aha media

The Future of Healthcare Marketing

7 Key Trends to Watch in 2025

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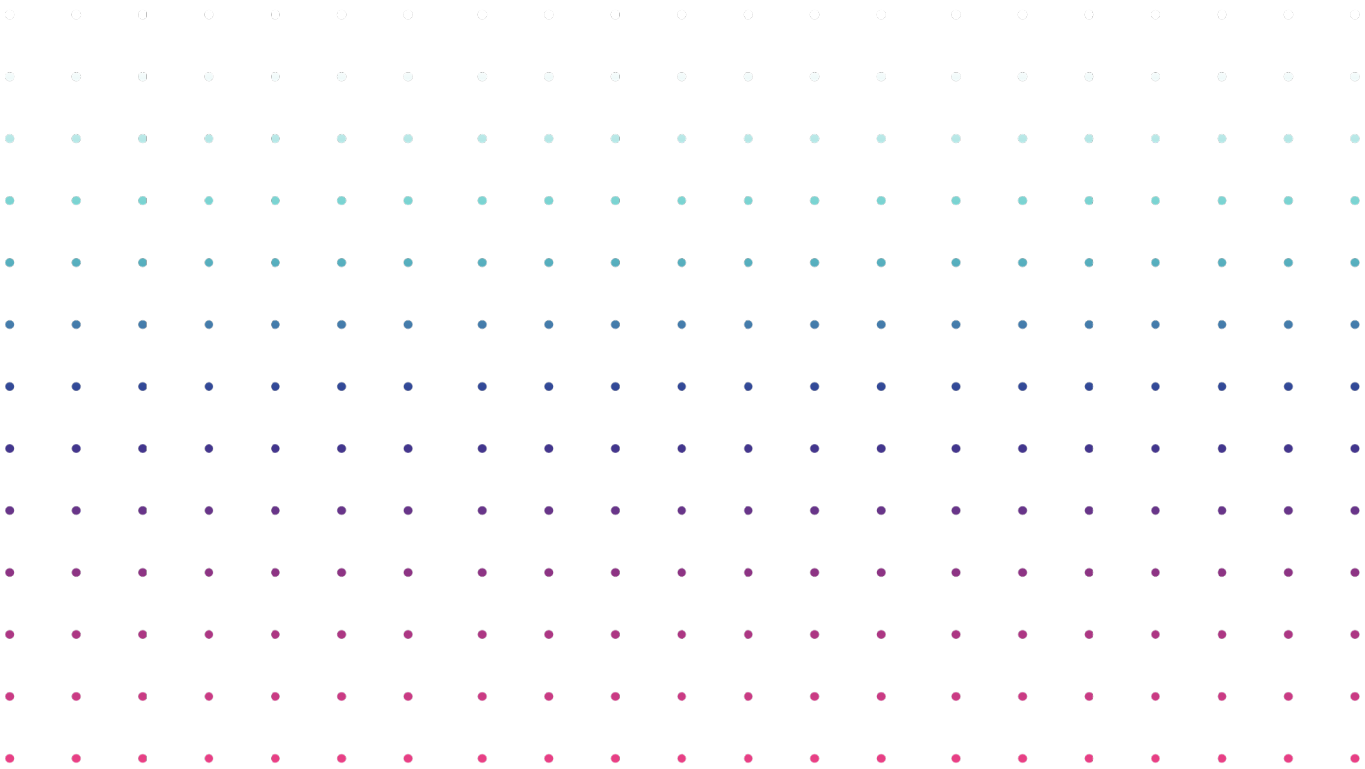


Buckle up, healthcare marketer

2025 brings an accelerated shift in patient behavior, technology, and platform algorithms. From AI tools that streamline workflows to social media continuing its evolution into a search engine, the landscape ahead is exciting and challenging.

Here's what you need to know to stay ahead — and how to turn these trends into opportunities.

