

# **Integrated Marketing Communications Plan for Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar**

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<p>In today's competitive environment, medical practices cannot do without advertising their services in order to attract and retain patients. Marketing in health care has become as essential as within any other industry. Therefore, this product-oriented thesis aims at creating an integrated marketing communications plan for the case company, Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar. The company's objective is to increase sales generated by its diagnostic methods and treatment options for arthrosis. Although the company has implemented some marketing activities within recent years, it is still missing a clear strategy behind its communication.</p> <p>The thesis is subdivided into three chapters, followed by the conclusion. The first chapter is an introductory part that provides background knowledge for the thesis. The thesis objective, process and the case company are presented, among other things.</p> <p>In the second chapter, the theoretical framework, the topics of health care marketing, marketing communications and integrated marketing communications are covered. A special focus lies on the marketing communications mix and PR Smith's steps in establishing an integrated marketing communications plan.</p> <p>Building on the theoretical framework, the third chapter applies each of the steps in developing an integrated marketing communications plan for the case company. The company's internal and external environments are examined, objectives and a strategy are defined, followed by the selection of the most suitable communications tools. The last two steps explain the implementation and control of the plan.</p> <p>"How-to" guidelines summarizing the steps and chosen communications tools conclude the thesis. With the help of the guidelines, the case company can achieve its objective, provided that all stakeholders fulfil their tasks.</p> <p>The thesis illustrates that the most suitable communications tools for the case company are advertising, direct marketing, events, word-of-mouth and online marketing. Especially online marketing is more important than ever in health care because consumers prefer to look for doctors online. The Internet is an easy way to get information and, thanks to review portals, consumers can easily compare their options.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Integrated Marketing Communications Plan, Marketing Communications, Marketing Communications Mix, Health Care Marketing	

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# 1 Introduction

In recent years the demands and expectations of patients have increased (Berlet, Hyer, Philbin, Weil & Fisher 2014, 432). The reason behind this development is the circumstance that we are living in a world of growing competition (Oancea 2015, 22). The number of practicing physicians has grown constantly over time (Gerst 2016, 704). Therefore, patients can easily compare their options by collecting relevant facts from different sources (Oancea 2015, 22).

Consequently, the importance of health care marketing can no longer be ignored (Berlet et al. 2014, 432). It is essential for doctors to enhance the communications with its current and potential patients across all channels, in order to build a long-term relationship with them (Elste, Lutz & Diepgen 2004, 5). A fundamental base for sending one consistent message through all chosen channels is a thoroughly constructed integrated marketing communications plan (Keller 2016, 286).

However, physicians are facing challenges in developing a marketing communications concept for their practices. This circumstance has been identified during a 2005 exploratory study carried out in America. The study revealed missing know-how of customer communications in the health care sector. (Kennett, Henson, Crow & Hartman 2005, 422.) These results can be traced to the fact that marketing in health care has not been considered ethical by the American Medical Association (AMA) until 1975. The AMA prohibited every type of healthcare advertising in its code of ethics of 1847. Therefore, doctors did not feel the need to train themselves on marketing communications. (Berkowitz 2017, 5.)

Ethical aspects and legal provisions have also been the reason why health care marketing in Germany only gained importance in recent years. Even now, surprisingly many physicians are still sharing the opinion that marketing in health care is illegal. (Kock 2013, 26.)

The case company an orthopaedic health centre situated in Germany has already recognized the importance of marketing communications for its three practice sites. Nevertheless, the company is still missing a clear strategy behind its marketing. Therefore, the company approached the author and asked for support.

## 1.1 Project Objective

The objective of this product-oriented thesis is to create an integrated marketing communications (IMC) plan for Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar. The final IMC plan will be handed over to the case company in form of a guideline. The commissioning company already started to establish some marketing measures in recent years. However, due to a

lack of resources, a more detailed analysis of the company's internal and external situation has not been possible yet. Therefore, the author will create an integrated marketing communications plan for the case company. With the implementation of this plan the case company aims at increasing its sales revenue by attracting and retaining patients.

## **1.2 Project Tasks**

The project objective has been divided into the following project tasks.

### **PT 1. Designing the theoretical framework**

Studying reliable journal articles, books and other sources about health care marketing, marketing communication tools and integrated marketing communication (IMC) in order to set up the theoretical framework.

### **PT 2. Applying the theory**

Using the theoretical framework of the thesis as a guideline to create the integrated marketing communications plan for the case company. This task is divided into several sub-tasks, which are listed below.

#### **PT 2.1 Conducting a Situational Analysis**

Performing a situational analysis in order to assess the company's internal and external situation.

#### **PT 2.2 Setting up the Company's Objectives and Strategy**

Determining the objectives of the commissioning company and defining a strategy on how to reach these objectives.

#### **PT 2.3 Deciding which communication tools to use**

Selecting the most suitable marketing communications tools for the commissioning company.

#### **PT 2.4 Implementation and Control**

Creating an implementation schedule of the chosen communications tools and determining key performance indicators (KPI's).

### **PT 3. Establishing a guideline**

Setting up a guideline for the commissioning company which contains a compact version of the integrated marketing communications plan and first design ideas.

## **PT 4. Evaluating the project process and project outcomes**

Reflecting the thesis process, the cooperation with the commissioning company and the project outcome.

### **1.3 Benefits for Stakeholders**

The bachelor thesis entails several benefits for the case company, its customers the patients and the author.

Through the creation of an integrated marketing communications plan (IMC), the case company receives a detailed guideline from the author. This guideline includes all the necessary information required to implement the most suitable communication tools. Currently, the company would need to hire additional staff to create an IMC plan due to a scarcity of resources. Therefore, the case company is able to save costs. With the help of the IMC plan, the case company will be able to improve its current marketing communications. As a result, the awareness of the case company and its services will grow, which will help to retain existing and attract new patients. Consequently, a broader patient base will bring along an increase in sales.

The customers, the patients will also benefit from the thesis. They will receive more easily tailored information about Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar and its services. This is extremely important with regard to the educational aspect. Only if patients receive information about clinical pictures and possible preventive measures it is more likely that they will go to regular medical check-ups. Moreover, the improved marketing activities will help patients to recognize additional benefits offered by the case company in comparison to other orthopaedic health centres.

The author will benefit from the thesis due to an increase in knowledge on the topics health care marketing and integrated marketing communications. Furthermore, the author will learn to communicate effectively with representatives from a company. Meeting the interests of all stakeholders is often more difficult and time-consuming than expected. Therefore, the thesis is a good exercise to learn how to understand and satisfy the needs of all parties involved. Lastly, the thesis is a great opportunity for the author to decide whether working in the health care industry might be worth considering later on.

### **1.4 Key Concepts**

**Health care marketing** is “a fine-tuned art and science that creates, communicates, and delivers offerings that have value for healthcare customers” (Celluci, Wiggins & Tracy 2015, 19).

According to Pickton and Broderick (2005, 4) **marketing communications** “describes all the promotional elements of the marketing mix which involve the communications between an organization and its target audience on all matters that affect marketing performance”.

The **marketing communications mix** comprises all the instruments utilized by a company to reach out to its target audience (Egan 2007, 17).

**Integrated marketing communications** describes the efforts made by a business to align all the communication channels used in order to spread a uniform message (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, Wong 1999, 754).

### **1.5 Demarcation**

The thesis will cover the topics health care marketing, marketing communications with a focus on the marketing communications mix and integrated marketing communications. Therefore, the thesis will only concentrate on one of the elements of the marketing mix, namely the promotion of the company’s offered services. The other three P’s of the marketing mix which are product, price and place will not play any specific role during the thesis.

