

# Hootsuite's Social Media Trends Report for the Health Care Sector

## Summary

From the rise in patients evaluating health care providers with online reviews to organizations extending social media use to front-line staff, social is impacting health care. In this report, we examine the best opportunities to use social media to attract prospective patients, create brand advocates, and improve patient experience.

Social media has transformed the patient experience. Whether a patient is researching a new doctor or sharing their health story on Facebook, social media now occupies a central role in creating meaningful connections with patients at every stage in their health journeys.

In 2016, we saw health care providers, insurers, and life science companies adopt social media communications as a primary marketing function. In 2017, health care organizations will continue to focus on Facebook as their primary channel to drive conversions, expand initiatives with advocacy strategies, and invest in training to ensure staff can deliver a human touch to the patient experience at scale.

As new research shows, peer media—such as online review sites Yelp and Healthgrades as well as content shared by patients about their experience on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat—have a direct impact on the ability of health organizations to attract new patients. [A study of 1,438 patients in the United States](#) by the technology company Software Advice found that **77 percent of patients use online reviews** as their first step in finding a new doctor.

This behavior is reflected globally as well. According to [Edelman's Trust Barometer](#), two of the top three most-used sources of news and information (search, TV, and social) are now peer influenced media. This means search and social carry equal weight to TV, giving them more influence on mass market opinion than magazines, newspapers, and popular blogs.

Similarly, the analyst firm [GlobalWebIndex](#) found that 81 percent of internet users publish a video, photo, or review online at least once per month. Content created and shared by patients, employees, and brand advocates far outweighs content published by corporate communications teams in both scale and influence.

In this report, you'll learn how to align your marketing strategies with these changing audience behaviors. From attracting new patients to growing the reputation of your health experts, you'll discover new ways to increase your brand's visibility and improve the patient experience.

## Methodology

These social trends are based on what we're seeing in our global customer community which includes 15 million social media professionals and 800 of the Fortune 1000, as well as analyst reports and interviews with health care sector experts.

# Key challenges ahead for health care organizations in 2017

We see three challenges facing the health care sector.



## From silos to one social strategy

In 2017, leading health care organizations will look to transform from siloed approaches to social media to a place where the social team orchestrates social strategy and governance for the entire organization. This requires building a common framework through which corporate social marketing programs can be cascaded to regions and local facilities efficiently. With a central strategy, teams can work more collaboratively, success can be reliably measured across departments, and risks to the organization (such as regulatory and internal content policy violations) can be better monitored and mitigated.



## Linking social media metrics with patient outcomes

According to the [2016 MM&M/Guidemark Health Healthcare Marketers Trend Report](#), 76 percent of health care organizations used digital channels to reach consumers in 2015, up from 72 percent in 2014. As investment in digital continues to rise, communication teams need to clearly show how strategies create meaningful outcomes such as improved patient experience, increased patient acquisition, and recruiting talent more effectively.



## Improving monitoring and patient response

As the influence of patient reviews and public health discussions increase on social channels, health care organizations need to build scalable ways to answer inquiries quickly, share information, and make connections—in a compliant way. “People are increasingly turning to social media, but there’s a lot of misinformation out there,” says Michael Yoder, Spectrum Health’s Social Media Consultant.

“Health care systems must provide trusted information on immunization, flu virus, therapy, Ebola, you name it—there needs to be a voice of reason.”

## Stories from the frontline of health care innovation



Join Hootsuite's Jason Slusarchuk as he hosts a panel of industry leaders from Spectrum Health, Mayo Clinic Center of Innovation, MedStar Health, and Detroit Medical Center (named one of the Top 100 Most Social Media Friendly Hospitals by Nurse Journal) to explore how social media is impacting the health care industry—and what sort of social initiatives drive the best results.

[Play the webinar](#)

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## How social networks will evolve in 2017



### **Facebook: Driving conversions. Social marketing.**

Facebook will remain the top network health care organizations use to drive conversions from social. If you have limited resources, focus your campaigns and ad budget on Facebook. With the success of Facebook Live and new features like Facebook Marketplace, expect to see more opportunities to advertise as well as a continued push for driving direct conversions on Facebook.



