FIGHTING FEAR WITH SCIENCE: UCLA HEALTH BUILDS COMPREHENSIVE DIGITAL SOLUTIONS TO PROTECT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DURING A PANDEMIC

To confont a pandemic that frightened patients away from in-person doctor visits, UCLA Health fundamentally restructured its overall digital strategy. From life-saving COVID-19 resources to uplifting social media campaigns, UCLA Health implemented a multifaceted digital approach, outperforming local market competitors and measurably improving health outcomes.

PROBLEM

COVID-19 changed everything. Although academic medical centers were already moving online and adopting digital-first strategies, the pandemic triggered millions of Americans to cease hospital visits, and UCLA Health's viability as an organization was at stake. The fears that inhibited patients from entering UCLA Health's front doors threatened our ability to protect the community we serve.

INSIGHT

What if UCLA Health could comprehensively scale up and respond to the stakes of the moment? What if there were a way to bring online the power and scope of our network -- 4 hospitals and more than 200 clinics across Southern California -- and deliver unparalleled experiences for people in need? What if we could turn digital products and tools we were merely piloting into full-blown digital experiences and ensure our target audiences felt welcomed, seen and understood across all digital touchpoints?

SOLUTION

Through an organizational commitment to an integrated 360 digital strategy, UCLA Health brought its 4 hospitals and 200+ clinics fully online. Although we couldn't simply recreate the offline, in-person experience that consistently drives patients to recommend us to their family and friends, by engineering customer-centric solutions built entirely around patient needs and emotions, UCLA Health architected an integrated digital framework that enabled us to welcome, protect and heal.

We achieved this by integrating ten key initiatives which enabled us to deliver better health outcomes. By working holistically and collaboratively across our organization, we created a plan to:

## 1. BUILD A WARM AND WELCOMING DIGITAL FRONT DOOR

In 2020, we reimagined and rebuilt our website to create a warm, reassuring welcome for all visitors to our site. With an explicit focus on patient-centric design, we empowered our patients to quickly connect with medical experts, book appointments, ask questions and resolve concerns.

2. LAUNCH A CENTRALIZED COVID-19 INFO AND ACTION HUB

By aggregating, prioritizing and delivering urgent and helpful health messages amidst an era marked by the politicization of basic science, UCLA Health made it easy for patients to get info and take action that could help them and their loved ones achieve better health outcomes. By featuring content from UCLA Health infectious disease specialists, endorsements from Los Angeles Lakers and Dodgers players reinforcing our #WearAMask messaging and hosting Dr. Anthony Fauci-led roundtables that inspired clarity around facts and data, UCLA Health acted as a leading resource to guide Southern Californians and patients across the globe.

3. EMBRACE VIDEO VISITS TO ENABLE PATIENTS TO GET CARE FROM THE COMFORT OF THEIR COUCH

In 2019, UCLA Health facilitated 400 video visits. In 2020, the number grew to over 400,000. By leaning into and augmenting video visit capabilities, our IT and Operations teams implemented a wide-scale solution that enabled us to bring our hospitals and clinics "online" and made our experts accessible to people in need. By increasing our digital capacity by 1000%, patients were seen, problems got flagged and UCLA Health maintained its position as a nimble and innovative leader in its category.
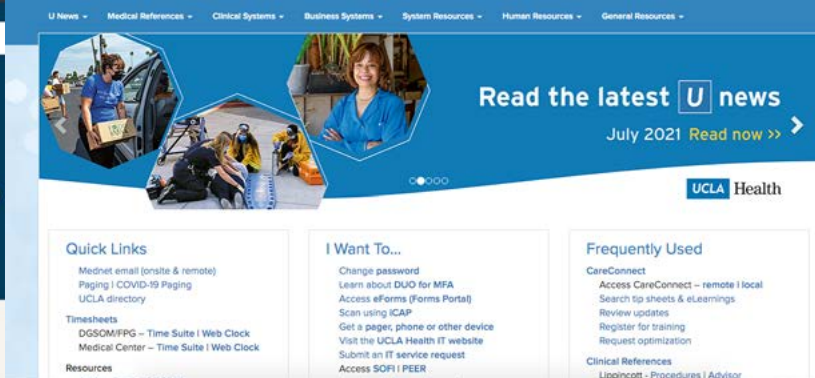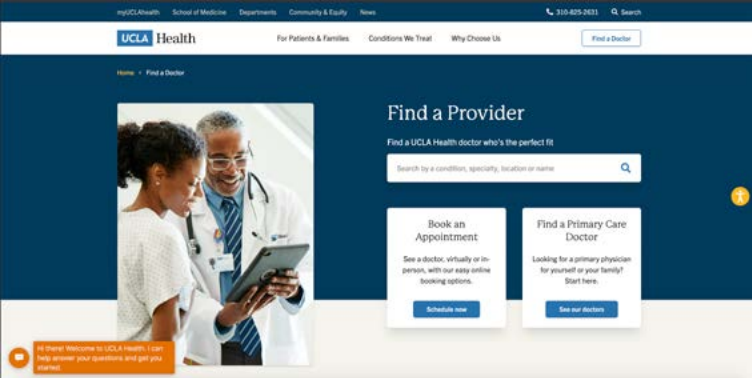
4. ALLEVIATE CALL CENTER STRAIN BY BUILDING A CATEGORY-LEADING CHATBOT