Moreover, the integrated marketing communications plan will solely focus on promoting some of the case company’s services due to the fact that the company offers an extremely wide range of services which would all require different promotional concepts.

Furthermore, the thesis will not treat the topic digital marketing in detail. Online marketing will be discussed as one of the communication tools. However, SEO, SEA, and content marketing will not be covered because of the limited scope of the thesis.

### **1.6 International Aspect**

The author is a student at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Finland and is doing an integrated marketing communications plan for a German case company, an orthopaedic health centre which is located in south-western Germany.

### **1.7 Case Company Introduction**

The case company is an orthopaedic health centre situated in the region “Rhein-Neckar” in south-western Germany. Today, the company is located at three sites: Sinsheim, Walldorf and Hockenheim. However, the owners are currently engaged in negotiations on opening a fourth orthopaedic practice in Leimen, in autumn 2017.

It all began in the year 2000 when the first orthopaedic practice was opened in Sinsheim by two orthopaedists Dr. Reitzner and Dr. Stock. Back then the team consisted of 2 doctors and 6 medical assistants. Over the years the orthopaedic practice proved to be extremely successful. Therefore, the owners chose to expand. In 2010 and 2013 they opened two additional orthopaedic practices located in Walldorf and Hockenheim. Their objective was to manage to provide their services to as many peoples as possible living in the district of Rhein-Neckar Kreis. (Orthopädie Sinsheim 2016.)

The map below depicts the district Rhein-Neckar Kreis. The yellow and orange dots mark the current practice sites and the planned site in Leimen. The figure shows the successful expansion of the Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar over the past 16 years.

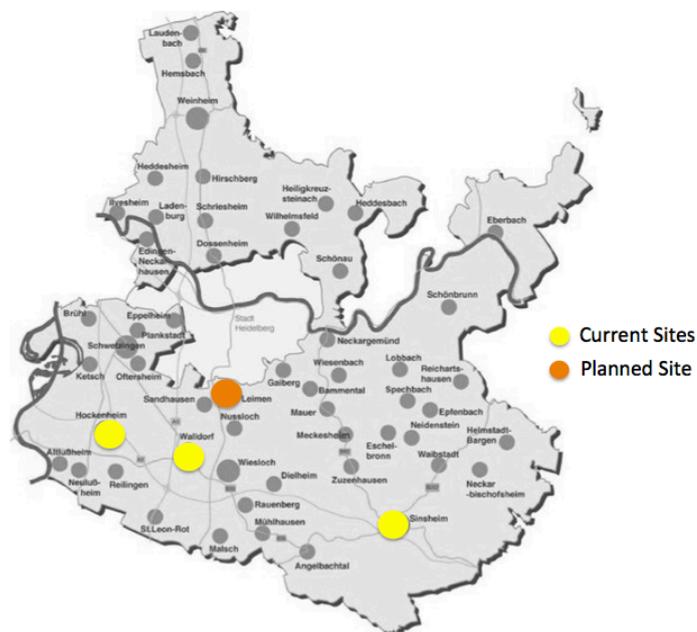


Image 1. Overview of the current and planned practice sites in the district of Rhein-Neckar Kreis, Germany (Stock 2016)

With its current size of 54 medical assistants and 11 orthopaedics the health centre provides its services to a large number of patients. In 2015 the company registered 24.000 patients of all age groups.

Looking at the financials the practice's turnover increased by 117% since its expansion in 2010. However, simultaneously the costs increased. Therefore, the company is currently looking for a way to increase its total turnover in order to balance out the rising costs.

Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar offers a wide range of services to its patients ranging from preventive measures to the treatment of orthopaedic disorders.

The focus of the company's services lies on:

1. Non-surgical treatment methods of diseases like arthrosis
2. Preventive treatment of all diseases of the musculoskeletal system
3. Orthopaedic therapy of acute and chronic pain
4. Treatment of injuries of the musculoskeletal system
5. Slowing or halting the progression of age-related diseases

The major aim of the practice owners is to constantly improve their service quality by permanently educating themselves on the medical and technical advancements in their field. To give an example the company is one of the first health centres in the region with an open MRI. Open MRIs are extremely important for obese or claustrophobic patients. (Orthopädie Sinsheim 2016.)

## **2 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework is subdivided into two parts. The first part is intended to provide background knowledge and a better understanding of marketing in the health care industry. It gives an overview of its history and the main legal provisions which, are existing nowadays. Since the case company operates in the German healthcare system the legal provisions will focus primarily on Germany.

The second part, which is the more extensive part of the theoretical framework, treats the topic marketing communications. It defines marketing communications, presents the marketing communications mix and points out which communication tools are considered to be the most essential ones within the health care industry. Lastly, the importance of an integrated marketing communication strategy and the steps of the creation of an integrated marketing communications plan (IMC) will be highlighted.

### **2.1 Health Care Marketing**

According to Thomas (2008, 1) "health care marketing involves any activities that relate to the development, packaging, pricing and distribution of healthcare products and to any mechanism used for promoting these products".

#### **Historical Background**

In comparison to other industries marketing in health care is relatively new (Berlet et al. 2014, 43). The three main reasons for this circumstance are listed below.

Firstly, the fact that the attitude of patients has changed over the years. While patients did not really consider comparing their options when they consulted a physician in the past, they are now aware of the wide choice which they have. This development has been encouraged by the flood of information on the internet. (Berlet et al. 2014, 432.) Thanks to review portals like Jameda and Sanego patients can check with a single click which physician is the most recommended in the surrounding area (Rothenfluh, Germeni & Schulz 2016, 2). Therefore, physicians nowadays need to start marketing the services offered at their medical practices, in order to set themselves apart from its competitors.

Secondly, physicians faced ethical conflicts since marketing was not regarded as being appropriate in this professional field for many years. Most people shared the opinion that healthcare is a social good and not a mean to earn money (Holden & Cox 2013, 17).

Thirdly, marketing in health care was even prohibited for a long time. In 1847 the American Medical Association (AMA) published the code of medical ethics, which banned any marketing activity in the field of health care (American Medical Association 1847, 98.) The corresponding extract is cited below.

“It is derogatory to the dignity of the profession, to resort to public advertisements or private cards or handbills, inviting the attention of individuals affected with particular diseases -publicly offering advice and medicine to the poor gratis, or promising radical cures or to publish cases and operations in the daily prints or suffer such publications to be made; to invite, laymen to be present at operations, to boast of cures and remedies, to adduce certificates of skill and success, or to perform any other similar acts. These are the ordinary practices of empirics, and are highly reprehensible in a regular physician” (American Medical Association 1847, 98)

Therefore, health care marketing was prohibited until the 1970s (Celluci, Wiggins & Tracy 2015, 19).

Similar provisions existed in Germany anchored in the “Heilmittelwerbegesetz” (HWG) the German pharmaceutical-advertising law. However, due to the growing recognition, that marketing in health care is just as important as in other industries, these limitations have been mostly abolished in recent years. Nevertheless, it is important that physicians catch up on the existing restrictions when thinking about establishing a marketing communication strategy for their practice. (Kock 2013, 26.)

