

Health Care Organisation - Marketing

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Introduction to Marketing and Non-Profit Marketing

The objective of this essay is to discuss the main challenges faced while marketing of a health care organisation. Further, the discussion is about the segmentation and target marketing of the health care organisation and answering some of the questions that arises in the marketing process of the organisation.

The healthcare organisation chosen for this study is “The Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR)”, situated in Atlanta, Georgia. This federal public health agency is the division which is working independently within the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry was formed by the end of December, 1980 and was formally organised on the 11th of June, 1985 (Atsdr.cdc.gov, 2016). Till now, it has worked in more than 600 communities across the country and assessed more than a million people whether they were at risk due to the chemical exposures from around 168 health assessments and consultations (Atsdr.cdc.gov, 2016).

The primary work of ATSDR is to minimize the health risk caused by the harmful effects of hazardous substance when it gets exposed. It assesses the presence of the health hazards at the superfund sites. By figuring out the health hazard’s nature, the health organization helps in preventing and reducing the further effects and exposure of the materials. ATSDR works for preventing the illness caused by these exposures (Atsdr.cdc.gov 2016).

The goals of ATSDR summarises their motive and helps in preserving the environment. The goals of ATSDR are:

- Protecting the public from all the toxic exposures and hazards promoting healthy environment.
- Supporting public health and making scientific advancements.

- Creating awareness among the partners, communities and policy makers by educating them about the risks and measures of the environmental hazards.
- Providing technical expertise and scientific expertise for advancing the health science and practice of the public.
- Reducing health related disparities and promoting environmental due to such toxic exposures (Atsdr.cdc.gov 2016).

However, the organisation faces various challenges while marketing that reduces the effectiveness of the health care organisations. Some of the challenges are discussed hereunder:

- **Competition** – As the economy is sluggish and uncertain, the health care agencies face intensified competitions in the communities. ATSDR is facing the competition because of the diminishing resources and their struggle continues for marketing (Pomirleanu et al., 2013).
- **Frequent changes in healthcare marketing and the Internet's role** – People are being informed in a better way with the help of internet, but the changes in healthcare marketing is affecting the marketability of ATSDR. Although the internet helps in reaching out to the concerned parties, the evolution to reach out to the customers is influenced when the choices are being made.
- **Industry's uncertainty** – Due to the recent changes in healthcare market, the marketers are struggling due to the uncertain movement of the industry. The adoption of online marketing and replacing the old traditional practice is not so easily adaptable by the agency.
- **Less participation of targeted people** – The marketing strategies are framed by the help of all the feedbacks received from patients and people involved in the issue. This is getting harder for the marketers to analyse because people resist participating in

surveys and sometimes health agency need to depend on the social media platforms to get the feedback.

- **Improper funding for marketing** – Marketing’s importance is undervalued in this industry and the funds provided for it is not sufficient. This is the reason because of which the marketers have to choose among the limited available options for covering the market. Healthcare agencies spend smaller part of their budgets in the areas where the consumers are available these days, that is, social media, search engines and healthcare websites (Pomirleanu et al., 2013).

Hence, these challenges are critical for the success in while marketing the healthcare agencies and they need to be resolved quickly to increase their consumer base.

Market segmentation is a strategy of dividing or categorising the target market on the basis of certain factors such as age group, gender, geographical area, interests, needs and many others. This is done for identifying and defining the target market/customers so as to frame the marketing strategies according to the segments which are the target market of the organisation.

Although there are several types of market segmentation like geographical, demographic, behavioural, cultural, attitudinal, needs based segmentation and many others but ATSDR mostly uses the geographical, demographic and occasional segmentation. ATSDR uses the segmentation information to:

- a. Estimate the size and characteristics of the population based on the demographic segmentation which were exposed to toxic substance.
- b. Next, they identify the affected population in the area who needs more attention like the old age people, children and women.
- c. Finally the social context of the area’s insight is provided (Gopichandran & Chetlapalli 2013).

ATSDR uses the three segmentations which are discussed below:

Geographical segmentation – The segments are divided on the basis of the geographic criteria like states, cities, regions, neighbourhoods and many more. ATSDR segments people on the basis of rural, semi-urban and urban populations. This helps in covering an area at a time with the help of segmentation and finding the target market. ATSDR uses Geographical Information System (GIS) technology to link the housing and population data to the location of a hazardous waste site. This helps in improving the estimation of current population. The waste site's demographics are more accurately characterised within a shorter period of time.

Demographic Segmentation – ATSDR segments people of all ages, income levels and education level. This segmentation divides the population on the basis of gender, religion, occupation and many other criteria. This segmentation of a population near a waste site or a hazardous site provides ATSDR all the information to assess and address the health issues in the communities. One of the most important segments is the employed people working at hazardous sites.

Occasional segmentation – This segmentation is useful in case of an occurrence of a crisis. The occasion decides the segmentation of the population and target market. It works on the basis of an individual's or group's need when required.

The target market of ATSDR is decided on the basis of the demographic, occasional and geographic segmentation. ATSDR mainly chooses children, people employed at hazardous sites living in both urban and rural areas. ATSDR approaches the most sensitive category of segment in case of an emergency. For example – In case of a calamity, the agency would look to save the children, women and the elderly. The segment moves the attention towards the most sensitive group of people that need care.

This organisation's services are positioned in way that the needs of the people who require instant attention and they are the sensitive segment of population. The focus of The Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry is on analysis and prevention of effects of hazardous toxic waste site on the target market. They are focussed on the needy segments of population.

ATSDR works to provide environmental health education products which increases the health related literacy to the members of the community, health care providers and health educators and professionals of this field. These information and products help in generating awareness about the hazardous effects of the toxic substances and their exposures. It also provides information about the patterns of these exposures, remedies and treatment options, prevention and minimization of exposures. ATSDR has worked in creating awareness among the potential citizens prone to exposure by its scientific researches and health products among the targeted markets such as children, women and their employees working in the hazardous sites, meeting the demand with the help of the segmentations and framing strategies according to the requirements of these segments (Atsdr.cdc.gov 2016).

References

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