

# Post Covid-19: Medical Tourism Strategy for Business Revival

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## DESCRIPTION

Medical tourism is on hold now due to COVID-19. It is impacted badly like other tourism products and possibly would take the longest time to revive again. We all know that this industry is not going to restart until the international flights' resume, worldwide travel ban uplifts, and visa reissues. But one thing is for sure this industry will regain its market share sooner or later worldwide.

However, the marketing plan and strategy for medical tourism are not going forward as earlier. There will be a question mark on traditional business strategy in the current scenario and post COVID-19, so you have to change drastically your marketing plan also in response to the shift in searches, competitors, and market share. (Figure 1)

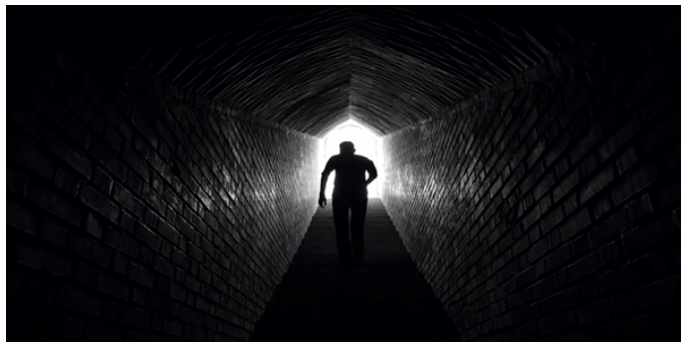


Figure 1: Medical tourism

## TELEMEDICINE / TELE CONSULTS

One thing which developed in the healthcare sector during the COVID-19 with lightning speed is telemedicine because of wide-spread affordability and accessibility to basic telemedicine tools like a smartphone, Internet, and online video chat apps like Skype or Face time. The telemedicine concept is not very FRESH or NEW for the Indian healthcare industry but it was not widely accepted by the general masses or by the government.

Telemedicine allows doctors and healthcare professionals to examine, diagnose, and provide treatments to international patients using telecommunications technology. Foreign medical camps, patients screening, second medical opinions can also be organized through these platforms in a very organized manner. It

can open a new source of additional income for medical tourism facilitators, companies, and healthcare providers. Good thing is that Almost all big corporate hospitals and clinics have already started acquiring or developing their own telemedicine tools to connect to the world. (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Telemedicine

## WEBINARS

CMEs evolved as a marketing tool since the last decades in the sense of doctors and hospitals meet in five-star hotels and share the latest knowledge with their peers. Now webinar replaces luxurious CMEs into an online knowledge-sharing platform. It establishes a professional relationship among the doctors to discuss case studies, share their experiences, and also in referring patients.

Earlier online CMEs or Webinars were never looked at as an option to live CME. Doctors and medical professionals prefer to join face to face knowledge sharing sessions but due to the Covid-19 pandemic, such programs may take place online rather than a live CME. This will help to follow the social distancing, cost-saving, and ease of organizing, on the other hand, the webinar covers the wider participants at the same time. No doubt a webinar is a highly effective marketing tool for the medical tourism industry if it's used in a proper and right way.

## DIGITAL MARKETING

A medical tourism company or hospital has to focus on a major component of Digital Marketing. These areas are most effective for patients' engagements and later on revenue generation.

- Social Media Marketing (SMM)
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

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- Search Engine Marketing (SEM)
- Content Marketing
- Email Marketing

To succeed in web space, selection of the right methods, result-oriented channels, and foolproof marketing strategies are the key components.

#### **FOCUS ON DISINFECTION AND PERSONALIZED CARE**

People all across the world are becoming more familiar with the NEW NORMAL. Their only concern is a safe and healthy environment where they can be treated carefully. So, focus on the clinical part of the hospital as well as the civic sense of continued social distancing. Apart from that, you have to promote as USP to treat patients in less crowded environments and properly disinfected state-of-art infrastructure . And giving single occupancy rooms in the hospitals for all international patients will also help to increase the volume of foreign patients.

#### **ON GROUND MARKETING STRATEGY**

Offline activities or B2B interactions are paused for a while therefore we are focusing on online activities but always remember virtual activities can't be a substitute for personal and physical contacts in the medical tourism industry. Patients always want to interact with real people to discuss their problems and disease. So try to maintain the previous relationship with your old international partners and find a new one using professional platforms like LinkedIn.

#### **FLY OUT DOCTOR PROGRAM**

We are expecting new trends in which doctors will fly from India

to an international destination for performing surgical procedures abroad. They can do less complicated surgeries overseas like knee replacements or spinal herniation surgeries and refer to India for complicated surgical procedures like kidney or liver transplants etc.

In 2021 we are expecting that international patients will fly to India for complex healthcare issues only. Patients will avoid unnecessary travel abroad especially elective surgeries, so traveling specialized doctors to other countries will give a boost to hospitals and also reduce unnecessary movement.

This program will help to strengthen the relationship between the countries and enhance the knowledge exchange among the doctors if pursued well. It will also help to increase the revenue of the hospitals.

#### **PROMOTION OF AYUSH PRODUCTS**

Post COVID-19, people will prefer to adopt preventive healthcare supplements especially immune booster which can fight the Novel Corona Virus. India has a rich history of alternative medicine. More than 8000 medicinal plants are found in the Himalayan region, near coastal areas, deserts, and rainforest eco-system. So add AYUSH products or lookalike products in your marketing strategy.

In the last, a carefully-planned marketing strategy will ease the burden of COVID-19 in the medical tourism industry. All the above marketing plans will help the industry to acquire its global market share and secure its position in the highly competitive market and give competitive advantage a company holds over rival counterparts.