

RMS Case Study 211 - HOSPITAL

- Background:** Research & Marketing Strategies (RMS) was engaged to conduct quantitative research for a local hospital in New York State. The focus of the research was concentrated on the hospital's primary market area (PMA) across a seven county region. The hospital commissioned the research to assess awareness of the hospital and its competitors, sources of awareness (*for advertising and marketing*), usage of services, and satisfaction with certain aspects of service. Ultimately the research provided the hospital with a comprehensive outlook on their brand equity. The research is conducted on a three-year cycle, assessing changes in awareness, trends in usage of services, where and how to market services, and improvement areas for patient services. This particular case study addresses the third and most recent of the three cycles of the hospital's image and awareness longitudinal study.
- Methodology:** To obtain the research necessary, RMS conducted a 10- to 12-minute telephone survey in the hospital's PMA. Approximately 800 completes were collected for this study with each of the seven counties' number of completes mirroring the region's population as a whole. This provided the hospital with statistically reliable results at the aggregate level and a high level of reliability by county. The 800 completes were aware of the hospital sponsoring the study and therefore provided RMS the opportunity to probe in-depth on specific open-ended questions. If the respondent was unaware of the sponsoring hospital, demographics were still collected and retained for analysis to report an accurate awareness statistic. The sponsoring hospital was blinded at the beginning of the survey but was then revealed once the line of questioning became more specific.
- Findings:** The third cycle of this image and awareness study revealed some interesting findings for the hospital:
- The survey identified six service areas in which most respondents reported not having a hospital of choice – offering the hospital a significant opportunity to become the service leader in those categories.
 - With significant marketing efforts being spent on increasing the awareness and usage of one specific service in the PMA, the hospital was able to measure the increase in awareness for that service to create a virtual ROI.
 - 46% of respondents in the PMA mentioned that hospital usage is referral- or recommendation-driven by their PCP or specialist. This statistic implies that the hospital must place greater marketing emphasis on local physicians' knowledge of their service offerings and potential patient benefits of using the hospital.
 - Respondents were most likely to use the hospital because of their advanced technology and their expertise. This should become the main focus of future advertising and PR efforts for the hospital.
- Results:** The hospital was able to keep the “pulse” of the residents in their PMA and discover which modes (*television, radio, and Internet*) were best to advertise on and also how to focus their marketing campaign (*technology and expertise at the hospital*). The client has become the hospital with the highest unaided and total awareness in the PMA. Overall, 43% of respondents believed the hospital is better than other area hospitals, 49% believed it is the same and only 8% believe it is worse than other area hospitals. The hospital is also the number one choice among respondents in the PMA for 8 of the 16 services tested in the survey and looks to continually gain on those service gaps for the fourth cycle of the research.