

Creating a Web Presence That Keeps Customers Coming Back

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In healthcare, a Web site can serve as a resource for information and to promote your organization and brand. But many times, occupational health programs post a site for the sake of having one, without taking time to understand what employers and employees expect from a site.

Finding out what kinds of information your customers want, and then customizing your site to provide up-to-date, ongoing resource materials can help you better position your services and serve as a credible “go-to spot.”

Find Out What Your Customers Want

Remember that your Web site should be a dynamic communication tool. Users today are conditioned to use the Web as a where-to-turn resource, where they expect up-to-date news, information and tips related to occupational health. For you, it’s also another opportunity where you can promote your services and serve the community.

There’s nothing gained by having a Web site that posts dry, out-of-date content. Keep a pulse on what kind of information customers are looking for, and how and where they expect to find it. Don’t be too quick to list the areas where you feel you’re strongest—remember to put yourself in your customer’s shoes and ask what they want to ask: “What’s in it for me (WIIFM) to visit this Web site? ”

An effective site should:

- Recognize the needs of both audiences, employers and employees, and direct each audience to the content that will interest them most.
- Be easy to access, read and use with well-thought-out content, useful links, e-mail addresses or phone numbers.
- Provide helpful information on how to keep employees safe and how to find an expert that can help with an everyday concern, or in an emergency.
- Make your visitor feel confident about choosing your organization as a healthcare partner.

Boning Up on the Basics

Whether you already have a site that’s an offshoot of your hospital, or is a stand-alone site—or whether you’re considering creating a Web site, information is power.

KSB Corporate Health Services is the occupational health organization for Katherine Shaw Bethea Hospital in Dixon, Illinois. Its site was developed with customers' needs and interests in mind, says Dave Schreiner, hospital vice president.

"The key elements of our site are a user-friendly, clean appearance and consistently changing content," he says. "It's our goal to allow our customers to access our site and avoid the time-consuming process of surfing the Web for new occupational medicine and workers' compensation information. They can visit us and be taken to useful, informative sites."

The have-to's of an effective site:

- An introduction to the facility: who it is and what it does
- Basic information up front: contact information, emergency contact information, etc.
- Listing of services, grouped together by topic. Separate the sections for workers' compensation vs. occupational health vs. health, wellness and education. Include sections for hospital classes and services, physician referral for group health needs, drug screening, EAP, rehabilitation, etc.
- News. Post the latest information about how your organization is helping people be safe or prevent accidents. Include statistics about occupational health-related topics. Consider an e-newsletter in PDF form with tips readers can hold onto.
- Articles. Post in PDF form an article by your physician or therapy team on treatment protocols or legal counsel on new regulatory updates.
- A contact mechanism—a way for employers or employees to ask a question, request information, register for a program, get your newsletter or get a referral.

The next layer of your site:

- Where and how to send a patient for workers' compensation.
- Printable/downloadable forms for transmitting a patient.
- Safety committee education tips and tools.
- Regulations updates.
- Upcoming events, such as employer seminars, with an agenda and how to register.
- Tips for staying safe on the job, for improving one's comfort on the job.
- Community outreach information that shows how your organization is helping members of the community.
- Quarterly satisfaction surveys that poll employers and employees.

The enhanced, "special customer" layer to your site:

- Password-protected forms transmittal and reports

- Password-protected employer data of utilization and costs
- Enhanced articles and updates
- Special programs and communications

Keeping it Fresh

Once you've decided on your content and have it posted, don't be complacent. Regularly review what's on the site and look at it from a visitor's viewpoint. Is the news still newsworthy? Does the main page feature the areas that are most important to your customers today—and does it reflect the seasonality or timeliness of your services?

Schreiner says the KSB Corporate Health Services site is updated monthly. "We send a 'push' e-mail to our clients informing them of the update and allowing them an easy method of linking to the site."

Ensuring a Good Healthcare System Connection

If your organization is affiliated with a hospital, make sure your Web site is a logical extension of the parent site. You want your site to mirror the look and message of your health system partner. Communicate with the hospital's Web site team about upcoming content and discuss ways to link information about what's happening on the main site to yours.

Customizing Your Content

KSB Corporate Health Services understands the importance of tailoring a site to better communicate with companies and their employees. Speaking directly to the people who use their services, says Schreiner, "allows us to inform them of educational seminars sponsored by us, continuing education that our staff have received, regulatory issues affecting their business, and product line offerings. It serves as one more way for us to stay in touch with our clients and establish our presence as a leader/expert in our area in issues involving workers' compensation."

Here are some other important content points to note:

For employers:

- Feature an employer of the month or a success story from the customer side that shows how your organization made a difference.
- Make your site a portal to an online call center triage nurse. It can give employers daytime and after hours support to make decisions about healthcare access for either employee health and/or workers' compensation injury management.
- Use your site as the place to register for a program or to get information on a specific topic. Track interest in services and educational programs and use that data to more specifically sell to your customers while customizing the educational content.

- ❑ Have your site serve as home base for “train the trainer” programs and workshops that the customer can download whenever they want.
- ❑ Give employers a way to manage their costs through informative, current articles and data. That can include information on building a healthy workplace or creating a prevention and education-focused workplace.

For employees:

- ❑ Enable workers to register for company health and wellness programming via your hospital’s Web site. A well-programmed and designed site can track participation in programs and allow employees to earn points or credits.
- ❑ Allow workers to enroll in your health plan through your site (if applicable).
- ❑ Give employees an avenue to register for hospital programs.
- ❑ Use the site to refer employees live to a call center where they can get physician referrals within their health plan.

You’ll Know It’s Effective When . . .

It takes a considerable amount of time and planning to get your site where you want it to be. But it all pays off when you hear some feedback about something an employer has read on your site, or when you get an e-mail from an employee requesting more information about a program.

“Our most flattering comment came from a local company that asked our permission to allow their plant managers from around the country to be included on the e-mail reminder list,” Schreiner says. “This proved to us that they felt there is some value to the site’s content. It’s great to hear the client say, ‘Oh, yes, I saw that on your Web site.’”

Thanks to Dave Schreiner and KSB Corporate Health Services for sharing their Web site success story.



Carolyn Merriman, FRSA, President, Corporate Health Group,
www.corporatehealthgroup.com, 1-888-334-2500