The applicable regulations, which are relevant for physicians in Germany, are listed in three provisions. The “Heilmittelwerbegesetz” (Pharmaceutical-Advertising Law), the “Musterberufsordnung” (Medical Association’s Professional Code of Conduct) and the “Gesetz über den unlauteren Wettbewerb” (Law of Unfair Competition). Summarized, the key message of all documents is that marketing within health care has to be serious. It must not be misleading or at the expense of patients. Furthermore, it is prohibited to distribute misinformation. (Thill 2013, 15.) To give an example, advertising to patients that a certain treatment will definitely lead to healing would be a case of spreading misleading information.

Today, there is a broad acceptance of marketing in the health care industry by the legislators (Kock 2013, 26). However, although the recognition has grown over the past years, most physicians still do not fully understand the importance of marketing for its practice. A 2015 study by the “Gesellschaft für Gesundheitsmarktanalyse” the German Society for Health Market Analysis has shown that only 45.9% of questioned physicians stated that

they see a need to market its services to the public. Furthermore, the majority of physicians is still not willing to spend an appropriate amount of money for marketing activities. Only 14.6% of the participating physicians who had stated that they see a need for marketing had actually defined a marketing budget for its practice. (Gesellschaft für Gesundheitsmarktanalyse 2015, 34.)

One thing is clear: Health care marketing is a topic which physicians cannot escape. Sooner or later they have to accept the fact that a thorough developed marketing communications strategy is the only mean to stay successful in today's competitive environment. They have to acquire knowledge of marketing communications.

## 2.2 Marketing Communications

Marketing communications is "a management process through which an organization enters into a dialogue with its various audiences" (Fill 2002, 12).

### 2.2.1 Marketing Communications Mix

Nowadays, companies are using a wide range of channels in order to communicate with its target audience. Some of these channels have been used for many years. However, within recent years' new communication tools have evolved. (Keller 2016, 286.) The marketing communications mix, also called promotion mix, provides an overview of the elements used in marketing communications (Shimp & Andrews 2013, 8).

The figure below depicts the ten communication elements which Wong, Radel and Ramsaran-Fowdar (2011, 112) consider being the most important ones.

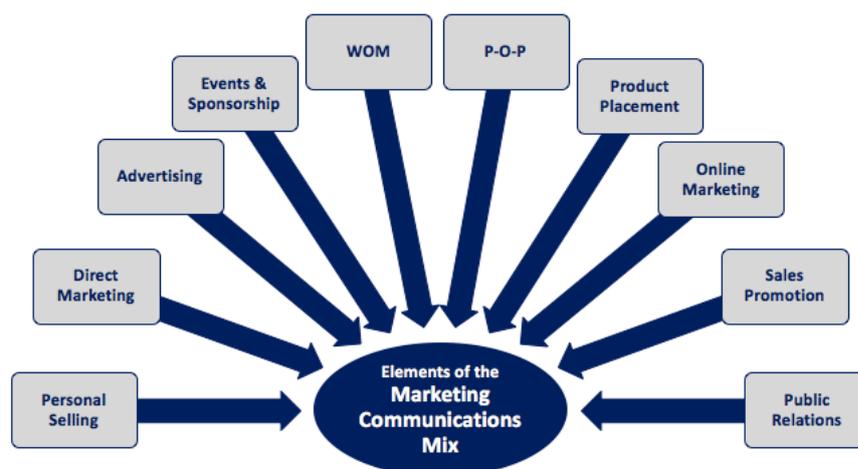


Figure 1. Elements of the Marketing Communications Mix (adapted from Wong, Radel & Ramsaran-Fowdar 2011)

In the following paragraphs, the elements of the marketing communications mix will be introduced.

### **Personal Selling**

Personal selling implies getting in direct contact with the target audience. Either with one specific person or with many people at the same time. The advantages are that the sales person receives direct feedback from the consumer, on the product or service presented. In addition, a clearer picture of the consumer's needs and expectations can be generated. The disadvantages of personal selling are that it is expensive and time-consuming to get in personal contact with every consumer. Therefore, it is less efficient than other communication channels, since fewer people can be reached in a certain amount of time. Moreover, whether the personal contact leads to the acquisition of customers often depends on the individual skills of the sales person and how he or she listens to the wishes of the customer. (Wong et al. 2011, 113.)

### **Direct Marketing**

Direct marketing is often compared to personal selling since its objective is to provide tailored information about products or services to individual consumers, with the aim of achieving a purchase decision of the consumer. The prerequisite for using direct marketing successfully is to gather personal information about consumer preferences and habits, in order to provide them with relevant content and facts. (Kitchen & De Pelsmacker 2004.)

In comparison to personal selling, it is more cost-efficient since sales staff is not required. Most used direct marketing media is direct mail, print, and telemarketing. The downside of direct marketing is the fact that it can be challenging to have a perfectly maintained database. Furthermore, consumers are increasingly annoyed by the flood of catalogs and newsletters they are receiving every day. (Wong et al. 2011, 114.)

### **Advertising**

Mass media is used in order to reach many consumers at the same time with a specific message instead of targeting one single consumer. Therefore, advertising is a non-personal communications channel. (Egan 2015, 181.) There exist several forms of advertising media. Television, radio, newspapers, magazines and out-of-home are considered to be the most important ones (Blakeman 2015). They are listed in the figure below.



Figure 2. Forms of Advertising Media (Blakeman 2015)

**Television** advertising is the most powerful and at the same time also the most expensive media since it reaches an extremely high number of consumers. Therefore, it is most suitable for companies which are advertising products or services that are not limited to a specific target group. In most cases, television advertising is used as a mean to present product launches or relaunches, as it is the easiest way to promote products among many consumers. The downside of this type of advertising is that television viewers tend to switch channels during commercial breaks since they are bored and fed up by the high number of advertisements. Therefore, they might miss all the advertisements. (Mamoon 2014, 144.)

**Radio** is an attractive media for companies, because of the fact that most people have the habit of listening to the radio several times a day usually at different locations. For example, at home, at work, at the supermarket or in the car. They are often close to the point of sale while listening to a radio spot. Therefore, they are more likely to directly buy an advertised product. Another benefit of radio advertising is the diversity of radio stations. The target audience can be addressed more specifically than with television. The major downside of radio advertising is the circumstance that people are not able to see the advertised product. Only by listening, they have to get an idea about the product or service and its features. (Mamoon 2014, 145.)

In contrast to most other media, **newspaper** advertising is more cost-effective, but nevertheless it has a very high reach. Furthermore, companies benefit from the fact that their ads can normally still be placed on short notice. The downside of newspaper advertising is the fact that the number of subscribers of most print newspapers has decreased within

recent years. Currently, there are no reasons to believe that this trend will experience a turning point. In addition, companies often criticize the circumstance that their ads get lost in a large number of articles published. (Blakeman 2015, 143.)

By using **magazine** advertising companies can target consumer groups quite easily. This possibility results from the extremely high variety of magazines (Kim, Lee, Jo, Jung & Kang 2015, 180). Moreover, editors are nowadays more and more offering to place the advertisements of clients next to suitable content, in order to make the product or service more relevant for the readers (Rosengren & Dahlén 2013, 61). Another benefit of magazine advertising is the circumstance that consumers are in the habit of collecting or keeping magazines, at least for a few weeks or months. As a result, they normally come across an advert more than once. (Collins, Dixon, Eadie, Regimenti, Shiffman, Soukhareva, Vogel & Ware 2010, 11.) The disadvantage of using magazines is that this form of advertising is very costly in comparison to other print media. In addition, the number of competitor advertisements in an issue is normally quite high. (Blakeman 2015, 154.)

