

BrightEdge Industry Focus: Healthcare Marketing and SEO

Healthcare Industry Overview

The topline numbers in the U.S. healthcare industry are noteworthy: The total U.S. healthcare expenditure was more than [\\$3.5 trillion](#), per the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. At that level, it accounted for 17.9% of gross domestic product (GDP). The U.S. spent about \$9,990 per person on healthcare. Japan, with a longer life expectancy (83.1 years vs. 79.1 years) and universal coverage, spent just \$3,816 per person. 85 publicly-traded healthcare companies made \$47 billion in profit on [\\$545 billion](#) in global sales. Pharmaceutical companies generated 22% of the revenue and 60% of the [profit](#).

Those levels of spending and profit make the industry ripe for disruption in all areas and processes. This potential for streamlining creates opportunities to connect previously disparate data sources and deliver higher degrees of personalization, consistency in care, overall capacity utilization, patient satisfaction, and outcomes.

Top Trends in Healthcare Marketing

Patient-Centered Care

PwC found that hospital systems plan to invest in and focus on patient experience more than ever before. The most forward-looking providers are shifting to patient-centered care, which this means improving the patient experience throughout the patients' journey. Modernizing and improving how people locate a provider, evaluate a provider, make an appointment, interact, diagnose, treat, document, monitoring, and follow up creates better outcomes for patients and better business results for providers.

Trust in the medical industry is declining and undermines treatment, adherence to recommendations, and health outcomes. While payers and providers play a role in the loss of trust, 3 out of 4 consumers feel that hospitals put profits over patients.

The combination of choice, value-seeking, and distrust drives patients today to research by all means at their disposal. Online, offline, friends and family, mobile search, vertical search, ratings and reviews, forums – all come into play with a skeptical public with high intent to find a solution. A focus on building credibility and trust with patients is more likely to deliver the outcomes sought.

Healthcare Digital Media Ecosystem

According to Think with Google's [The Digital Journey to Wellness: Hospital Selection](#):

- 77% of patients use search engines prior to booking appointments.
- Search drives nearly three times as many visitors to hospital sites, compared to visitors from other referral sites.
- 44% of patients who research hospitals on a mobile device schedule an appointment.
- 94% of respondents said reputation of facility is important to selection.
- After an appointment patients discuss and recommend to family or friends 50% of the time, 12% post a review in social, and 6% posted a review on a website.
- Online sources are used for research and discovery three times more than other sources
- Before the moment of conversion patients typically search on non-brand terms related to symptoms and conditions
- Nearly half of patients finish their journey with a branded term.
- Patients who booked an appointment online conducted three times as many searches as people who did not.
- 1 in 8 patients watched an online video before scheduling an appointment.
- 30% of patients who watched an online video scheduled an appointment.

Google states that a “surround digital” strategy incorporating search, display, video, content, and site optimization is three times more influential in hospital choice than single-channel. Organizations who are experiencing success in this area have made strides in cross-channel attribution, integrated planning across a patient’s care journey, and flexible budgeting to allocate marketing budget where opportunity or demand returns best value.

Digitization

Devices, sensors, micro-services, and rich applications offer highly efficient options to enhance operations, supply chain, physician efficiencies, and patient outcomes.

Users are adopting and many now expect intuitive interfaces, health-record portability, and immediate, always-available access to scheduling. [Fifty-four percent](#) of appointments booked online are from new patients. According to an [Accenture study on digital self-scheduling](#), by 2019, 64% of patients will utilize self-scheduling to book appointments. **This will result in 38%, or 986 million, of all appointments being digitally self-scheduled, creating \$3.2 billion in value.** Older patients, who use the most services, are also adopting online scheduling with 39% of online bookings coming from patients over the age of 40. Missed appointments and unused provider time cost the economy an estimated [\\$150 billion](#) a year in the US.

A [PatientPop survey](#) found **42% of survey respondents** say they would like online medical appointment scheduling, versus scheduling calling the practice. However, **only 17%** of respondents said they currently have an option for online appointment booking.

