

ARTICLE

## Marketing agency sees market insights as a unique and invaluable tool for its healthcare clients

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Marketing has become a key discipline for hospitals and health systems, accounting for about 10% of a healthcare organization's budget.<sup>1</sup> Successful marketing strategies drive increased awareness, consideration, preference, choice, and advocacy, all critical stages of the consumer decision journey. To make the most of their resources and maximize return on investment, many healthcare marketers look to marketing and advertising agencies for guidance on strategies to gain an edge on their competition.

Laughlin Constable (Laughlin), a marketing agency with offices in Chicago and Milwaukee, partners with hospitals and health systems on marketing initiatives. From guiding strategy to monitoring campaign performance and helping demonstrate marketing ROI, Laughlin's healthcare team values the essential role of current as well as historical consumer-perception data, whether in evaluating a client's existing geographies, potential new markets, or peers' performance in comparative markets. Over the last ten years, Laughlin has valued the reporting flexibility and up-to-the-minute data it can access when its clients subscribe to NRC Health Market Insights.

**“It’s a good sign that a client is committed to brand marketing efficacy when they invest in NRC Health Market Insights. It’s a powerful brand-measurement tool for healthcare marketers, and there’s really nothing else quite like it.”**

**--Gayle Morse**, Vice President, Strategic Planning, Laughlin Constable

### MARKET INSIGHTS ALLOWS HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS TO:

- Understand consumer perceptions of their brand relative to their competitors
- Identify perceptions among different segments such as age, gender, and income
- Monitor changes in consumer perceptions and track against marketing spend
- Inform strategic decision-making with real-time consumer input
- Evaluate potential new markets or acquisitions in terms of both current and historical consumer-perception data

**Consider this: The median annual operating budget of a hospital marketing department is \$3.1 million.<sup>2</sup>**

How are you proving your return on marketing investments? Are you confident that you can continue to secure and grow your budget for the future?

### **Demonstrate return on marketing investment**

With Market Insights data, healthcare marketers and their agencies are able to track changes in brand status through longitudinal brand awareness, perception, preference, and advocacy information trending back several years. Nuances like service-line strengths, community support, and share of “bests” are also among the available data points. Another thing the Laughlin team appreciates is having historical data with consistent methodology, making it possible to track marketing impact over time and support marketing ROI.

**“That historical information helps us draw a before-and-after marketing picture or a spending-impact demonstration that is meaningful to organization leadership and validates their marketing investment. It can be a big part of our data storytelling, combined with digital, web, social, and other metrics.”**

--**Gayle Morse**, Vice President, Strategic Planning, Laughlin Constable

Clients without NRC often use a point-in-time AAU (Awareness, Attitude, Utilization) study that is typically completed every two years.

These studies are often customized, and the methodology can vary, which compromises the validity of the comparisons and trend insights they offer. Healthcare marketing departments typically report to physicians and other medical scientists, to whom disciplined research and a rigorous methodology are critical.

### **Understand the factors that impact marketing campaigns**

A significant investment goes into developing marketing campaigns, and ready access to data enables organizations to validate performance and impact on marketing goals and objectives. With Market Insights, organizations can also get a more complete picture and gain a deeper understanding of other factors that may be impacting their brands.

Market Insights enables an organization to view and track the engagement of specific marketing campaigns, along with the influence each campaign has on consumer perceptions in its market. It also provides access to data that is linked to non-campaign-related factors such as actual care experiences and the marketing campaigns of their competitors.

“When we work with organizations that also partner with NRC Health, we get a richer and more immediate understanding of the various factors that can impact a campaign’s success,” said Morse. “This can help us understand the drivers of campaign performance, track ROI, and optimize campaign performance.”

### **Grounding gut feelings in data**

Laughlin has also seen clients use NRC Health’s consumer-perception data to add another level of information for strategic decision-making around new markets and

merger opportunities, and to compare market perceptions of similar hospitals or systems in other parts of the country.

“NRC Health is a tool that clients can use to ground common sense, gut feelings, and ideas. It helps validate or inform instincts, and provides a great foundation for measurement recommendations. It’s a valuable resource.”

--**Patti Bridge**, Senior Vice President, Account Management, Laughlin Constable

To learn how your organization and its marketing-agency partner can utilize Market Insights data to make more informed marketing and strategic decisions, visit [nrchealth.com](http://nrchealth.com).

**Consider this: Mergers and acquisitions can be extremely expensive and risky.**

Has your organization considered ways to use consumer-perception data in non-traditional ways to gain an advantage over its competitors in your market?

Strategy and governance teams should use consumer-perception data to inform and justify mergers, acquisitions, and strategic decision-making.

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