Acronym glossary

- **CTR: click-through rate**
  The percentage of users who click on a link after seeing it in search results, social posts, email, and other marketing channels
- **SERPs: search engine results pages**
  The list of results displayed by a search engine after a query
- **PAA: People Also Ask**
  A SERP feature showing related questions and quick answers for additional exploration
- **SGE: Search Generative Experience**
  Google's AI-driven tool that delivers summarized answers (also called AI Overviews) directly on search pages

> *Get comfortable with AI, but don't hurry yourself—start small, learn from others' policies as you develop your own, and give yourself a lot of grace along the way. What everyone is saying is true: it's not going away. So learn its benefits, but also get comfortable with its vulnerabilities—then fill those gaps with genuine human empathy and creativity.*
>
> *The kind of stuff AI won't ever be able to touch.*
>
> *I've seen it cook up some good personas and starter ad copy for a marketing campaign. But it'll never be able to tell a compelling patient story with some of the rawness of reality that can only come from a human sharing about another human.*

Ben Riggs, Content Manager, Kettering Health

TREND 1

Search is shifting

We can help with this!

What to do when people stop clicking

How patients search for healthcare information is evolving. AI-generated summaries and SERP features like PAA boxes and featured snippets continue to rise in popularity. Traditional website clicks are declining as these tools prioritize delivering immediate, on-page answers.

1. **The rise of AI Overviews**
   Platforms like Google's SGE and Microsoft's Bing AI provide AI-generated summaries directly on SERPs. These tools often eliminate the need for users to visit a website, but they create opportunities for your content to serve as the trusted source referenced in these answers.
2. **The growing impact of SERP features**
   Features like PAA boxes and featured snippets still drive more traffic than AI Overviews, particularly for health-related searches. These elements appear prominently in search results and help your content stand out.

How to adapt:

- **Optimize for multiple SERP features:** Structure your content with concise answers, strong leaders, and FAQs to rank in AI Overviews, PAA boxes, and snippets.
- **Incorporate videos and FAQs:** Video content performs well in SERPs and boosts engagement, while FAQs make your content more searchable.
- **Leverage omnichannel marketing:** To enhance visibility, ensure consistent messaging across your website, social media, and email campaigns.

Redefine success with new KPIs

Traditional metrics like CTR and total website traffic matter less for top-of-funnel content, as answers are delivered directly on search pages. Success now depends on visibility and engagement across multiple channels.

What to track:

- **SERP visIbility:** Measure how often your content appears in AI Overviews, PAA boxes, and featured snippets.
- **Brand mentions:** Track whether your brand is referenced in AI tools like Google SGE or ChatGPT, showing authority and trust.
- **Engagement on other platforms:** Pay attention to social shares, video views, and comments where your content reaches audiences beyond your site.
- **Time with your brand:** Track metrics like email open rates, scroll depth, or video watch time to measure interaction.
- **Mid- and bottom-funnel priorities:** CTR still matters here. Users at this stage are often prequalified by search engines, making this content critical for conversions. Build out mid-funnel content if gaps exist.

TREND 2

AI tools

From workflow efficiencies to custom GPTs

AI is no longer "the future." It's here, and it's transforming how we work.

Here's how to make the most of it:

1. **Streamline workflows**
   AI tools like **ChatGPT** or **MarketMuse** automate tedious tasks like ideating email subject lines or identifying keyword gaps. AI assistants built into video meeting software can summarize key points from meetings.

   This frees up your time for more strategic work, like planning campaigns that resonate with your audience.

   Pro tip: Use AI to test subject lines or generate multiple versions of ad copy. Then, A/B test them to learn what resonates with your audience.

2. **Predict patient behaviors with analytics**
   Predictive analytics powered by AI tools like Adobe Analytics help forecast what patients need next — appointment reminders or tailored follow-ups. Use these insights to craft campaigns that feel personal and timely.

3. **Develop a custom GPT for your brand**
   Custom GPTs trained on your healthcare system's voice, style, and compliance guidelines can generate accurate, brand-specific responses to patient queries. Imagine automating ideation or analyzing your content for style and compliance with the click of a button.

Before you jump in

It's essential to have a process for identifying, testing, and implementing new tools. With AI tools, we recommend first setting up an organization-wide AI policy. Then, identify the tasks that need support before looking for tools.

It's easy to get wooed by the latest technology, but AI is only helpful when solving a real challenge.

Tasks

- What would we like to take off our plates?
- What tasks can we automate?
- What is the goal?

Tools

- What AI tools are available?
- Who will test them?
- What training is needed to use AI effectively in our workflows?

Trade-offs

- What's the impact of AI on team workflow and efficiency?
- What's our timeline and budget for AI integration?

TREND 3

Voice search

Speak your audience's language

Voice search is nothing new. Thanks to devices like Alexa and Siri, it's been growing rapidly for over a decade. The new change? The way people type queries is starting to match the way they talk.

