



Getting Consumer Engagement Tools Used

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Introduction:

New research from the Center for Advancing Health (CFAH) sheds light on what health care leaders can learn from other industries around getting consumers to use tools for making decisions. After a presentation of CFAH's [Getting Tools Used](#) research findings, we engaged with an array of experts around key strategies for consumer engagement, how we learn and make progress in this arena, the role of incentives in patient activation, and integration of consumer tools into the clinical workflow to facilitate shared decision making and participatory medicine.

Background:

Consumer purchasing guides exist for a range of products and services, but their use in health care has yet to become the norm. Currently, tools for making decisions about health plans, hospitals, long-term care facilities, doctors, and medical treatments are not widely used.

IxInsight #1: Ix is not just about content. Information won't impact consumer behavior if consumers don't use it. Ix is about more than just information; it is also about communication, decision-making, and engagement.

Getting Tools Used: the CFAH Study

IxInsight #2: Consumer tools for health are underutilized compared to consumer decision tools for non-health goods and services. To learn more about why this might be the case, CFAH developed and reviewed case studies of four successful decision support tools to uncover common factors that might influence widespread adoption. The tools selected were:

- Consumer Reports: Car Buying Guide
- eBay.com
- Nutrition Facts Panel
- U.S. News & World Report: America's Best Colleges

IxInsight #3: Successful tools are consumer-centric. Tool content must be responsive to specific concerns and worries explicitly articulated by consumers. To create tools that are relevant to consumers, be sure to involve them in the tool development process. Consumers can be involved through focus groups or interviews. It is also possible to gain insight through consumer observation.

IxInsight #4: Information that comes from trusted sources is more highly valued. Researchers noted focus group participant behavior when reviewing consumer information products. Participants flipped to the back of an information booklet to see who had sponsored it. Trusted sources are recognizable names or brands that do not have a vested financial income in the outcomes of consumer decisions.

IxInsight #5: Successful tools provide information that is otherwise unavailable to consumers. Successful tools filled an existing need for information and decision support by providing information and compiling it in a way that facilitates comparison.

IxInsight #6: Successful decision support tools have ongoing mechanisms for supporting the maintenance and relevance of information over time. The information, itself as well as specific consumer interests, change over time. Tools require ongoing support and maintenance to stay relevant and useful.

IxInsight #7: Timing isn't everything, but it sure helps. To some extent, success depends on timing. The tools examined in the CFAH study benefited from growth that was supported by favorable market conditions.

Getting Tools Used: Panel Discussion

IxInsight #8: Use good design to emphasize important, comparable information. Comparison of products has to be incredibly clear. Comparison

information should be displayed consistently to allow consumers to easily compare the information in which they are most interested.

IxInsight #9: Consumer tools should include comparison points of interest to consumer caregivers where appropriate. Tools should be flexible enough to accommodate the concerns of both patients and caregivers.

IxInsight #10: With increasing competition for attention on the web (and elsewhere), making things fun is a way to stand out. Bringing a level of levity and humor to teachable moments can help gain and maintain consumer attention. For example, “top 10” and “bottom 10” lists appeal to consumers. Also, introducing a social aspect to tools often makes them more appealing to consumers.

IxInsight #11: Acknowledge differences in how people want to engage and provide appropriate opportunities. On the internet, people tend to be “exhibitionist” or “voyeuristic.” This may have different implications for health care and how people want to “participate.” Not all participation is active. Sometimes consumers simply prefer to “look.”

IxInsight #12: Clinician-enabled tools need to work within the context of existing systems. In order facilitate adoption, issues around workflow integration and implementation support are critical to address.

IxInsight #13: Tools should be flexible in relation to the “moment in care.” From a patient perspective, timing is important. Information should be provided during (or prior to) decision-making windows.

IxInsight #14: Tools should accommodate varying levels of patient readiness. Preparedness to make decisions varies from person to person and over time. For example, it may not be appropriate for treatment decisions to be made before a patient understands their diagnosis.

IxInsight #15: Incentives are a way to spur consumer engagement. Due to the fragmentation of the health care system and the nature of health care, consumer health decisions are more challenging than other types of decisions. Decisions:

- are not inherently fun for most people
- do not usually include the direct exchange of payment
- often do not have immediate, concrete consequences

Creating immediate, tangible incentives is one way to encourage use of health decision aids. Programs that financially reward both clinicians and consumers have been shown to boost both consumer and physician engagement.

IxInsight #16: Tapping consumer motivation is multifactorial, including financial, social and other factors. In addition to financial motivation, social motivation plays a role. Saving money is great, but connecting with other people with similar goals or concerns can also provide motivation.

IxInsight #17: Consumer engagement with chronic disease tool is both a challenge and an opportunity. Since such a significant portion of health care costs are driven by costs associated with chronic disease, engaging consumers in managing their ongoing health conditions is a critical area of development.

Additional Resources

[Center for Advancing Health: Getting Tools Used](#)

- A. [Foreword by Jessie Gruman](#)
- B. [Executive Summary](#)
- C. [Introduction: 21st Century Marketplace](#)
- D. [Case Study Research Framework](#)
- E. Case Studies
 - 1. *Consumer Reports: Car Buying Guide*
 - 2. [eBay.com](#)
 - 3. [FDA Nutrition Fact Panels](#)
 - 4. *U.S. News & World Report: America's Best Colleges*
- F. Case Study Commentaries
 - 1. [Margaret Holmes-Rovner](#)
 - 2. [David E. Kanouse](#)
 - 3. [Stephen Parente](#)
 - 4. [Dale Shaller](#)
 - 5. [Shoshanna Sofaer](#)
- G. [Lessons Learned: Key Variables of Success](#)
- H. [Advancing Healthcare Decision Aids](#)
- I. [Research Team Bios](#)
- J. [Acknowledgements](#)

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