

THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING TOOLS BY THE POLISH MARSHAL OFFICES TO PROMOTE HEALTH

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Summary: The increasing number of people using social media determines the contemporary approach to the means of communication to the information society. The Marshal Offices willing to conduct effective health promotion campaigns are forced to adapt to the changing trends in the modern marketing communication. Objective: The aim of this study is to determine whether the Polish Marshal Offices use the tools of social media marketing activities in the field of health promotion. Material and methods: 14 Marshal Offices in Poland were investigated. Two methods of research were used: CAWI and CATI based on author questionnaire. Data analysis was based on standard statistical methods. Results: 93% of responding offices are involved in activities related to the promotion of health. The main domains are: cancer (30%) and stimulants (28%). In the opinion of employees of the Marshal Offices the most convincing form of communication with patients is direct promotion (46%). Far less important are information posters (12%) or TV spots (10%). 56% of offices do not use social networking sites in the conduct of health campaigns. The other commonly used canals in these operations are Facebook (25%) or YouTube (6%). 50% of offices do not apply the tools of social media marketing. The rest declares active participation in discussions on Internet health forums. Conclusions: It has been postulated to pay more attention to social media and social media marketing tools in health promotion campaigns carried out in order to improve the efficiency of communication with the present information society.

Keywords: marketing communication, social media, social media marketing, health promotion

1. Introduction

Nowadays, due to the latest technology, it is observed a dynamic development of communication based on the medium of the Internet. The network has not only become a popular medium, but also an effective, efficient and accessible communication channel. The social media create therefore space for an efficient and modern way of communicating with the target groups for the promotion of health (Evans 2006). They are able to respond to undesirable social phenomena and test new activities in the field of health promotion and health education (Tokarz 2009). In the digital era it seems to be a perfect idea of social media connection with the tasks related to the promotion and health education undertaken by state institutions. It has become a prerequisite to choose topic of this paper. The goal was to investigate whether the marshals' offices use social media marketing and social media tools to communicate with the environment in the field of health promotion.

2. Research Objectives

The main objective of the study was to determine whether, in the era of ubiquitous Internet, Polish marshal offices use internet marketing tools, with particular emphasis on social media

marketing activities in the field of health promotion. Specific objectives of the study focus on the activities of Polish Marshal Offices in the field of health promotion and use of social media marketing tools:

- Identification of areas of activity of Polish Marshal Offices in the field of health promotion.
- Identification of marketing communication tools used by Polish Marshals Offices in activities in the field of health promotion.
- Determination whether and how the Polish Marshal Offices use the tools of social media marketing for their actions in the field of health promotion.
- Formulation of postulates of recommendations to improve the communication efficiency by Polish Marshal Offices in the field of health promotion.

3. Material and Methods

The research material was collected using an online survey (CAWI - Computer-Assisted Web Interview) and telephone interviews (CATI – Computer Assisted Telephone Interview). Obtaining statistical data followed in several steps. Invitation to participate in the study was sent by e-mail. The invitation consisted of a covering letter, information about the project implemented and a hyperlink to the questionnaire (CAWI). At intervals of several days three mailings was made. In order to complete the missing number of surveys a call center studio was launched.

The study was nationwide, as all the Marshal's Office were invited to participate. Consent to participation in the project expressed 14 offices. The samples for the study were purposeful.

4. Results

Taking action in the field of health promotion declared 13 Marshal Offices (92.9%). Only one tested Office (7.1%) did not engage in any activities in the area of health care. Polish Marshal Offices prefer to engage in health promotion campaigns for the cancers (N = 14; 100%) and stimulants (N = 13; 92.9%). Also the actions to combat domestic violence are often taken (N = 7; 50%), cardiovascular disease (n = 5; 35.7%) and lung disease (N = 4; 28.6%). The least frequent activity in the area of health promotion carried out by Marshal Offices concerns of obesity among adults (N = 2; 14.3%) and children (N = 1, 7.1%).

Marshal Offices most frequently implement activities in health promotion through the organization of conferences (N = 11; 26.8%). Willingly used form of activity are workshops (N = 8; 19.5%), as well as the initiation of television programs (N = 7; 18%), and finally the development of information brochures (N = 6; 14.6%). Least likely health promotion campaigns are carried out by organizing concerts (N = 4; 9.8%), the development of information leaflets (N = 3; 7.3%), and initiating radio programs (N = 2; 4.9%).

In the opinion of the staff from Marshal Offices the most effective ways to implement activities in the field of health promotion are the organization of the conference (N = 11; 78.6%), workshops (N = 7; 50%), concerts (N = 7; 50%) and to initiate radio programs (N = 6; 42.9%). For the less effective the respondents completed the development of information brochures (N = 3; 21.4%), initiation of television programs (N = 3; 21.4%), and the development of leaflets (N = 2; 14.3%).

Marshal Offices' cooperation with NGOs in the field of health promotion is often dedicated to drugs (N = 14; 100%) and cancers (N = 13; 92.9%). Less commonly, third sector organizations engage in actions against domestic violence (N = 4; 28.6%), and the marginal importance to cooperation is the prevention of cardiovascular disease (N = 1, 7.1%), lung disease (N = 1; 7.1%) and obesity among adults (N = 1, 7.1%) and children (N = 1, 7.1%).

In the opinion of employees of Marshal Offices the most attractive and convincing form of health promotion for patients is the direct promotion recommendations implemented by friends (N = 12; 85.7%). Effective promotion provide also doctor and pharmacist direct recommendations (N = 7; 50%), displaying posters in medical units (N = 6; 42.9%) and the issue of television spots (N = 5; 35.7%). Of less importance is the distribution of newsletters (N = 3; 21.4%) and information leaflets (N = 3; 21.4%), as well as direct internet promotion through recommendations from other users (N = 3; 21.4%). Of the least effective actions in the area of health promotion, respondents completed the street putting up billboards, posting press releases, email campaigns, and the issue of radio and online spots.

5. Conclusions

Almost all surveyed offices engage in activities in the field of health promotion. Activities of Polish Marshal Offices in this field consist mainly of cancer and stimulants health promotion. The organization of conferences and workshops turns out to be the most common and the most effective actions in the area of health promotion carried out by the Polish Marshal Offices. A half of the employees of Polish Marshal Offices considered direct communication of health promotion among patients to be the most convincing and inspiring confidence form. Far less important, in their opinion, are information posters and TV spots. In the opinion of surveyed offices the direct promotion recommendations implemented by friends are the most attractive form of health promotion. More than half of the surveyed agencies, despite awareness of the importance of direct communication, do not use social networking sites in the conducting health campaigns. One quarter of responding offices used in these activities Facebook, and very few You Tube. Half of the Polish Marshal Offices do not use any social media marketing tools. The remaining half declares active participation in discussions on Internet forums on health or in moderating online forum or consulting. The study can be concluded that in the era of ubiquitous Internet less than half of the surveyed Polish Marshal Offices uses social media and social media marketing tools in their efforts to promote health. The change in technology should also revolutionize the functioning of the offices operating in the healthcare market, that want to get to the "digital" audience with their health-related transfers. These institutions, at various levels of their activities, may make profits from modern communication technologies if only they follow a new communication trends. It has been postulated to pay more attention by Polish Marshal Offices to social media marketing and social media tools in its actions in the field of health promotion in order to improve the efficiency in communication with the "digital" environment.

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