Digitization means even the doctor/patient appointment itself can now be digitized and remote, increasing convenience in scheduling for patients and more complete time efficiency for doctors. The virtual interaction also reduces staff cost in terms of check in and real estate costs for waiting rooms and offices. Doctors and clinics that adopt this technology AND the marketing of the service will have a significant advantage in patient acquisition and retention. On-demand health data for self-education combined with self-monitoring using mobile apps and wearable devices fuel self-care, disease prevention, and patient-driven focus on wellness all

means that doctors and providers who adopt and integrate these technologies and data into their practices will have operational and outcome advantages over those who do not.

Regulation, Compliance, and Marketing

The political uncertainty and opposition to the U.S. Affordable Care Act has buffeted the industry for most of the last decade. Public exchanges provide more access to insurance at the same time as the laws impact the services and fees. **The uncertainty creates even more incentive for providers to become skilled at independently attracting the right kinds of patients for their business.**

HIPAA regulation protects patient information and impacts some of the traditional marketing techniques, like customer case studies.

The Healthcare Success blog provides guidelines on [healthcare-compliant marketing](#):

***Be truthful.** This one may seem black-and-white obvious, but trouble may lurk in gray areas or in “spin” regarding effectiveness or results. Medical boards and state regulations expect legitimate, reliable data in support of claims.*

***Revealing previous-patient detail.** “A lot of writing about patients which is thought to be anonymized, is not as anonymized as you might think,” according to David Harlow. “Under HIPAA, there are basically 18 key categories of personal health information that can lead to patient identification and it’s easy to inadvertently cross the line. “The safer approach is a completely fictional composite, or a no-compensation, signed patient release. (HIPAA has established standards for a proper release; check with your attorney.)”*

***Advertise the doctor.** In medical procedures that involve a pharmaceutical product or medical device, such as dental implants or even a hip replacement, advertise the provider or the service, not the device.*

***Not everyone is a specialist.** Having extensive experience or expertise does not a specialist make. In legal terms, claiming to be a “specialist” typically requires a recognized certification.*

Reputation Management

As cited above, reputation of hospital is the #1 criteria for selection. Providers and hospitals must provide excellent customer experience, have an active and effective public relations effort, and encourage their customers to write positive reviews. These reviews can play a role from Yelp to the insurance sites to specialty vertical search engines. Doctors and providers must be very careful to not respond to any reviews with details of specific patients or their procedures.

Video Marketing

Perhaps because of the industry’s consultative roots, video is and will be an increasingly important way to reach and connect with potential and current patients. The videos can be hosted at both YouTube and on the provider’s site to maximize top of funnel reach. Videos can help potential patients get comfortable with the provider and procedure before they come in.

Some video types providers should consider:

- Explainer video to introduce the provider and what is different about it
- Physician introduction videos
- Procedure and treatment videos
- How to prepare for a procedure videos
- Health maintenance videos

Artificial Intelligence

AI can help with all of the challenges in the industry from research, to managing massive data sets, virtual interaction with patients, to even diagnosis and pathology. AI can help prevent mistakes and misdiagnoses and optimal prescription management.

According to HealthAnalytics.com: Pathologists provide one of the most significant sources of diagnostic data for providers across the spectrum of care delivery, says Jeffrey Golden, MD, Chair of the Department of Pathology at BWH and a professor of pathology at HMS. "Seventy percent of all decisions in healthcare are based on a pathology result," he said. "Somewhere between 70 and 75% of all the data in an EHR are from a pathology result. So the more accurate we get, and the sooner we get to the right diagnosis, the better we're going to be. That's what digital pathology and AI has the opportunity to deliver."

IBM's cognitive computing AI solution, Watson, is showing promise in genomics and pathology to [detect cancer and other diseases from x-ray images](#).

Channel Marketing Mix in Healthcare

At BrightEdge, we have examined how the healthcare industry invests across various marketing channels. Our research indicates that this sector shows a far-above average share of organic at 73%, a below-average share of paid search at 6%, and below-average share of social and other at 19 and 3%.

Healthcare includes a lot of informational and longtail queries so the high proportion of organic searches. Paid search cost per click on some disease treatment terms can be over \$100 a click, possibly due to the high amount of financial contribution health insurance companies make to the decision and purchasing processes.