**Out-Of-Home** (OOH) advertising comprises every type of advertisement, which people encounter on the streets (Blakeman 2015, 195). Over the past years, OOH has grown constantly (Benady 2015, 8). The advantage of OOH is that it is a reasonably priced advertising media with a large surface for a company's message. Therefore, the chances that consumers will come across the advertisement of a company are extremely high. They will spot it on their way to work, while waiting for the bus or while walking through the streets. The disadvantage of OOH is that the amount of words that can be used is extremely limited. If the text is too long there is the risk that people might not be able to understand the message in a short amount of time. (Moomoon 2014, 148.)

### **Events and Sponsorship**

Events are an effective communication tool for companies. Either they are organized by the company itself or they are planned by someone from outside. Events are a great opportunity to present products or services to consumers. Furthermore, they can help to call attention to the company and contribute to enhancing its image. Lastly, events enable a personal contact and exchange between a company's representatives and consumers. (Moise 2015.)

The motivation behind sponsorship is based on the expectations that the participants will transmit the emotions they have regarding the event, towards the company (Prendergast, Paliwal & Mazodier 2016). The disadvantages of events and sponsorship are that both require extensive planning and high expenditure (Wong et al. 2011, 115).

## **Word-of-Mouth**

Word-Of-Mouth (WOM) marketing means that consumers who have tested a certain product or service are sharing their experience and opinion with others. Nowadays, the internet is mostly used to spread such information and to exchange views with other people. Therefore, the term eWOM, which stands for electronic word of mouth has evolved in recent years. (Rosario, Sotgiu, de Valck & Bijmolt 2016, 297.)

One of the advantages of WOM is that consumers are more likely to trust other consumers when it comes to product or service reviews and recommendations. The best that can happen for a company is that consumers are creating a real hype around the companies' offerings. Although this would be the ideal outcome, WOM can also have the contrary effect. The issue with word of mouth marketing is that companies are not able to influence the content that people are spreading, either face-to-face or online. As soon as a consumer has shared his or her opinion about a company or a product others will keep the person's statement in mind. They are unconsciously influenced by it when making a purchase decision. (Wong et al. 2011, 116.)

## **Point-of-Purchase**

As indicated by the name point-of-purchase (P-O-P) communication comprises any kind of promotion material positioned at the point of purchase, ranging from flyers, brochures, posters and displays to the whole interior design of a location (Bianca & Simona 2008, 807).

The aim is to inform consumers and to drag their attention towards the offered products or services. One of the benefits compared to other communication channels is the circumstance that the consumer is already at the point of sale, which can lead to a positive impact on the consumer's decision to purchase. In addition, point of purchase communication can help to strengthen the image of the company or a certain brand. A restriction of point of purchase advertising is that it is mostly targeted to those consumers who have in many cases already made up their mind about the offered product or service since they went intentionally to the point of purchase. (Bianca & Simona 2008, 809.)

## **Product Placement**

In marketing communications, product placement is widely used. Companies often spend high amounts of money in order to promote its products or services within a certain media. Most popular is product placement in television. The product is shown in a movie or series, without actually advertising it. (de Gregorio & Sung 2010, 83.)

The aim is to raise the consumer's awareness for a certain brand. It is a fantastic tool to reach many people since consumers will normally subconsciously notice the product or logo while watching television. However, there is no assurance. Moreover, the product will only be seen for a restricted amount of time and companies are usually not completely in control of how the producers will integrate the product. (Wong et al. 2011, 115.)

### **Online Marketing**

According to Keller (2016, 291) the most important components of online marketing are a company's website, e-mail, display and social media marketing as well as blogs and search engine optimization.

In today's competitive environment companies cannot keep up with the competition, without a certain online presence (Sharma 2014, 1). A 2016 study showed that Germans spend on average more than two hours online every day (Statista). Therefore, internet marketing has become one of the most important marketing channels. The benefits of using online marketing are that it is in comparison to many other communication channels quite cheap for companies to spread selected information to a large amount of people. In addition, online marketing tends to be very interactive, since it is possible to get immediate responses from users. Furthermore, it has become easy for companies to collect relevant data online which enables customer-tailored advertising. (Sharma 2014, 3.) The downside of online advertising is that many consumers have been expressing privacy concerns, for example when they shop online (Wong et al. 2011, 114).

### **Sales Promotion**

Companies use sales promotion as a marketing communications tool, in order to provide consumers with an incentive to purchase a product. As soon as a product or service is cheaper or a consumer has the chance to receive something for free the decision to purchase is taken more easily. (Zehra Rizvi, Malik & Batul Zaidi 2012, 251.)

There exist many forms of sales promotions: Coupons, refunds, price-offs, samples, and bonus-packs are the most common ones (Keller 2001, 821). Interestingly, consumers tend to think that a product is less valuable if there have been several price-offs in a row. Therefore, it is important for companies to consider which promotional tool they are planning to use. (Buil, de Chernatony & Martínez 2013.) Sales promotion has a short and a long-term effect. In the short run, sales will rise for a certain period. In the long run, customers will develop a bond with the brand. (Zehra Rizvi et al. 2012, 251.)

## Public Relations

There exist many different definitions of public relations (PR) (Theaker 2016, 1). In general, public relations comprises all communication efforts done by a company in order to establish and strengthen a company's image. Moreover, it aims at developing loyal relationships between the public and a company. (Mikáčová & Gavlaková 2013, 832.)

Tools used in public relations are among other things press releases, annual reports, publications, seminars and magazines published by the company (Keller 2016, 288). Public relations has the ability to establish customer loyalty and especially in the case of forthcoming product launches companies are using public relations in order to create a buzz around a product. In addition, it has the advantage of being normally a quite inexpensive marketing communications tool. A disadvantage of public relations can be that consumers are not able to link a company's PR with a certain product. Furthermore, it is not easy to evaluate the success of PR. (Wong et al. 2011, 113.)

### 2.2.2 Marketing Communications Mix in Health Care

In the health care industry, marketing communications has become extremely important in recent years. Therefore, it is essential for health care providers to choose the right communication tools. (Grybś 2015, 123.) The figure below highlights the key communication tools in health care consisting of direct marketing, advertising, word-of-mouth marketing and online marketing.

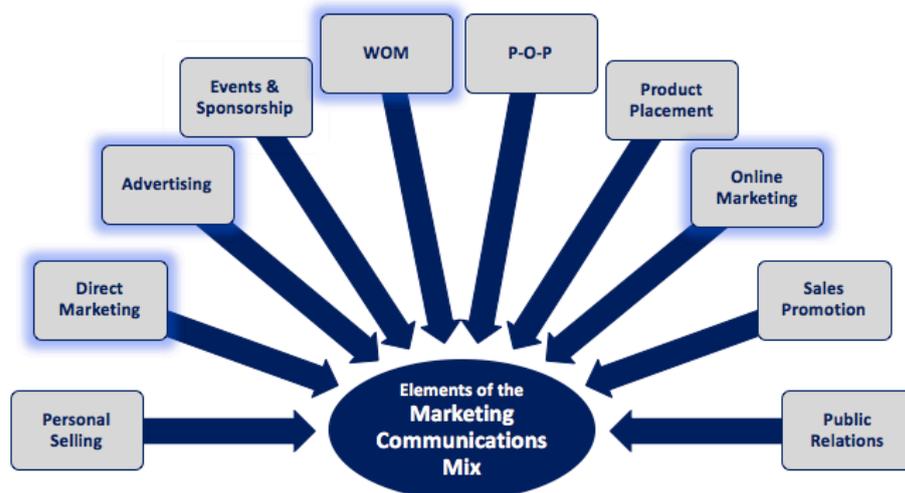


Figure 3. Overview of the most important marketing communications tools in health care (adapted from Wong, Radel & Ramsaran-Fowdar 2011)

There is no general guideline listing which communications tools have to be used in health care. Some communication tools are better suited for an organization than others. It always depends on the objectives and strategy of the individual health care provider.