As COVID-19 spread across the nation and sirens clamored across Southern California streets, UCLA Health turned a digital chatbot pilot into a powerful, CX-friendly tool that delivered real-time guidance and friendly/colloquial assistance to alarmed patients in need. Simply stated: Our call center was slammed. Our teams were spread thin. To build a sustainable solution that would immediately improve health outcomes, UCLA Health's marketing and communication experts turned complex Command Center directives into helpful, patient-facing information, often times in less than an hour. By positioning our chatbot to offer precise guidance on important tasks such as finding a location, clarifying COVID-19 facts/fictions or enabling patients to book a video visit with a simple Smartphone thumb click, UCLA Health ensured that the doctor's office was never out of reach and always just one click away.

5. MAKE IT EASY TO PICK A DOCTOR WHO CAN IMMEDIATELY HELP

By optimizing the customer experience on the UCLA Health "Find a Doctor" page, UCLA Health expedited the time it takes to link concerned patients with physicians. Through algorithms, tagging and search-term prioritization, UCLA Health ensured patients felt like they could easily take command of their own care and quickly get the guidance they sought. Separately, by prioritizing our health equity, diversity and inclusion messaging, as well as making it easy for LGBTQ+ patients to identify a doctor specifically trained to help them feel seen, we created a system that optimized the care we deliver.

6. REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF TIME PATIENTS HAVE TO WAIT TO BE SEEN

By creating a "Save My Spot" feature that empowered patients to schedule a doctor's visit in advance, reduce time waiting in line and minimize potential exposure to COVID-19, UCLA Health encouraged patients to visit its website and book ahead with the "Save My Spot" feature.

7. TAKE ACCOUNTABILITY IN A WAY THAT MAKES PATIENTS FEEL UNDERSTOOD

Sometimes, despite best efforts, patients aren't always satisfied with their care. To prevent one negative experience from turning a happy patient into a brand detractor, UCLA Health led a study to audit best practices in health care customer service. By clarifying examples of how to humanely and caringly respond to negative feedback online, UCLA Health defined a communications structure to guide how we apologize to negative online reviews and increase positive reviews.

## 8. MEASURE THE SITE-SPECIFIC EFFICACY OF OUR AMBULATORY BRAND EXPERIENCES

In partnership with our office of patient experience, UCLA Health marketing developed a post-visit text message survey to ask thousands of patients about their experiences in one of our ambulatory clinics. By gathering data and comparing it with data captured across each clinical site, we created a macro, bird's eye view of the efficacy of our system -- i.e. which clinics were delivering our most joyous patient outcomes and which clinics were creating customer service experiences that were hurting our overall brand reputation.

9. ATTRACT THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST BY PIVOTING MEDICAL SCHOOL RECRUITMENT TO AN ENTIRELY DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

Data revealed that the on-site campus visit was a key driver in a medical student's purchase decision. With the inability to invite prospective students to campus, UCLA Health enlisted an Emmy-winning video partner and a best-in-class design firm to bring the recruiting process online. By creating over 20 original videos, enabling a live-chat feature, and building messaging that communicated why a prospective student should choose the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA over any category competitors, UCLA Health inspired 30% of all site visitors to live chat with an admissions counselor or current student within the first month of the campaign. Through articulating its "why" and making it easy for students to self-select why UCLA was the right choice for them, UCLA Health successfully grew the total number of 2021 admission submissions by 38%, from 8,000 to 11,000.