### **Twitter: Moments in time. Patient experience and service.**

Twitter will focus on being where consumers go to experience, create, and report on moments in time. From cultural events to breaking news, Twitter's focus will be on real-time moments. Health care providers, insurers, and life science companies will continue to use Twitter to respond to patient questions, create shareable moments, and quickly resolve issues with patients to protect their brand.



### **Instagram: Brand awareness. Community building and discovery.**

In North America, Instagram hasn't been as successful at driving conversions as Facebook. Instagram works better to build brand awareness, engage your community, and recruit new employees. Instagram can also fuel the discovery of new products and services, especially if you're targeting millennials. For most health care organizations, Instagram works best for recruiting new employees.



### **Snapchat: Content distribution. Patient engagement.**

Snapchat has matured as a social marketing channel. But there's a greater focus on content than other networks. Few health care organizations have mastered this channel, creating an opportunity for early adopters. If your health care organization wants to reach younger consumers on Snapchat, you need to focus on fun, engaging content—such as sharing new births in the maternity ward with other young mothers.



### **LinkedIn: Content platform. Social selling and peer-to-peer influence.**

With Microsoft's acquisition of LinkedIn in 2016, LinkedIn will continue to invest in their content platform as they try to become the single place professionals go to stay on top of things happening in their network, industry, and profession. LinkedIn isn't where corporate communication departments blast messages. But rather where your content has to spread through your workforce—shared by your organization's thought leaders and experts, amplified by employees.



## Global social media trends at a glance

Each year, Hootsuite examines how audience behaviors are changing and the top opportunities in social across all industries. For our complete analysis of global social media trends, [watch our webinar with Edelman](#). Here are the most relevant trends to health care companies.

### 1. Social catches up with search for discovery.

Search is still king for researching and evaluating brands and services. But social is rivaling search for discovery, especially among younger buyers. [GlobalWebIndex](#) found that 37 percent of internet users turn to social networks to research brands or products. They also found that [one in two Snapchatters and Instagrammers](#) use social media to research products.

### 2. Organizations turn to connected workforces.

Organizations are increasingly investing in the online reach and influence of their workforces with employee advocacy and digital skills training. Ninety percent of brands surveyed by the [leading research firm Altimeter](#) plan to pursue employee advocacy solutions in 2017.

### 3. Video ignites social advertising.

Last year, we saw the domination of social video. The next evolution is to combine the emotional power of social video with the scale and reach of social advertising. [A May 2016 study by Animoto](#) found that 70 percent of marketers plan to use social video advertising in the next 12 months with Facebook the platform of choice.

### Get the full story in our Social Trends webinar

This guide offers an abridged version of our 2017 Social Trends webinar. Watch the webinar for a detailed analysis and audience Q&A session featuring Erin Jacobson, Edelman's Vice President of Digital for Western Canada, and Cameron Uganec, Senior Director, Growth Marketing & Education at Hootsuite.

[Play the webinar](#)



## TREND #1:

### Social catches up to search for discovery

Social usage isn't slowing. It's accelerating, especially as a discovery and research tool for consumers.

Search, email, and digital ads—these are established and mature channels. While their use is still prevalent, they've reached their peak. In contrast, social media usage isn't slowing. It's more influential than ever.

A key development is social media being used as a research tool, helping consumers gather information and evaluate products and services. Search is still one of the top ways people research products. But social is quickly catching up.

#### The rise of the empowered patient.

[Research by Deloitte Centre for Health Care Solutions](#) uncovered that 75 percent of the U.K. population goes online for health information. However, Deloitte found that the biggest hurdles to serving patients better on digital channels were not technological but “cultural and regulatory.” According to Deloitte's research, health care organizations need to provide credible information and expert advice online so patients can move from the role of “passive recipients of care to one where they're actually engaged in their own care.”