However, in general, it can be observed that online marketing has become one of the most important tools within health care marketing. A 2015 study by the German “Gesellschaft für Innovative Marktforschung” (GIM) found out that German citizens mainly use the internet to inform themselves about health topics (GIM 2015). The amount of people who are using the internet to search for doctors and hospitals or clinical pictures and their treatment options is constantly growing. Therefore, online marketing, including among other things a company’s website and social media channels like Facebook and LinkedIn should be one of the tools to focus on when planning a marketing communications strategy. In addition, word-of-mouth marketing has turned out to be extremely relevant to health care. This development can be explained by the fact that people have the tendency to believe in reviews and experiences of others, rather than following recommendations expressed by their doctors. Thus, using word-of-mouth marketing can be very beneficial for a company’s image. Besides online marketing and word-of-mouth marketing, the more traditional communication channels advertising and direct marketing are also most commonly used within the health care industry. (Grybś 2015.)

No matter which communications tools a company selects for its communications strategy it is always important to bear in mind that using too many channels at the same time might not be the best option. Consumers tend to reach a point, where they start to get annoyed by the flood of information they receive on a daily basis from different companies. Therefore, it is all about finding the right balance. (Godfrey Flynn, Seiders & Voss 2011.)

### 2.3 Integrated Marketing Communications

The paragraphs above introduced the different tools, which companies can use in order to communicate with its target audience. To ensure that a consistent message is communicated to the consumers throughout all the selected channels, it is very important to integrate them (Keller 2016, 286). Although marketing communications has been popular for many years the concept of integrated marketing communications (IMC) only became known at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Kitchen & Schultz 1999).

Integrated Marketing Communications has been defined as “the concept under which a company carefully integrates and co-ordinates its many communications channels to deliver a clear, consistent, and compelling message about the organization and its products” (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders & Wong 1999, 781).

### 2.4 Developing an Integrated Marketing Communications Plan

In order for a company to succeed in marketing communications, a thoroughly constructed integrated marketing communications plan is essential (Keller 2016, 286).

Developing an integrated marketing communications plan requires several steps. The SOSTAC model is a good indicator of the stages, which have to be covered when establishing an IMC plan. The model consists of six different stages which, are illustrated by the graphic below.



Figure 4. Steps SOSTAC model (adapted from Smith 2011)

### 2.4.1 Situational Analysis

The first step of the SOSTAC model is a situational analysis. It is a very important and an extensive part of the IMC plan since the subsequent steps will build upon this analyses (Smith 2011, 13). The 5C's analysis is one method, which can be applied to assess a company's current situation. The five C's stand for – company, customers, competitors, collaborators, and climate.

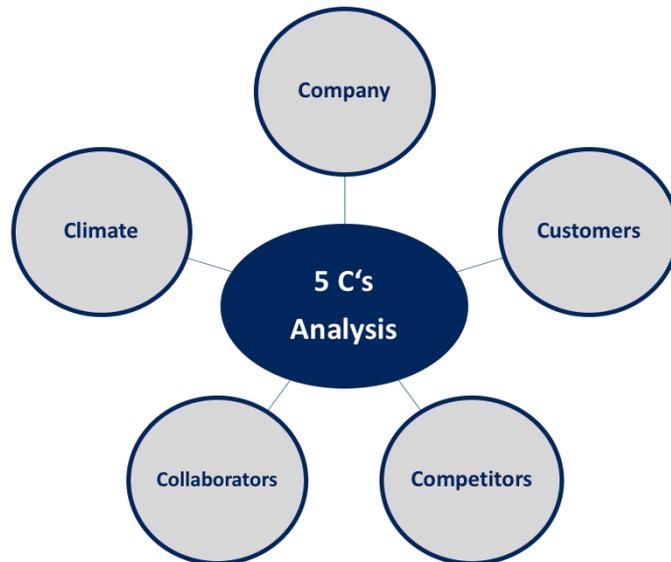


Figure 5. Five C's analysis (adapted from Steenburgh & Avery 2010)

This method has proven to be extremely valuable since it looks at the internal and external situation of a company.

The **company** analysis points out what the company is actually doing. Furthermore, it determines which products or services are driving sales and examines how sales have developed over the past few years. In addition, the competitive advantage of the company will be identified. What can the company offer to its consumers which, sets it apart from its competitors? What is it that makes the company stand out of the crowd? Furthermore, current challenges will be listed (Steenburgh & Avery 2010.)

The second component of the model focuses on the **customers** (Steenburgh & Avery 2010). The company needs to assess its current customers. The aim is to be able to target future marketing activities more easily by dividing the customers into different segments based on shared needs and characteristics. (Pickton & Broderick 2005.)

Moreover, a **competitor** analysis is part of the model. Companies who are offering the same or a similar products or services need to be identified.

Another aspect covered by the model are **collaborators**. Collaborators can be other companies or people who support the company. Normally, collaborators can be classified as either suppliers, distributors or influencers (Steenburgh & Avery 2010.)

Lastly, the **climate** is also part of the 5C's analysis. The climate can be examined by using a PEST analysis. (Steenburgh & Avery 2010.) The PEST analysis looks at the external environment of a company covering political, economic, social and technological factors (Aguilar 1967).

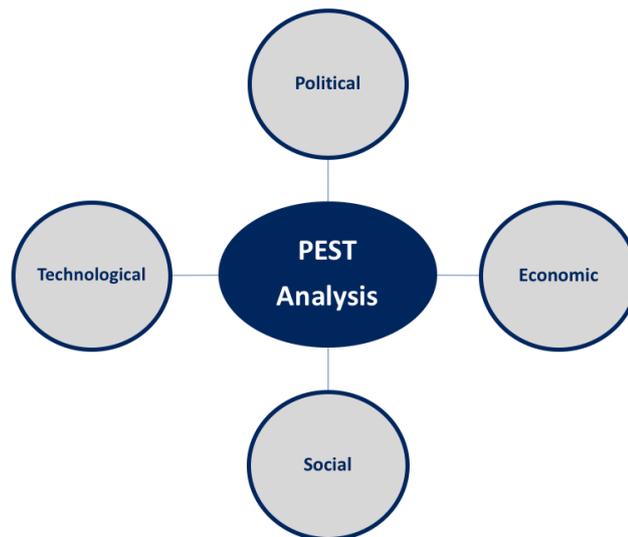


Figure 6. PEST Analysis (adapted from Aguilar 1967)

### 2.4.2 Objectives

While the situational analysis focuses on getting an overview of the company's current status the second step of the SOSTAC model requires the company to define where it wants to go by setting objectives (Smith 2011, 75). It is important that these "objectives are **SMART (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic & Time Specific)**" (Smith 2011, 76). In general, objectives can be divided into different clusters. The most relevant objectives for a marketing communications strategy are marketing objectives and communication objectives. Marketing objectives can be for example the aim to boost value and volume sales, market shares or the number of product launches. One thing which, all marketing objectives have in common is that they contain numbers. For instance, a company might have the marketing objective to increase its market shares by 10 percent. Communication objectives can be described as the ways in which a company hopes to influence the consumers through its communications strategy. According to the **AIDA** model a com-

pany's communication should generate **A**ttention, **I**nterest, **D**esire, and **A**ction. (Russel Smith & Taylor 2004, 44.)