10. IMPLEMENT A 360-DEGREE PAID, OWNED AND EARNED DIGITAL CONTENT STRATEGY TO MEET PEOPLE WHEREVER THEY ARE

As helpful as it is to create a warm and welcoming digital front door, a large percentage of patients seek us out and engage with us via other channels. On Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Twitter and LinkedIn, the content we post and the stories we tell directly impacts our ability to be found, chosen and recommended. By creating zip-code specific and condition-specific content, we built infographics, visuals, blog posts, videos and other forms of engaging multimedia content to ensure that no matter where a customer found us, they would always feel welcome and guided. In a time of great confusion and fear, the deliberate efforts we took to build a digital ecosystem that helped patients feel safe elevated us from the competition and facilitated patient experiences worth recommending to others.
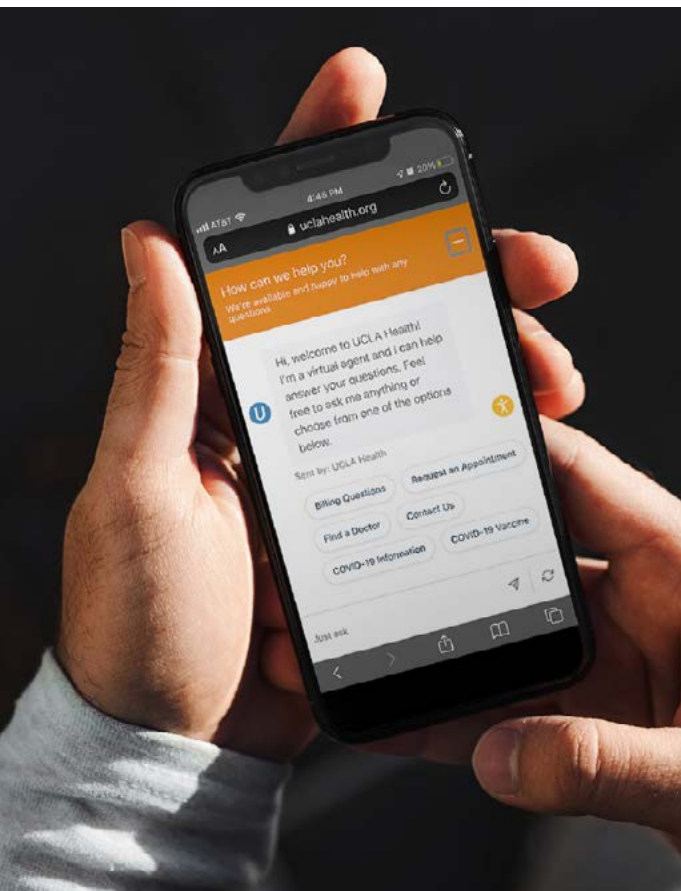
METRICS

UCLA HEALTH COVID COMMUNICATIONS

27,739,815 emails sent

36.26% open rate

1,353,859 total clickthroughs

HEALTH EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WEBSITE

January 2021 - July 2021

8,083 visits

9,433 page views

6,706 unique visitors

875 returning visitors

PRIDE MONTH SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Impressions - **288,698**

Views - **54,816**

Public Views - **51,633**

2020 OPEN ENROLLMENT ANIMATION

January 2020 - December 2020

5,621 site visits

6,732 page views

5,034 unique visitors

January 2021 - July 2021

3,029 site visits

3,403 page views

2,841 unique visitors

316 returning visitors

YELP AD PERFORMANCE

532,204 impressions

5,278 clicks

2,504 user actions

52% actions ad-driven

1,914 clinic visits

CONNECTED TV METRICS

1,086,068 impressions

183,700 reaches

3,677 web visits

CHATBOT

- **400,000+** video visits (which grew from a mere 400 in 2019)

- over **1 million** messages exchanged

- Chatbot drove **30%** of new patient forms across enterprise

- Chatbot answered **tens of thousands** of questions about COVID-19 testing and vaccines

FIND A DOCTOR PAGE

3,243,804 visits

6,058,675 page views

2,182,273 unique visitors

105,450 returning visitors

NURSING REPORT

- Digital first annual report to support UCLA Health MAGNET Designation told a powerful front-line worker perspective on COVID-19

- The report features the words, ideas and images from over 50 healthcare staff and professionals, 4 writers, 1 photographer, 1 illustrator, 4 designers and 4 project managers

MEDNET

- Over **9 million** internal site visits from January - May 2021

DAVID GEFFEN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE: UCLAHEALTHBOUND.ORG

- Grew total number of 2021 admission submissions by **38%**, from 8,000 to 11,000