#### Social is one of the top three ways people find information.

[Edelman's annual Trust Barometer](#) reveals that two of the top three media sources consumers use to gather news and information (TV, search, and social) are now peer-driven media. In today's customer journey, every voice counts: employee advocacy, patient reviews, and peer-to-peer sharing. [GlobalWebIndex reports that 37 percent of internet users](#) turn to social networks to research brands or products, an increase on the 28 percent seen back in mid-2015. [One in two Snapchatters and Instagrammers](#) use social media to research brands.

#### Millennials skip search and go to social.

[GlobalWebIndex](#) reports that for millennials social networks are only six percentage points behind search engines as the number one place to research brands. “The older the person, the more wedded they are to search engines; conversely, the younger they are, the more likely they are to turn to social platforms and or mobile apps.”

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## Industry expert perspective: Jason Slusarchuk

We asked Jason Slusarchuk to share how he sees social evolving in the health care industry.



Jason Slusarchuk is the Industry Strategy Director for Health Care at Hootsuite. He has helped North America's largest health systems advance and advocate their social programs, using social media to improve patient care, health outcomes, and operations.

### *When you talk to teams at health care organizations, what new strategies are they planning to execute on?*

Building advocacy programs will be a focus in the coming year. Organizations know that there is a lot of value to be gained from amplifying patient experiences on social. Employees and health enthusiasts from the general public can also be used to help drive patient acquisition, attract employment referrals, and grow brand reputation.

### *What will make health care organizations more successful on social?*

Don't get distracted. Facebook continues to be the best social network in terms of active users and rates of engagement. For organizations just getting started and

trying to scale social programs, it's easy to lose focus and spread resources too far on multiple channels.

### *You work with a lot of forward-thinking hospitals and health care brands. What are some of the experimental strategies leading organizations are testing?*

Facebook Live (streaming live video) will be an interesting area to watch. We're seeing innovative health care organizations generate strong returns from live social video. A lot of experimentation is happening with Snapchat. Snapchat has 100 million daily users who spend an average of 25 to 30 minutes on the app each day, making it essential to reach millennial patients.



## TREND #2:

### The rise of connected workforces

Social began as a department-specific strategy. But health care organizations are expanding social to tap into the power of connected workforces.

Over the last few years, we've seen the evolution of social in the workplace. From the rise of Slack and Workplace by Facebook to the maturing of advocacy strategies, it's clear the lines between the personal and professional use of social media are merging.

The patient journey is also becoming more social. People want to speak to front-line employees on social—not brand handles. Patients want to ask questions about medical conditions with doctors on Twitter instead of reading generic company updates.

Health care organizations are realizing there is a lot of value in the talent, knowledge, and social reach of their people.

#### How health marketers are investing their digital budgets

MM&M in association with Guidemark Health conducted a study with 181 director-level-and-above execs, split among pharma (45 percent of respondents), biotech (21 percent), device (28 percent) and diagnostics (6 percent) companies. The short answer? Investment in digital and social is surging.

As their [2016 MM&M/Guidemark Health Healthcare Marketers Trend Report](#) shows, 76 percent of respondents used digital channels to reach consumers in 2015, up from 72 percent in 2014. By comparison, 40 percent of respondents reported using traditional advertising to reach consumers in 2015. As Larry Dobrow, the study's lead author puts it, "the gap between digital and traditional continues to widen."

**Health care consumer marketing tactics:**

	% using channel 2015	% using channel 2014	% reporting shift increase	% reporting shift decrease
Net: traditional advertising	40	38	18	17
Net: digital	76	72	52	13
Websites	66	67	38	10
Social Media	49	39	69	7
Research/data/analytics	45	46	49	10
Public relations (earned media)	41	43	39	23
Advocacy education programs	37	32	51	11
Digital ads	35	32	54	18
Direct marketing/direct mail	35	34	33	23
Print ads	34	33	30	28
Mobile/tablet apps	31	24	57	5
TV	18	17	39	24
Radio	10	12	22	43
Outdoors	6	4	42	17

[2016 MM&M/Guidemark Health Healthcare Marketers Trend Report](#)

**Every voice matters for building trust**

As revealed in [Edelman's Trust Barometer](#), every voice matters for influencing customers. For example, consumers trust information shared by friends and family more than academic experts, brands, and journalists. In 2017, the voices of local influencers and everyday advocates—employees and friends of employees—need to be encouraged and amplified.