### **2.4.3 Strategy**

The strategy part of the SOSTAC model focuses on the question of how to achieve the set objectives (Smith 2011, 79). A company can decide to use a pull or a push strategy or a mixture of both to promote its products. A push strategy means that a company is aiming at using intermediaries to recommend and advertise its products or services to the consumers. The pull strategy signifies that the company itself is promoting the products or services directly to the consumers. It really depends upon of the company itself to decide which strategy is the most suitable. Both strategies have their advantages and disadvantages. Sometimes, it does makes sense to use a mixture of both strategies. (Kingsley 1987.)

Moreover, it is part of the strategy definition to decide to which segments the communication should be targeted at and to clarify the positioning, meaning to define the way in which consumers should see the product or service of the company, in comparison to its competitors (Russel Smith & Taylor 2004, 38).

### **2.4.4 Tactics**

Tactics are "the details of the strategy" (Smith 2011, 86). When creating an integrated marketing communications plan the tactics are the tools, which a company decides to select from the marketing communications mix, like advertising, public relations, and online marketing to promote its products or services. The defined strategy and the selected target group of the company influence which of the tools are the most suitable ones for the company. (Russel Smith & Taylor 2004, 49.)

In order to plan the exact timing of the chosen channels more easily, the company can create a Gantt chart to be able to provide an overview to all the stakeholders. A Gantt chart is mostly used in project management. It contains all the tasks listed in a number of rows. In the case of marketing communications, the tasks are the chosen tools. The columns contain a timeline divided either into days, weeks or even months depending on the whole duration of the project. With the help of bars, the company can indicate the duration of every task. Some of the tools might be used only for a short period of time, while others will last for many days or weeks. (Pankaja Pradeep 2005.)

### **2.4.5 Actions**

The defined tactics have to be planned, implemented and supervised by someone. Therefore, it is an important part of the “Action Stage” of the SOSTAC model that a company decides who is going to be in charge of what. Furthermore, it is essential to evaluate if the internal resources are sufficient or if external help is needed. This decision also depends on the budget assigned for marketing activities by the company. (PWC 2013, 10.)

### **2.4.6 Control**

In order to ensure that the chosen tactics go into the right direction, after the implementation, a company has to control the development on a regular basis. If a marketing communications campaign is not working as planned it is necessary to take actions at an early stage. To be able to monitor the campaign key performance indicators (KPI's) have to be defined in advance. These KPI's are based on the set objectives. A KPI can be for instance the number of new customers or the increase in sales within a given period of time. It is important to choose the people who are in charge of controlling these KPI's and the dates on which the check-ups have to be done. (Smith 2011, 92.)

### **3 IMC Plan - Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar**

In the following pages, the author is going to put the theoretical knowledge presented above into practice, by applying the steps of creating an integrated marketing communications plan to the case company. The aim is to provide a detailed “How-to” guide to the company as an end product of the thesis.

#### **3.1 Situational Analysis**

Developing an integrated marketing communications plan starts off with a situational analysis. This analysis helps to get a better understanding of the company’s current situation, its customers, and its external environment. The 5C’s model presented in the theoretical framework will be applied.

##### **3.1.1 Company**

As already mentioned in the introductory section of the thesis the case company, Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar is an orthopaedic health centre which, was founded in the year 2000 in Sinsheim, Germany. Currently, the health centre consists of three orthopaedic practices, which are all located in the “Rhein-Neckar” region. The company employs 65 people: 11 orthopaedists and 54 medical assistants. Thanks to the relatively high number of orthopaedists, the company is able to offer a wide range of services to private insured patients and patients with statutory health insurance. 10% of the company’s patients are private insured and 90% are statutory health insured. Although the percentage of statutory health insured patients is much higher, the private insured patients are the ones who make up 65% of the company’s annual turnover. (Orthopädie Sinsheim 2016.)

Generally speaking, the company’s sales are generated from two areas: diagnostic services, and therapy. As part of the diagnostic services the company offers for example x-rays, ultrasounds, and MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scans. Therapies offered, are among other things, emergency treatments of bone fractures, pain therapy like for example hyaluronic injections against knee pain, caused by arthrosis and rehabilitation measures required after surgeries such as hip replacements.

Although, sales did increase constantly within recent years the company is experiencing a stagnation in revenue since 2015. This development has been caused mainly by the circumstance that German private insurances are covering fewer treatment costs than they used to. Therefore, private insured patients started to carefully reconsider whether to choose an expensive treatment or not.

## German Health Sector

Even though, the case company's sales have stagnated the German health sector is nevertheless a flourishing market, with high future sales potential. The bar graph below depicts the health expenditures in Germany from 2010 to 2014. It can be seen that health expenditures have increased constantly over the years.

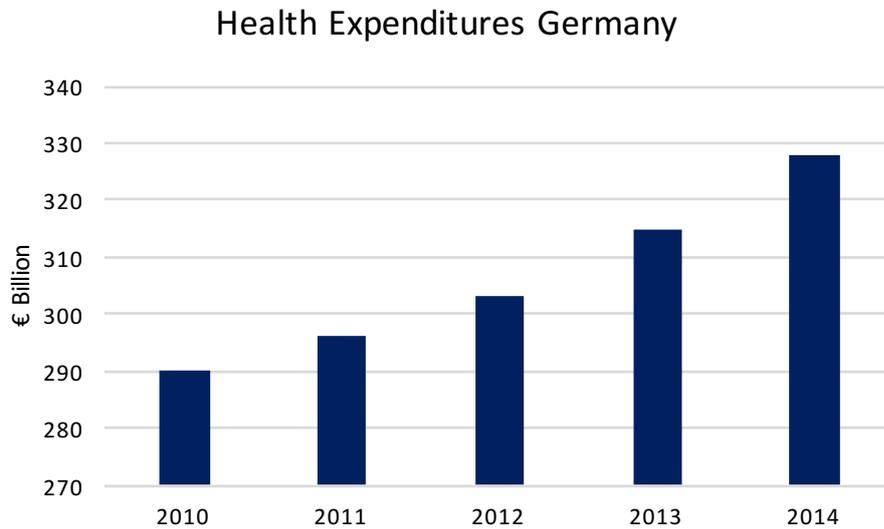


Figure 7. Health Expenditure Germany 2010 - 2014 (adapted from Statistisches Bundesamt 2014)

More and more people are spending money on health care. In 2014 the overall expenditures on health were 328 billion euro. An increase of 4.0 percent, from 315 billion euro in 2013 could be observed. (Statistisches Bundesamt 2014.)

## Challenges

Besides the stagnation in revenue, there are three other challenges which the company is currently trying to handle.

Firstly, the company noticed that the internal communication is not as efficient as the owners would like it to be. This is caused by the fact that some of the doctors and medical assistants are rotating on a daily basis between the different medical practice sites. Therefore, it is difficult to assemble the whole team in order to discuss internal matters.

Secondly, the rotation in combination with staff fluctuation makes it difficult from time to time to keep up the high-quality standards.

Thirdly, patients have been complaining about the long waiting times for appointments. This issue affects especially the people with a statutory health insurance. Waiting times can be up to six months in some cases. Although these are all issues which most of the medical practices in Germany are facing, it is important to address them properly.

