



Choose the Right Hospital

A TOOLKIT TO FACILITATE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION



A Strategy for Distributing *A Guide to Choosing the Right Hospital*

Employees, employers, health plans and even high-performing hospitals benefit when consumers embrace the need to compare hospitals on quality of care. But disseminating information on hospital quality to an employee population can be tricky, as employees don't always pay attention until they end up in a hospital. In addition, in cases where the employee is having elective surgery and has time to choose a hospital, often they simply take their doctor's recommendation and do not do any research.

The following sample roll-out plan is designed to help you get started in the development of an effective strategy for distributing *A Guide to Choosing the Right Hospital* (referred to as the *Guide*), the element of the toolkit developed specifically for employees. From this plan, you can draw ideas that are most applicable to your company.

Planning the Roll-out: Defining the Objective and Identifying the Audiences

The overarching goal is to increase employee awareness of the availability of a reliable online resource that can be used for comparing hospitals. Successful roll-outs depend on both "top-down" education and training and some "bottom-up" buzz building within the company about the tool.

The first step is identifying your audiences. Typically, there are two key audiences for your communications:

- ❖ **Executive leadership and managers:** Success depends in part on educating the executive leadership on why it is important to engage employees in activities that can help improve the quality of the health care they receive. If the leaders within your company understand that when employees receive substandard care, the company will pay the price in terms of health care costs as well as absenteeism and productivity, they will be more willing to become champions of the website. To make the case, consider preparing a presentation for top executives on the importance of this issue and how the *Guide* can assist the company in educating employees.
- ❖ **Employees:** Once your leadership is onboard, the next step is to focus on communicating with employees about key concepts and available resources.

Implementation Plan

To help drive home the message to employees about why they should care about quality and safety in the hospital, you may want to consider multiple methods of communicating the availability of the *Guide*. Ideally, a full roll-out would include most, if not all, of the dissemination methods listed below:

- ❖ **Pilot testing:** Consider pilot testing the *Guide* with a select group of employees to get feedback on what they found most useful. The information received from the pilot users can help you figure out what people consider most valuable. That information can be used to develop key messages and help you decide how to communicate going forward.
- ❖ **Introductory e-mail:** A personalized e-mail sent to all employees with information about the *Guide* and how to obtain it.

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- ❖ **Company intranet:** Prominently posting the *Guide* in an easy-to-access place on your company intranet.
- ❖ **Article in company newsletter:** As part of your regular communications with employees on information pertinent to the company, consider adding an article on hospital quality, along with information on the *Guide*.
- ❖ **Welcome card:** Consider developing a brief card introducing each employee to the *Guide* and then following up by delivering a copy to each staff member. The cards could include a healthy treat inside. The idea is to trigger people to open the communication and pay attention to the information in it.
- ❖ **Promotional posters:** Posters placed in common areas (e.g., break rooms, restrooms, etc.) are an effective way to remind people of the availability of your company's resources. In this case, the posters could focus on the examples given in the *Guide* and the benefits of comparing hospitals.
- ❖ **User feedback survey:** After disseminating the *Guide* to your employees, consider getting feedback about how they used the *Guide* and whether it was beneficial. Their responses could be used in future communication reminders about the *Guide* to help reinforce its value. Showing how fellow employees benefited from using the *Guide* is an effective way to convey its importance. People relate to examples about others similar to themselves.

Below is a sample roll-out plan that provides a timeline along with actions to consider when communicating with employees about hospital safety and quality.

Suggested Launch Timeline for the Guide