Healthcare Industry SEO BrightEdge Content Benchmark Stats

According to BrightEdge research, the industry has the following content profile:

BrightEdge Data Cube Metrics	Avg for Industry
The average Data Cube score for higher industry is:	85,360
The average number of position one listings is:	334
The average page 1 listings is:	2576
The average total universal content results is:	482
The average number of images is:	24
The average number of Quick Answers is:	90

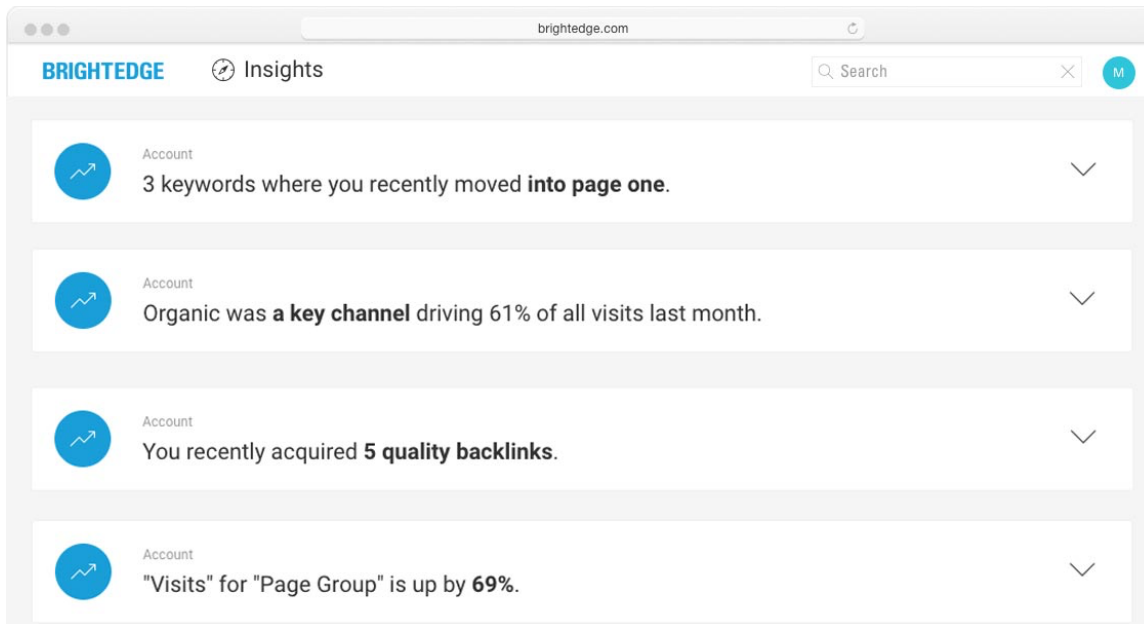
These numbers fall well below the median of all sectors, indicating that have considerable room for SEO and content growth. For the providers that correctly capitalize on this opportunity, however, the chance to step out in front of the rest of the field is immense.

BrightEdge Healthcare Industry SEO Click Curves for Mobile and Desktop

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Mobile	18.7%	12.8%	9.6%	5.9%	3.8%	2.6%	1.8%	1.4%	1.1%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%
Desktop	22.8%	11.7%	10.4%	7.0%	4.1%	2.7%	1.8%	1.6%	1.3%	1.0%	1.1%	0.8%	1.1%	2.3%	2.1%