What this means:

Your content should match how people speak and search. For example, instead of "diabetes symptoms," use phrases like, "What are the first signs of diabetes?"

How to optimize:

- Use long-tail, conversational keywords and phrases.
- Add an FAQ section to your website for common voice search queries.
- Focus on local SEO, as many voice searches are location-based (e.g., "Pediatrician near me open now").

Traditional query	Long-tail query
"flu symptoms"	"What are the first signs of the flu?"
"pediatrician near me"	"Where can I find a pediatrician near me who is taking new patients?"
"best hospital for heart surgery"	"Which hospital has the best success rate for heart surgeries?"
"diabetes diet plan"	"What foods should I eat to manage my diabetes?"
"urgent care wait times"	"How long is the wait at [Name] urgent care center?"

TREND 4

Social media

We can help with this!

A discovery engine and engagement hub

Social media isn't just for connecting — it's where people search, engage, and make decisions.

Don't just take it from us. Here's what **Alan Shoebridge**, Associate Vice President, National Communication at Providence has to say:

"It's difficult to understate the importance of social media in healthcare. With the decline in traditional news outlets, the influence of social media will only continue to grow next year. And if you're going to invest in something from a content creation and/or advertising perspective, I just don't see how you ignore Meta since Facebook and Instagram have nearly 5 billion worldwide users.

Also, Facebook users skew older, which clearly aligns with the target audience for healthcare. LinkedIn remains the best option for employee engagement. It reinforces important internal messaging with the bonus of reaching the broader public and building your brand."

Overall, maximizing social media has to be a top consideration in 2025.

1. **Optimize for social search**
   Patients are turning to TikTok and Instagram to find healthcare advice, hospital and provider reviews, and health tips. Make your content searchable by using strategic keywords, trending hashtags, and engaging visuals.
2. **Build a relatable brand**
   Patients connect with healthcare organizations that feel human. Share patient stories, behind-the-scenes glimpses, and relatable, fun content. Think Instagram Reels or TikTok videos highlighting day-in-the-life moments at your facility.
3. **Embrace zero-click posts**
   Content that focuses on engagement (likes, comments, shares) rather than driving traffic performs better but isn't easily measurable. Focus on building community and use sentiment tracking to gauge success.

> *Social media is especially important for English as a second language (ESL) audiences—they're more likely to connect through socials than traditional internet searches. And when it comes to social, video is where the real connection happens.*

Jen Brass Jenkins, MPC, PMP, Associate Director, Web & Digital, University of Utah Health

TREND 5

Video

We can help with this!

Still reigning supreme and more important than ever

Video continues to dominate both search and social. It's a must-have for 2025.

Why it matters:

Platforms like YouTube and TikTok prioritize video, and search engines reward it with higher rankings. Additionally, video enhances engagement and trust, making it ideal for explaining complex health topics or sharing patient testimonials.

How to tie your video strategy to your SEO strategy:

- Publish video content related to top keywords that drive conversion and revenue.
- Repurpose long-form video content into bite-sized clips on multiple channels.
- Optimize YouTube videos with targeted keywords and clear descriptions.
- Use video FAQs for common patient concerns, boosting both engagement and visibility.

> *Healthcare marketers need to make provider profile videos a priority. If all you can manage is sitting them down in front of a camera and having them talk about themselves, it's better than nothing.*
>
> *However, the better you're able to tell that provider's story, the more likely that video will have an impact on potential patients/customers. It's not about where they went to med school. They can see that on the profile page. It's about telling a compelling story that makes the viewer feel something about that provider.*

Tony Gnau, Founder & Chief Storytelling Officer, T60 Health

Bonus:

77% of patients look for visual content before booking an appointment with a provider. A video helps humanize the provider and makes them more relatable. Take a look at Dr. Memarzadeh's profile from UCLA Health, which offers patients 10 different videos they can watch to get to know her ahead of time.

See more examples of physician bios that win over patients >

TREND 6

Omnichannel marketing

We can help with this!