### **Strengths**

Over the years, the company managed to expand its size constantly, which made it possible to invest in the acquisition of innovative diagnostic and therapeutic devices. Smaller medical practices mostly do not have the financial means for such major investments. To name an example Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar recently purchased an open MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging). Many claustrophobic patients are afraid of MRIs. With the new open MRI, the company is able to provide a solution to this problem. Moreover, the company owns a MBST® (Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Therapy) device which is used for the treatment of arthrosis. This device really sets the orthopaedic health centre apart from its competitors, since the manufacturers guarantee ensure that the company is the only one possessing an MBST® device in the surrounding area. Most of the company's sales are generated by its MBST® therapy. The introduced devices are only two of the acquisitions, which enable the company to deliver an added value to its patients.

Furthermore, patients really appreciate the fact that the health centre is located at multiple locations in south-western Germany. This increases the possibility of getting an appointment and it allows patients to choose the location which is the closest one to their home.

Another aspect, which makes the company stand out of the crowd is the fact that the team is able to offer an extremely wide range of orthopaedic services to its patients. This diversity can be achieved through a large number of orthopaedists employed. All orthopaedists are specialized in a certain area and the owners require them to take part in regular trainings, to assure that they are up-to-date on new medical findings and treatment methods.

#### **3.1.2 Customers**

The majority of patients of Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar comes from within a 30-kilometre radius. The company offers services to people in all age groups. However, most of its patients are between 40 and 54 years old followed by patients between 55 and

70 years. This distribution can be explained by the fact that most people are seeing orthopaedists because of age-related diseases. (Orthopädie Sinsheim 2016.)

Since, the company offers such a wide range of diagnostic and therapeutic services, which are often interrelated, it is difficult to clearly segment the patients. However, in general, patients can be classified into two groups. Patients with acute symptoms who need to be treated fast and patients with chronic complaints. Patients with acute symptoms normally come only once or twice, while patients with chronic complaints need treatment over a long period of time.

The health centres patients are either privately insured or publicly insured. There is no significant difference between both groups, besides the fact that private insured patients are normally wealthier. This circumstance can be traced back to the fact, that people have to earn a certain amount of money per month in Germany, to qualify for private health insurance.

In Germany health insurances have reduced the number of treatments, for which they are covering the costs. Therefore, the number of services for which patients have to pay themselves has increased. Although, one would assume that privately insured patients are willing to pay for self-payer services while publicly insured patients are refusing, this is not the case. The company noticed, that there are people from both types of insurances, who are willing to invest money in order to receive the best possible treatment.

These are exactly the people the company wants to target with its future communications strategy. People who are prepared to invest in their personal health and well-being.

### **3.1.3 Competitors**

The case company has three main competitors. All of them are located in the Rhein-Neckar Region in Germany. The strongest competitor is the "Vulpius Klinik". The company offers hand surgery and shoulder surgery besides its orthopaedic services. Therefore, the "Vulpius Klinik" is able to offer a wider range of treatments than the case company does. Moreover, the company is larger than Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar. Only, the orthopaedic department consists of 17 orthopaedists and 10 assistant doctors. In addition, the "Vulpius Klinik" has been awarded as being one of the best national hospitals in Germany. (Vulpius Klinik 2016.) Therefore, many patients choose the "Vulpius Klinik" since it is very well recognized and the patients are convinced that is the place where they will receive the best care.

The second competitor is the “Sporthopädie Heidelberg”. It offers similar orthopaedic services than the case company does and employs approximately the same number of orthopaedists. The difference between the two companies is that the “Sporthopädie Heidelberg” focuses on sports orthopaedics and surgical methods, whereas the case company does not have a sports orthopaedics specialization. (Sporthopädie Heidelberg 2016.) However, since many patients prefer non-surgical treatments, the case company can set itself apart with its approach more “conservative” approach.

The third competitor is not as strong as the others. It is an orthopaedic practice owned by a physician called Dr. Vogeley. His practice is situated in Sinsheim, close to one of the three orthopaedic practices, which are operated by the case company. The diagnostic and therapeutic services offered are similar to the ones offered by the case company. However, there is one significant difference between the two companies. Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar has a lot of medical devices which Dr. Vogel cannot offer to his patients. Furthermore, runs the practice on its own, which automatically results in a smaller patient base. (Dr. Vogeley 2016.)

#### **3.1.4 Collaborators**

The case company cooperates with several suppliers, which are providing the medical devices and the medical equipment used. In addition, the company has a contract with an advertising agency called “Shadowplay GmbH” who is responsible for the creation of posters and brochures. Moreover, an external service provider is developing newsletters, which are sent out to the patients every month. The company is still in need of a PR agency, who would be in charge of the production of texts. Currently, the company is trying to write all articles itself, which is very time-consuming.

#### **3.1.5 Climate**

A PEST analysis will be used in order to examine the external environment of the company.

##### **Political**

Nowadays, there is a huge discussion in Germany about self-payer services. These are services offered by physicians, which are not covered by health insurances. Self-payer services are for example treatments, which are not yet fully medical recognized or additional services like travel medical advice.

Politicians are raising the question whether patients actually benefit from self-payer services. They share the opinion that physicians are only offering these services as a mean to earn more money, which is why physicians fear that these services could be eventually banned by politicians. In addition, there have been several debates about abolishing private health insurances. However, so far no action has been taken.

Banning self-payer services and abolishing private health insurances would both have an extremely negative impact on the company's turnover.

### **Economic**

Germany has a relatively low unemployment rate in comparison to other countries and people are more and more willing to invest a great deal of money in their health and well-being. This can be seen by the constant increase of health expenditures in Germany illustrated by the Figure 7. above. Therefore, there will always be a demand for health services and the Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar does not need to worry about a lack of patients

### **Social**

Nowadays, demographic change is an important topic in Germany. The birth rate is decreasing, while the number of older people is increasing. This development is actually beneficial for orthopaedists since most of their services are directed at older people. Therefore, the case company will not be affected by this development while for instance paediatricians will definitely feel the consequences of the declining birth rate.

Moreover, Germany is fighting against an acute shortage of physicians especially in the rural areas. Reasons behind this trend are among other things the fact that many physicians are leaving Germany after their studies due to better job opportunities and higher salaries abroad. As a solution, German hospitals and medical practices are hiring people from abroad. However, this decision brings along language barriers and differences in medical standards, which have to be overcome. The company also noticed the impact of the increasing shortage of physicians. It has become challenging within recent years to find qualified applicants for open positions.

## **Technological**

Due to technological progress in health care, the diagnostic and therapeutic options did improve immensely over the years. New devices are launched every year. To name an example, the case company is currently in negotiations with a company which provides 3D animations, which are used to educate patients about different treatments. These animations can be viewed on tablets and mobile phones. They would really be a technological progress for the company since the orthopaedists have made the experience that patients are often facing difficulties in understanding procedures. Being able to show them the procedure step-by-step by using a 3D animation will be beneficial for both sides, the physicians, and the patients.

### **3.2 Objectives**

Now that the company's internal and external environment has been assessed it is important to define the objectives of the integrated marketing communications plan.

The company's main desire is to increase total sales in 2017. Until 2016 the company managed each year to exceed the total turnover of the past year. However, after reaching the highest turnover in the company's history in 2015, sales declined in 2016. This development was caused primarily by benefit cuts by the private health insurances. The aim is to reverse this negative trend. In order to achieve this goal, the company has to concentrate on promoting the treatments, which contribute the largest share of total sales. Therefore, the case company decided in consultation with the author to focus on advertising the diagnostic services and treatment options of arthrosis (joint wear) in its communications strategy. In order to diagnose arthrosis, the Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar uses its open MRI. For the treatment, it uses mainly hyaluronic acid injections and MBST® therapy.