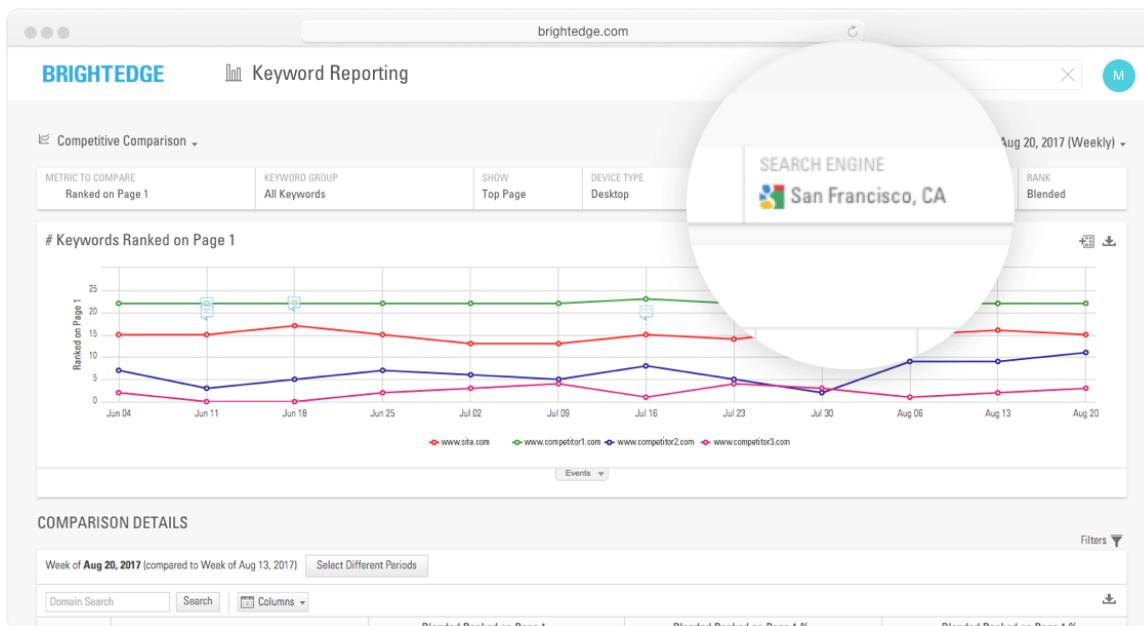
These click curves indicate the average performance in various search result positions. The numbers help understand and forecast the traffic that should be coming in from the organic search channel for healthcare marketers.

How Healthcare Providers Use BrightEdge for SEO



Insights

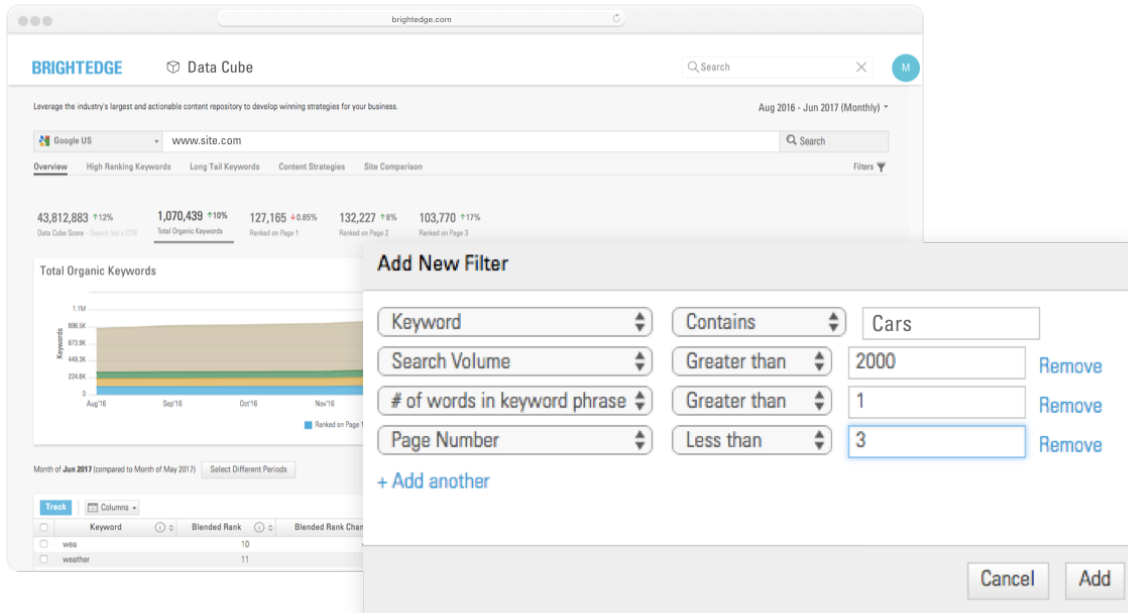
Insights automatically applies BrightEdge machine learning and artificial intelligence to help healthcare providers monitor their site for opportunities and errors. The automated nature of the feature is particularly helpful to small marketing staffs that do not have a dedicated SEO specialist. As more providers invest in digital marketing, a key use case for Insights is in helping marketing teams direct their SEO efforts in the most impactful ways when time and resources are limited.