**Increasing reach with employee advocacy**

Health care organizations are realizing that patients want to talk to their peers. Advocacy has matured beyond a tactic and is now a core component in social strategies, gaining adoption in nearly every industry.

**Closing the digital skills gap.**

In regulated industries and complex organizations, employees need to represent the brand with consistency. With online certifications and scalable courseware, it's easy to have thousands of employees participating in your social strategy. For example, Hootsuite and Mayo Clinic partnered to create the world's only [CME Accredited Course in Social Media](#). This makes it scalable to train employees to use social networks with confidence and navigate regulatory and privacy concerns.

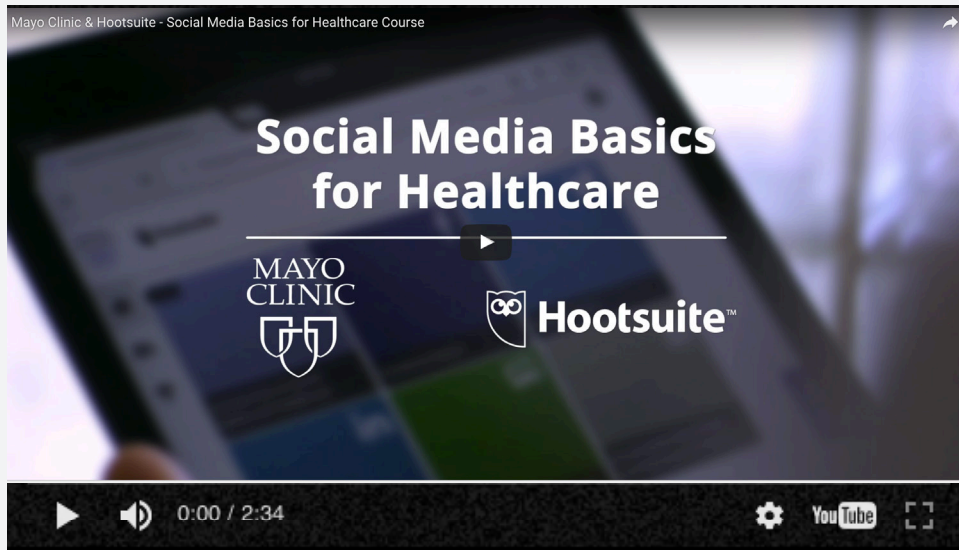


## Industry perspective:

### How the Mayo Clinic is scaling social media with training

Our partner the Mayo Clinic is ranked number one in more specialties than any other hospital by the U.S. News & World Report and is globally recognized as one of the top brands in the industry. Their innovative Mayo Clinic Center for Social Media (MCCSM) aims to improve health globally by training and equipping its staff to use social media tools.

The Mayo Clinic Center for Social Media and Hootsuite have collaborated to develop training to help medical and health care communications professionals understand social media technologies and their application within the health care industry.



## Solutions to help



### The Mayo Clinic-Hootsuite Social Basics for Health Care Certificate

Join the thousands of health care professionals who have taken control of their online presence with Mayo Clinic and Hootsuite's CME Accredited Course in Social Media.

[Take the course](#)



### Hootsuite Amplify

Boost your health organization's organic reach and unite thousands of experts, advocates, and employees on social.

[Learn more](#)



### TREND #3:

## Video ignites social advertising

Last year, social video stole the show. In 2017, social video advertising will be a key strategic focus.

