

St. Rita's Medical Center Reinvents Brand

St. Rita's Medical Center, Lima, Ohio

The key to success is often nothing more than simply believing it can be done. Experts used to claim that running a mile in under four minutes was impossible. Year after year, runners achieved time that were close, but never broke the barrier – and it seemed like maybe the experts were right. Then came Roger Bannister, who in 1954 ran one mile in 3:59.4, and then suddenly it seemed like *everybody* could run a sub 4 miles (his record lasted only 46 days!).

This is also what happens when HealthStream Research's clients set goals based on survey research: Find out where you are, set goals to improve, then break the records over and over again. St. Rita's Medical Center set out to do what some might have said was impossible—reinvent the hospital's image into a center of big city excellence. Two years after embarking on this challenge, they have taken the old assumptions and smashed them with success.

St. Rita's Medical Center was experiencing great success and their survey results from HealthStream Research were quite impressive in 2001. However, they experienced a drop in scores across the board in 2002:

	2001	2002
Awareness	43	40
Image	61	58
Preference	58	51
Market share	65	64
Loyalty	127	105
Brand Equity Index	71	64

Calvin Lindo took on the position of Director of Planning and Marketing in 2002. "Looking at the decline in scores, we were surprised and concerned. Our admissions and outpatient visits increased from 2001 levels—but our image was taking a hit," said Mr. Lindo. So, Calvin Lindo asked the following questions:

- Had people changed their perceptions about St. Rita's in 2002?
- What is our brand message & slogan?
- Is it applied consistently?
- Is our use of the media effective?
- Was our spending a key factor?

HealthStream Research

HealthStream Research is a national leader in the measurement of physician, employee, patient, and community satisfaction for healthcare organizations. We currently work with more than 1,100 facilities nationwide, including many of the nation's largest for-profit and not-for-profit health systems and specialty healthcare companies.

Success Story: St. Rita's Medical Center

Armed with the results and action plans from HealthStream Research's consumer study, he sought answers to these questions. Through this process, St. Rita's found that people's perceptions had *not* changed. For perceptions of the quality of care and staff, St. Rita's continued to score significantly higher than all of their competitors

"We are a steady, repeat client of HealthStream Research. We really value their national benchmarking and the comparisons we get to our competitors. They are consistent over time, and this allows us to accurately track public perceptions of our hospital," said Jim Reber, President and CEO.

As part of HealthStream Research's Action Blueprint, the following recommendations were made to St. Rita's Medical Center for their marketing efforts:

1. Address the decline in top of the mind awareness through increased direct-mail, newspaper, television, and radio campaigns targeted to both the senior citizen market and the 35-44 year old segment.
2. Marketing should focus on the following highest-rated areas of St. Rita's excellence:
 - Having the best doctors and nurses
 - Most responsive to community needs
 - Most state-of-the-art equipment
 - Most caring and friendly staff
 - Most trusted

So what was their next step?

"We found that we had been unclear about our brand slogan. There had been 5 different slogans in 5 years, and sometimes multiple slogans were used in the same year. Also, our use of media was not very effective. We had a heavy reliance on TV, but almost no use of radio. Our print ads looked 'old', and several service lines lacked marketing plans," said Mr. Lindo.

To solve these problems and to reinvent their brand, St. Rita set the following as the key objectives:

- **New brand slogan & use consistently**
- **Keep slogan for at least 5 – 6 years**
- **Create new commercials & ads**
- **Change use of media mix (use more radio)**
- **Use campaign approach to ad placement:**
 - **TV and print ads together**
 - **TV and print and radio ads together**

They began by sending RFP's to three ad agencies to help develop a new and fresh brand slogan. They chose their ad agency in May 2002 and created a full marketing campaign around their new slogan:

Advanced. Caring. Right here.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advanced
Skilled clinicians
High tech equipment
Experienced physicians
High technology & state of the art equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Caring
Compassionate care
Core Values
Mission /Community
Benefit activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Right here
In West Central Ohio
In Lima, Glandorf or Delphos
Big city care here |
|--|--|--|