HyperLocal

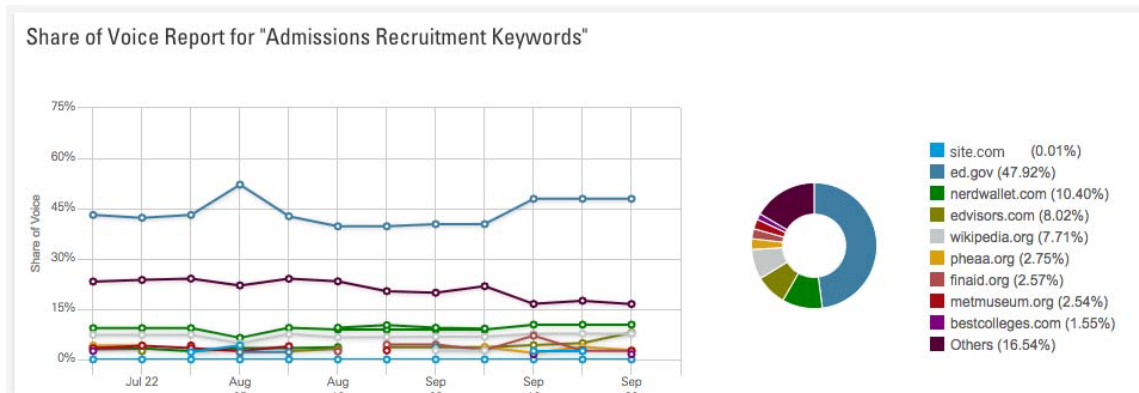
More than any other industry, healthcare requires real-world contact between customer and the professionals they've entrusted their wellbeing to. Medical treatment is tied to medical offices and facilities, which often become local fixtures wherever they're based. Providers are extremely interested

in reaching potential patients in particular cities and even neighborhoods. BrightEdge HyperLocal capabilities allow them to target down to the zip code or even GPS coordinate locations.



Data Cube

Because of the universality of interest in wellness – everyone wants to be healthy -- there are a multitude of health and medical-related topics that people search for online every day. BrightEdge Data Cube allows providers to identify those longer queries people use on these more specific topics related to their health or things that are trending in the world of medical care and treatments.



Share of Voice

Since there are often several medical service or provider options in the same locality, providers can use the BrightEdge Share of Voice feature to understand how much share of organic search they possess has on particular topics versus the competition.

BrightEdge Healthcare Industry Customers

Dozens of hospitals, medical providers, pharmaceutical companies, insurers, devices, and healthcare technology companies all use BrightEdge for organic search marketing.

BrightEdge Healthcare Customer SEO Quotes

“SEO was very new for me, and BrightEdge was actually an excellent platform to teach me the right way to optimize our page.”

--Janine Beck, NextGen Healthcare

“BrightEdge is helping us get to where we want to be quicker. If I had to do this all in-house, we would not be where we are right now.” --James O'Brien, NextGen Healthcare

“BrightEdge has helped us quickly and easily optimize and publish knowledge-based Smart Content that showcases our deep orthopedic expertise. BrightEdge-published pages now drive 75% of all our online appointment requests.”

--Timothy Wall, Jacksonville Orthopedic

About BrightEdge

BrightEdge, the global leader in enterprise organic search and content performance, empowers marketers to transform online content into business results such as traffic, conversions, and revenue. The BrightEdge S3 platform is powered by a sophisticated deep learning engine and is the only company capable of web-wide, real-time measurement of content engagement across all digital channels, including search, social, and mobile. BrightEdge's 1,700+ customers include global brands as well as 57 of the Fortune 100. The company has eight offices worldwide and is headquartered in Foster City, California.