#### **Live video goes commercial.**

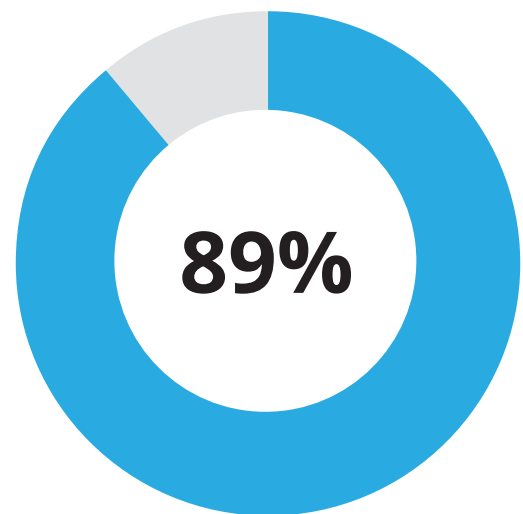
In the next year, 89 percent of marketers are considering using live stream video advertising, according to a study conducted by the [global marketing firm Trusted Media Brands](#). In August 2016, Facebook began testing 15-second mid-roll ads on live streams for a select group of publishers. These are essentially commercial breaks during live broadcasts, allowing brands to monetize their audiences.

#### **Twitter releases Conversational Ads.**

These video-based ads encourage more dynamic interactions with your ads: for example, consumers can Tweet a hashtag in order to unlock a hidden video. These ad formats also encourage users to engage and share the video based on their selection.

#### **Instagram expands their video options.**

Instagram added video to the carousel product it launched last year. Brands can now add a combination of static photos and 60-second videos with carousel ads.



*Marketers are considering using live stream video advertising - Trusted Media Brand*

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# How to get started with social video advertising

## The Basics

**Short and visual**—Keep it short (under 30 seconds) and remember people will likely watch with their audio turned off. You don't need to create an expensive video to achieve impact. A simple tip many health care organizations miss: your title image really matters. For example, a headshot of a speaker means that the video will need audio to play.

**Get inspired**—Mayo Clinic has mastered short, visual social videos with little or no audio. Their Mayo Minute series, for example, offers fast health tips. [This video answering the question](#)—how often should children bathe?—has been viewed over 138,684 times.

## Advanced tips

**Test short clips**—Produce five to ten short clips and test what works. This can influence future video creative and give you ideas for bigger budget videos.

**Focus on customer stories**—Go beyond brand awareness and help prospects evaluate your product. For example, Nuffield Health showcases how customers benefit from their products—such as [an elderly couple who use their retirement plan](#) to take care of a relative. This is much more powerful than any advertising concept. Show how customers are using your product and focus on emotion.

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## Solutions to help



### Manage paid and organic from one place

Manage, measure, and improve your paid social campaigns. Hootsuite integrates with AdEspresso, Kenshoo, Adaptly, and other social ad tools.

[Learn more](#)



### Social ads toolkit

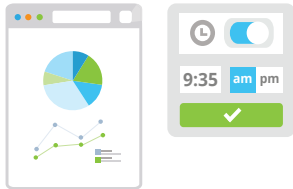
Download our social ads toolkit created in partnership with AdEspresso. The toolkit includes 137 Instagram ad examples.

[Learn more](#)

# About Hootsuite Enterprise

Partner with Hootsuite to accelerate your social transformation

## Social Marketing



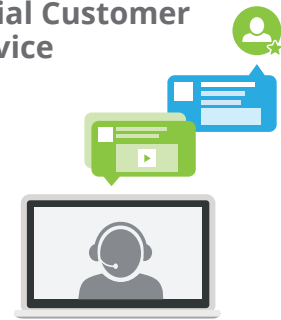
## Social Selling



## Employee Advocacy



## Social Customer Service



Hootsuite is the most widely used platform for managing social media, loved by over 15 million people around the globe and trusted by more than 100 Health Care clients. Hootsuite Enterprise empowers organizations to execute business strategies for the social media era and scale social media activities across multiple teams, departments, and regions. Our versatile platform supports a thriving ecosystem of social networks complemented by 200+ business applications and integrations, allowing organizations to extend social media into existing systems and programs.

Along with our channel and agency partners, we help organizations build deeper relationships with customers, stay connected to the needs of the market, grow revenue, and draw meaningful insights from social media data. Innovating since day one, we continue to help organizations pioneer the social media landscape and accelerate their success through product training, group training and tailored organizational training, as well as security and compliance services.

Request a custom demo today by visiting [hootsuite.com/health-care](https://hootsuite.com/health-care)

## Trusted by over 100 Health Care clients.

