaps, paid to advise the surgeon how to best achieve their goals.
HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

In USD, capital sufficient to pay for the media and advertising (not the graphics, print, digital and other collateral creation and the person to coordinate the media buys and advertising and promotional management so that the surgeon can keep busy in theater) is about USD $250,000 for the year.
ARE YOU SEEKING US PATIENTS?
Be prepared to pay US media and advertising opportunity prices for the placements in the USA to connect with the US market.

ARE YOU SEEKING CHINESE PATIENTS?
Be prepared to pay Chinese media and advertising opportunity prices for the placements in the CHINA to connect with the Chinese market.

ARE YOU SEEKING RUSSIAN PATIENTS?
Be prepared to pay Russian media and advertising opportunity prices for the placements in the RUSSIA to connect with the Russian market.

In your locality, some costs will be lower...

But are you buying in your locality or are you buying media and advertising to connect with a remote market in another place and another culture and language?
Buying media and advertising and creating content and messages for healthcare is very different than buying media and advertising for any other industry.

**ARE YOU SEEKING US PATIENTS?**
- You must comply with U.S. consumer protection and healthcare advertising regulations and cultural and linguistic nuance.

**ARE YOU SEEKING CHINESE PATIENTS?**
- You must comply with Chinese consumer protection and healthcare advertising regulations and cultural and linguistic nuance and translate western medicine terms to eastern medicine nuance.

**ARE YOU SEEKING RUSSIAN PATIENTS?**
- You must comply with Russian consumer protection and healthcare advertising regulations and cultural and linguistic nuance.
If you are wondering why you aren't getting a steady stream of US patients of any significant numbers, and you aren't advertising on all channels in the USA to the USA, with the right messages and the right offers…

I've just solved your mystery.
HOW DOES ONE CREATE A MARKET FOR A NEW PRODUCT, SERVICE, OR EXPANSION?

• Are you ready to disrupt and innovate?
• Are you capitalized to do it effectively?
• Are you prepared to pivot quickly when others copy you and differentiate yet again?
• Are you informed and prepared with a backup strategy and tactics?

Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter describes when a new innovation overcomes earlier technology or innovation and it disrupts the industry, as "creative destruction".
The surgeon who desires to build an international brand must decide **how to position themselves** as the leader. *If employed by a hospital, they owe a duty to the hiring entity.*

The brand must incorporate **messages** to explain new approaches, new technology.

The hospital, surgeon, or dentist, should not make claims about their service, their technology, or its indications for use that exceed regulatory permissions in the country where the advertising appears without marking the service **experimental, investigational or unproven in the target country.**

They should not advertise **outcomes** of a certain characteristic because the messages may exceed accepted regulatory permissions.

They cannot use comparative **hyperbolic language** of “better” or “best” without measurable proof.
ARE YOU READY TO MITIGATE BRAND RISKS?

The healthcare marketplace is different and requires different, specialized skills.

It will not tolerate unqualified generalist tactics applied to healthcare.

With generalist marketing applications come infractions, fines, rebuke from the marketplace, loss of trust, brand scandal and ultimately - failure to succeed in the blue ocean of disruptive innovation and lost investment opportunity and resources.
1. Reconceptualize the medical tourism industry

- View the medical tourism industry and healthcare overall as malleable.
- Don't accept conventional modes of advertising and promotion
- Don't engage or collaborate with inexperienced, unqualified, marketing and referral agents and agencies and expect effective results
- Verify competency of "facilitators" and who could endanger your patients and your reputation and outcomes with improper planning and execution – check references, examine portfolios of past projects and verify claims of outcomes, experience, and results claimed.

How will you reconceptualize "your" target global market?

Write down ideas as you listen then come back to them after the event.
7 WAYS TO MAKE THE SHIFT TO BROADER HORIZONS

2. Render your competitors "obsolete".

• **You aren't there to beat the competition.** Find approaches and swim lanes where there are no competitors.
• Put forth the necessary creativity, research, analysis, data, and observation - all of which must be capitalized and interpreted – by you. After all, it is your brand!
• From the interpretation, create a global brand and marketing strategy and deployment tactics formulated and skillfully executed by someone with the training, experience and expertise to do it for you while you continue to treat patients and perform surgery.
• Seek out other surgeons who have achieved success rending competitors obsolete and ask who helped them.

How will you render "your" global competitors obsolete?
Write down ideas as you listen then come back to them after the event.
3. Produce new demand

- Make your medical tourism product appealing and attractive to prospective patients and organic referral sources.
- Your product must solve a patient's problem in a practical and reasonable way.
- Pitch where the solvable problems exist.
- Don't aim to attract "American patients" because you believe they are rich. The richer they are, the less they need your solution. They can buy the best of the best wherever they want.

How and where will you create demand for your new global brand?

Write down ideas as you listen then come back to them after the event.
4. Drive market attraction with a specific plan.

- Your plan must be both affordable / low cost and distinct at the same time.
- Set yourself apart but be mindful of the cost to market and promote because there's no endless fountain of cash from which to draw to achieve year-round marketing and advertising.
- Devise an approach to cost effectively market your business and track results and improve when you discover you made a mistake on a tactic or marketing or advertising strategy. It isn’t the end of the world.
7 WAYS TO MAKE THE SHIFT TO BROADER HORIZONS

5. Atomization

• Break down seemingly daunting and overwhelming tasks into bite-size chunks
• Focus on only one or a few at a time
• Aim at targets with laser-like precision and consistency

How will you prioritize and focus your approach to marketing and advertising to the extent necessary to produce desired results? Write down ideas as you listen then come back to them after the event.
7 WAYS TO MAKE THE SHIFT TO BROADER HORIZONS

6. First-hand, personal discovery

• Invest time, effort, research and resources to develop new perspectives, critical thinking approaches, and new experiences that shape your new global marketplace approach.

