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Mary Washington's journey to understanding the trends shaping their market.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Leadership at Mary Washington Healthcare, one of three independent systems in the state of Virginia, faced a challenge. They wanted to understand the trends shaping their market, but they lacked the analytical tools necessary to pull a coherent story from the data. With two hospitals, three emergency departments, and over 40 clinics and wellness facilities under its direction, Mary Washington had a daunting amount of data to sift through. But with NRC Health's Market Insights solution, leadership was able to quickly grasp their position in the marketplace and come to a stronger understanding of their patients.

The opportunity

It's not easy for healthcare leaders to answer questions like, "What will our market share be next year?" or "In what direction are our volumes heading?"—especially given broader changes in the industry landscape. This is partly because healthcare consumption looks much different from how it did even a decade ago: more and more, it's driven by how patients interact with health systems' digital brands.

The Internet has enabled consumers to assert more control in the marketplace, using online tools to shop around before selecting a provider. Health systems, therefore, need to understand their customers' digital behaviors if they hope to attract—and retain—new patients.

To make accurate forecasts about volume or market share, Mary Washington's leaders knew they needed to find a way to gain a comprehensive grasp of modern patients' healthcare purchasing patterns. They started to look at ways to generate sound predictions based on leading indicators of digital behavior. By correlating these indicators with robust consumer data, they knew they would gain a sense of how the marketplace was shifting.

The solution

NRC Health's Market Insights solution gave Mary Washington's leaders the data they needed. Market Insights is a customer-intelligence tool that gathers insights from over 300,000 households—the largest consumer-health database in the country.



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Customized surveys, delivered to segmented patient demographics, can help healthcare organizations answer their most urgent questions with unparalleled precision and rigor.

In the case of Mary Washington, leaders wanted to use Market Insights data to discern how patients' preferences and perceptions shape bottom-line health-system metrics. The big question they wanted to address was, which subjective consumer measures correlate with an increase in volumes?

The results

Mary Washington's leadership started by using Market Insights to ask consumers about their awareness and preference for receiving services from a specific provider within their organization. This gave each provider a Market Insights Preference Score, which they could then use to assess how consumer preference affects business performance.

The next step was correlating these preference scores to provider volumes. A correlation quickly emerged between the values: as Market Insights Preference Scores rose, so did patient volumes. Even when Mary Washington's leaders tested other potential correlates, such as reputation data or patient-feedback surveys, they found that Market Insights Preference Scores were by far the most reliable.

Signs were encouraging. By examining a longitudinal view of patient encounters, leaders found that as awareness of Mary Washington increased, so did consumption of Mary Washington's healthcare services. This was a promising sign for conserving patient loyalty within the health system.

The data was remarkably sensitive as well. Mary Washington's leaders were able to use Market Insights' Top of Mind Awareness Scores to make very specific predictions. An increase of **3.8%** in their Top of Mind Awareness Scores, for example, correlated with a **2.4%** increase in market share within the next six to eight months.

Perhaps more important, though, is how this data shifted Mary Washington's approach to customer cultivation. The wealth of data, and its indisputable relevance, gave administrators a new way to test—and prove—hypotheses related to customer satisfaction. This helped them devise new ways to engage their patients, which they now confidently knew would lead to stronger business results.

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increase in Market Insights' Top of Mind Awareness Scores

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increase in market share within the next six to eight months

"NRC Health Market Insights data helped Mary Washington Healthcare better track and measure their consumer awareness data. We were able to discover that awareness leads to volume, and now as an organization we can strive to increase awareness knowing this will increase volume and essentially revenue."

—Lisa E. Henry, MHA

Director, Corporate Marketing and Communications

Finally, with this robust data in hand, Mary Washington's leaders were able to bring a new empirical certainty to their conversations with board members. Market Insights helped them find common ground between the hospital executives, who spend their day-to-day working lives immersed in healthcare's particular challenges, and the board members, who do not. The story that emerged from the data was universal, which made it invaluable for driving internal engagement.

"NRC Health Market Insights allows us at Mary Washington Healthcare to create uniformity that crosses all industries. It helps us create a bridge between industries. We can capitalize and tap into the non-healthcare members of our board and help them understand our 'healthcare language.'"

—Lisa E. Henry, MHA

Director, Corporate Marketing and Communications

The future

Mary Washington's board has been thrilled by the progress they've seen. Leadership has ready answers for the board's most probing questions, and together they're able to conceive a strategic vision that the entire health system's staff can rally behind.

This shows that it's not just the data that made Market Insights useful—it's also how the data inspires staff to get engaged with the organization's challenges. Now that they've seen the effect that strong data can have, Mary Washington's leaders plan to continue searching for other metrics that might help inform further strategies. They know that the work of understanding your customer never truly stops.

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For more on Market Insights from NRC Health, call 800.388.4264 or visit nrchealth.com/demo.



**NRC Health helps healthcare organizations
better understand the people they care for and
design experiences that inspire loyalty.**

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