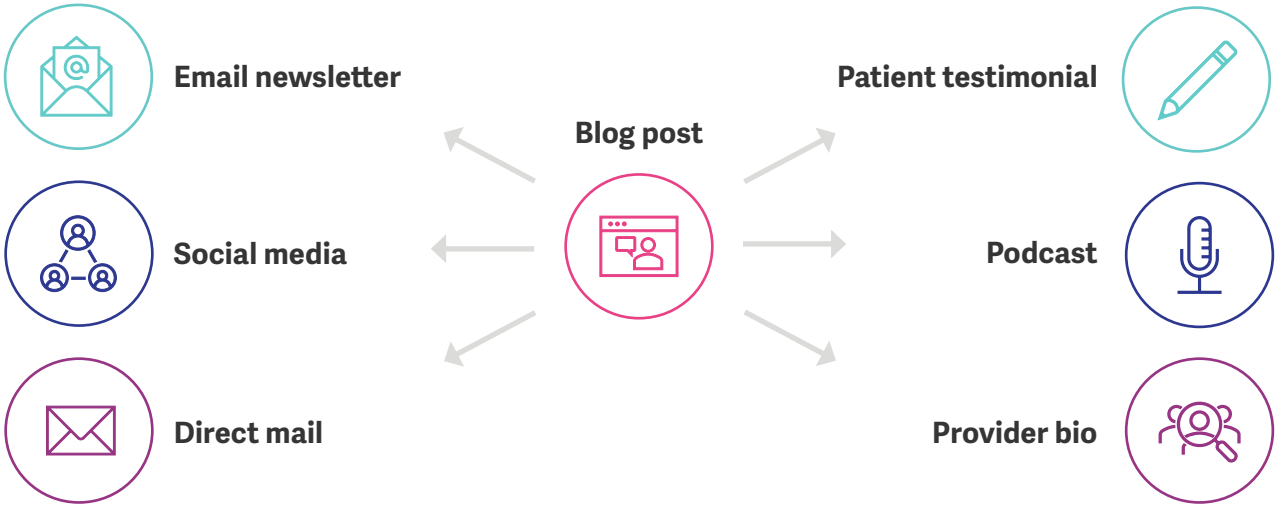
Hang out where your audience hangs out

Patients and caregivers don't stick to a single platform — they're everywhere. A true omnichannel strategy makes sure your brand meets them where they are with consistent, cohesive messaging.

Gone are the days of siloed marketing. Your website, social media, and email campaigns have to work together seamlessly to create a unified experience for both searchers and search engines.

> *Search engines are pulling from everywhere now — social media, videos, websites — you name it. That's why having a cohesive, 360-degree digital presence is so important. It helps search engines and AI understand who you are and present a consistent brand identity.*
>
> 
>
> **Ann Key**, Content Strategy Team Lead, Aha Media Group

1. **Put audience first**
   Always. Find out where your patients and caregivers are most active. Are caregivers turning to Facebook groups for support? Are younger patients searching for answers on TikTok or YouTube? Focus your efforts on those platforms to ensure your brand is where they're looking for help.
2. **Keep it consistent**
   Your voice, tone, messaging, and visuals should stay aligned across every platform. Whether it's a TikTok video, blog, or email, your audience should immediately recognize your brand. This consistency builds trust and reinforces your identity.



TREND 7

Access to care

Marketing and recruitment unite to tackle staffing shortages

Attracting and retaining top talent is not a new challenge. But as healthcare organizations face ongoing staffing shortages in 2025, marketing teams are getting called to the table to support recruitment efforts. By aligning strategies, marketing and HR can attract providers and build trust with patients by showcasing a thriving workplace.

How to adapt:

- **Highlight employee advocacy:** Share authentic staff stories demonstrating why your organization is a great workplace. These stories attract candidates and reassure patients of your commitment to quality care.
- **Leverage social media:** Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn are ideal for showcasing workplace culture, from behind-the-scenes looks to staff milestones.
- **Get cross-functional buy-in:** This is not a single-issue problem and won't be fixed by 1 (or even 2) departments. Push for a bigger table with room for HR, marketing, operations, and clinical leadership working toward a unified solution.

> *"Marketing will play a constant role in recruitment, retention, and access to care in 2025. It will overlap with patient sentiment as well, as patients are increasingly looking at how you treat employees as a sign of how you would treat them.*
>
>  **Dean Browell**, Chief Behavioral Officer, Feedback

The future is now

The healthcare marketing landscape is changing fast, but these trends don't have to feel overwhelming. By leveraging AI tools, optimizing for changing search habits and algorithms, and staying consistent across platforms, you can build a strategy that's impactful now and in the future.

Need assistance turning trends into action? We're here to help.

Let's talk!