• Everyone employed by you or influenced by you and your practice must live your new brand and feel a need for change as a result of their own thinking, not as a preordained decision by you or your marketing or branding consultant.

How will you translate and transform your local brand to a global brand people will notice, recognize and trust?

Write down ideas as you listen then come back to them after the event.
7 WAYS TO MAKE THE SHIFT TO BROADER HORIZONS

7. Develop a fair and ethical and compliant process

Three principles guide this process:
1. Engagement by organic means
2. Explanation and clear expectations.
3. Engage all stakeholders - not just prospective customers - into the decision-making process. There's no place for decision by fiat.

Give a clear explanatory breakdown of decisions and ideas that are rejected. Also give clear expectations of what people will experience and that for which they are responsible.
A STRATEGIC MAP FOR SUCCESS

• Develop a reality chart that helps you determine your position in the marketplace.

• The purpose of the reality chart is to get an objective sense of your product, your reputation, and your value to someone who might become a customer.

• Categorize your products as:
  • “Pioneers” - products with clear innovative values. They are the key to your distinctive touch and future profits.
  • “Settlers”. These are comparative products based on that which your competitors offer. Settlers imitate the competition and only marginally improve on what others are offering or doing.
  • “Migrators”. This category provides greater value than your competitors but isn't truly innovative.
A STRATEGIC CANVAS

• This tool creates an overview of your comprehensive business strategy and identifies competitive drivers of your industry.

• Use it to map how much value prospective buyers derive from each of competitive factor.

• Sorry to inform, but it isn’t about you. It’s about your customers. If you focus on you, your ego, your vision of yourself, and how great you are, those are features, not valuable benefits your customers receive for doing business or entrusting their medical care to you. Nobody. Will. Care.

In your canvas, the horizontal axis indicates the primary competitive factors of surgery on the international/domestic/regional market.

The vertical axis indicates the offering level of each factor from high to low. These range from percentage of each dollar that goes to the bottom line and the costs incurred to market or drive business and revenues.
Creating Your Strategic Canvas

- For each key competitive factor, select 5-12 of them. For each, choose a competitive rival to whom you can compare yourself.
- Choose the industry leader so that you are assured you are comparing and benchmarking properly.
- If you believe you ARE the leader already, select your closest rival.
- Rate your offerings against your competitors for each factor, plotting your graphs.

If there is a strong resemblance between your curve and that of your rival's you are not in a position to render your competitor obsolete. If your curve is all around lower, your offer is probably inferior.
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<th>Provider Selection</th>
<th>Consultation</th>
<th>Surgery</th>
<th>Recovery</th>
<th>Aftercare</th>
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IDENTIFY YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER

PAIN POINT DISCOVERY

1. What impedes customer productivity (shopping and comparison or selection)?
2. What prevents simplicity?
3. How is convenience hindered?
4. How can prospects reduce risk?
5. What inhibits delight and image?
6. What hinders environmental friendliness?
7. What do these things have these effects?
8. What can you do to address each pain point?

Once you figure this out, you can attract patients who are not yet purchasing the products you offer. As a result, people who would not normally participate or consider medical travel will open up and consider the possibility.
1. **Alternative medicine.** Some people with osteoarthritis elect to have their knee replaced without robotic assistance, while others will elect to choose a provider who uses the robot. Still a third group select stem cell injections. WHY?

2. **Value proposition.** WHICH customers will choose high value vs low cost?

3. **Influencers.** Whom do your ideal prospects trust and WHY? *Focus on the prospects that influencers and marketers ignore to carve a new pathway.*

4. **Solutions.** Assess the context your product operates and what occurs before consultation and option of surgery, during and after treatment.

5. **Redefine orientations.** Rethink the balance of functionality and emotion within medical tourism. *How can you elicit positive emotions about traveling to obtain health services? Remember, in a perfect world, people need not travel to obtain healthcare.*

6. **Shape external trends.** How can you either adapt or influence trends about medical travel?
ACTION FRAMEWORK

NEXT STEPS
ACTIONABLE FRAMEWORK

Which factors do most healthcare facilities and other clinicians in your specialty take for granted?

1. Change what you can change to differentiate yourself
2. Cut costs for “fluff” and stop passing them on to the patient
3. Include value-based, patient centric amenities they want and view as valuable
Which risk factors can be reduced will below the industry standard?

1. At the ASC, our infection rate is 0.037% while the national average is about 2.3%. That's one factor we can and do control.
2. Another is our complications rate. Knee replacement revision is said to be 20% overall. Ours is less than 1%. Those are two examples.

What can you improve?
What factors can be raised well above industry standards?

1. Ours are:
   - patient satisfaction
   - clinical outcomes, and
   - cost savings per case.

2. Another we raise is utilization of state-of-the-art technologies.

3. We also raise the standard on our medical tourism patient accommodations. 5-star, externally-rated luxury for the cost of a standard chain hotel room.

What can you raise?
Incomparable amenities and features not offered elsewhere

We offer concierge service that is brand standard from administration to patient facilitation to nursing care. Everyone on our team is a multitasking brand ambassador.

What can you offer that your competitors don’t?
Once you have undertaken and completed the previous tasks, you'll be ready to begin thinking how to roll out a medical tourism expansion of your brand at your destination.

The next task is to choose your approach, design your product and program and put it into practice.

This is where most healthcare providers fail: they launch prematurely.
ARE YOU READY TO BEGIN?

Maria K Todd PhD, MHA

📞 +1 800 727 4160
✉️ mtodd@mercuryadvisorygroup.com
🔗 https://mariatodd.com
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