For the radio campaign, St. Rita's chose to focus on country music stations. Where it was possible, they used their own staff in radio and print ads. When HealthStream Research performed a Brand Equity survey again in 2003, they were able to see the fruits of their labor:

2002 to 2003 Primary Service Area results:

- Top of Mind Awareness from 80% to 92%
- Image from 3.89 to 4.06
- Preference from 51% to 58%
- Market Share from 64% to 75%
- Brand Equity Index from 64 to 73

2002-2003 Secondary Service Area results:

- Top of Mind Awareness from 32% to 45%
- Image from 3.88 to 3.99
- Preference from 15% to 19%
- Market Share from 13% to 17%
- Loyalty from 4.19 to 4.21

Not only did they increase their brand equity, but the increased scores also led to improved perceptions of the quality of care and the quality of the staff:

- Best doctors from 36% to 45%
- Best nurses from 33% to 41%
- Most caring and friendly staff from 34% to 40%
- Most medical technology from 47% to 51%
- Most responsive to community from 38% to 43%
- Most trusted from 37% to 45%
- Local city competitor best score fell to 17%

“The best part? We actually spent \$22,100 *less* in advertising to get these results,” said Calvin Lindo

Beyond Marketing

Marketing may get people in, but it is quality care that matters most. The following were part of HealthStream Research's Action Blueprint recommendations:

1. Increase patient satisfaction tracking research
2. Use the results of this research to identify strategies that will better meet the needs of patients
3. Share the results of research with all staff

Success Story: St. Rita's Medical Center

“We instituted an increased focus on staff loyalty and patient care. We posted monthly results on each floor, began scripting programs for our staff, and started a 30-minute guarantee for the emergency room. We also started offering nursing scholarships for those that made a two-year commitment. Consequently, we have no shortage of nurses, and our patients are happy and satisfied,” said Mark Skaja, Vice President of Mission Services.

Their quality initiative covered nine areas:

- 1) Adopted reader friendly strategic pillars:
 - Be the #1 hospital in providing community benefit/mission
 - Be the best place for patients
 - Be the best place for physicians to practice
 - Be the best place to work,
 - Be a well run organization
- 2) Distribute service recovery scripting for employees
- 3) Post monthly results on the patient units
- 4) Share compliments from patients
- 5) 48 hour complaint turnaround
- 6) Conduct manager rounds—Managers go room to room and talk with patients
- 7) Conduct discharge follow up telephone calls
- 8) Initiated a Legends Program to recognize employees with superlative service—Each year, employees nominate colleagues. The leadership reviews the nominees, and winners receive a plaque and a weekend trip.
- 9) Made changes in Guest Services and at the Information Desk—Replaced volunteers with paid (and fully trained) staff.

“Part of replacing volunteers with paid staff was our increased focus on consistent customer service. Our staff was thoroughly trained across the board. We used Mystery Shoppers to check our progress, and we discovered that the training was very effective,” said Mark Skaja. “HealthStream Research was an incredible resource in helping us identify the critical areas of customer service and market awareness. Their research and recommendations provided a real roadmap to success.”

“The key to our success was our team approach,” said Jim Reber, President and CEO. “There was no single component among our nine initiatives that led to the final outcome. We asked for simultaneous execution of these initiatives, and our employees delivered. We improved the service performance of *every* employee. By making our initiatives simple and reader-friendly, our staff found the hospital vision clarified by its conciseness.”

While hospitals in smaller cities (Lima, Ohio has approximately 40,000 residents) have many unique issues to face, some issues are the same for *any* hospital. By implementing a consistent, effective, and long-term marketing plan, you can dramatically increase your brand equity. With increased brand equity and a focus on recruiting and retaining your best and brightest, you can see your bottom line improve. As St. Rita's proved, just being successful isn't enough—success is a journey, not a destination.