Below the defined communication and marketing objectives are listed:

1. Raise the consumer's awareness of arthrosis and the company's diagnostic services and treatment options
2. Increase the number of MRI scans used to diagnose arthrosis by 5% over the next 6 months
3. Increase the number of MBST® treatments and Hyaluronic Acid Injections by 10% over the next 6 months

If the company manages to achieve the set objectives, its overall sales will increase in the long-term.

### **3.3 Strategy**

In order to reach the defined objectives, it is essential to establish a clear strategy. The case company will use a pull strategy, which means that it will not use intermediaries to promote its products. The communication will directly address the consumers.

#### **3.3.1 Target Group**

The communication will focus on two target groups. The first target group are people between 35 and 50, suffering from either a sport-related or an early stage arthrosis. The second target group are people between 51 and 70 years, suffering from an age-related early or intermediate stage arthrosis.

#### **3.3.2 Message**

Two messages will be communicated through different channels. The first message will point out the wide distribution of arthrosis among adults and elderly people and will stress the importance of diagnosing the disease at an early stage, in order to preserve the patient's physical mobility. A focus will be placed on the company's new open MRI since an MRI scan is mostly used to detect arthrosis.

The second message which will be communicated will highlight the company's non-surgical approach. Many orthopaedists suggest surgery right away for the treatment of arthrosis. By positioning itself as a company, which is focusing on non-surgical treatment methods, the Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar sets itself apart from its direct competitors. Treatment methods such as Hyaluronic Acid Injections and MBST® therapy, which are used by the company will also be part of the communication.

### **3.4 Tactics**

In order to implement the strategy, the author decided to select the following tools from the Marketing Communications Mix for the case company:

- Advertising
- Direct Marketing
- Events
- Word-of-Mouth (WOM)

- Online Marketing

The tools will be coordinated such that a consistent message will reach the consumers. In the following paragraphs, the components of each of the tools will be explained in more detail.

### 3.4.1 Advertising

One of the channels which has been selected by the author will be **print advertising** in magazines. With print advertising the company has the possibility to reach the defined target audience, since there is a large variety of medical magazines in Germany. One magazine, which would be interesting Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar is the "Apothekenumschau", which is distributed for free in pharmacies all over Germany. However, it is extremely expensive to place an advertisement in this magazine. Therefore, the author decided to choose a magazine, which also fits very well and is affordable at the same time. "Orthopress" is a magazine which is read by orthopaedists and by patients. The advantage of this magazine is that it is divided into different regions in Germany. This means that the company could decide to place an advert in the "Orthopress South-West", to ensure that the right people are reached. The magazine is published four times a year, which implies that it is essential to book the advert many weeks in advance. It can be distributed in the waiting rooms of the medical practices. For the company, it would make sense to have a print advertisement which occupies quarter a page. The reason behind this choice is that it could be placed next to an article on arthrosis. Embedding an advertisement into relevant content would have a higher impact in the long-run since patients could directly connect something with the company's promotion.

The advertisement would highlight the non-surgical approach of the company and would stress its mission to help people stay active and remain mobile for as long as possible by using non-surgical treatment methods such as hyaluronic acid injections and MBST® therapy. In addition, the contact details for all three sites would be part of the design to make sure that the consumers can easily make an appointment, without having to take extra steps, such as looking for a phone number or address.

Another important channel which fits perfectly to the communication strategy is **brochure advertising**. The objective would be to create an info brochure on arthrosis, which could be placed in the waiting and examination rooms. Providing a brochure is a great way to raise the general awareness of the disease and it is an efficient way to provide an overview of arthrosis to the patients at the same time. The patients could take the brochure

home or bridge the waiting time while reading it. Even if patients might not suffer from the disease right now, they might remember the brochure when the first symptoms start.

The brochure would be created by an external agency since it can be extremely time-consuming. The structure would be divided into 3 parts: The first part would explain arthrosis and its symptoms. The second part would focus on the different methods used to diagnose it and the third part would stress non-surgical treatment possibilities. Besides placing the brochure in the waiting area it would be important to upload a digital version of it on the website and on Facebook. The costs depend on the agency used and also on the size of the brochure. However, generally speaking, the expenses will most probably lie in a range between 300 and 400 euros.

Lastly, the author has decided to use the **waiting room TV** and the **IPads** which are already existing at the company. The idea is to purchase 3D animation videos of arthrosis from an external provider. Often patients are not able to follow the explanations given by the orthopaedists. The animations would help to illustrate the disease in a way that everyone would be able to follow. Normally, patients feel bored while waiting for their appointment. A solution for this issue would be to design the animations on the IPads in an interactive way. To give an example an arthrosis self-check could appear at the end of the video series which gives the patients the possibility to find out if they are at risk for arthrosis.

### **3.4.2 Direct Marketing**

The company sends out **newsletters** to its patients on a monthly basis. To raise the patient's awareness of arthrosis and the treatments offered in the medical practices it would be useful to add an arthrosis specific newsletter which would be sent out to those patients who express interest for this topic. In order to avoid spamming this newsletter would only be sent out on a 3-month basis.

The process would be as followed. Currently, the company distributes surveys to get feedback from its consumers. To find out who would be interested in receiving the newsletter there would be a question asking if patients would be interested in learning more about arthrosis. Afterwards, only these patients would receive the newsletter which would be created by an external service provider.

### 3.4.3 Events

In order to get better known in the region, it is important to hold events. Open days or lectures are the most suitable events for medical practices. To promote the company's diagnostic and treatment services of arthrosis the company should hold an **information evening** on arthrosis. Besides, raising the awareness for the company and its services the evening would be a perfect possibility to get in personal contact with the patients. Talking to the consumers is a great way to receive feedback and suggestions for improvement. During normal office hours, there is usually no time for such conversations.

It is important to plan the event many months in advance. A venue needs to be chosen and booked as well as catering. Furthermore, invitations have to be designed and printed by an agency. These invitations could be distributed in the waiting areas. In addition, an electronic version of the invitation would be created in order to attach it to the newsletter and to upload it on Facebook. In order to get an overview of the number of people coming, a link should be part of the invitation which people could use to sign up for the lecture.

### 3.4.4 Online Marketing

To have visitors stay longer on a **website** the company should focus on providing interesting content for them. Currently, the company's website covers all basic information: opening hours, team presentation, services etc. However, there is no content which seems to provide additional benefits to the consumers. Therefore, a first step in the right direction would be to implement a news feed on the website. Topics covered could be among other things latest research on arthrosis and a regular presentation of new medical devices used to diagnose and treat arthrosis. Keeping the website up to date is extremely important since many people are using the internet to look for medical information.

Furthermore, a link should be included on the homepage which leads directly to reviews written about the company either on the review page "Jameda" or on "Sanego". Both review pages are used by many people to compare the different doctors within their region. People care a lot about the opinion and recommendations of others. If the reviews are mostly positive a patient might be convinced more easily to choose the Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar.

Social media has become a firm part of nearly everyone's life. Therefore, the company has to focus on using one of the social media channels as a communication tool. In regards to the age of the defined target audiences it makes sense to focus on **Facebook** only, for now. One possibility would be to focus on a certain disease every month. To

boost sales of the offered arthrosis services the company should start off with an arthrosis month on Facebook. Some posts would refer to latest articles published on arthrosis. For example, one of these posts could recommend an article, which introduces exercises, which can help to handle the pain caused by knee arthrosis. Choosing such articles is a smart decision since they provide benefits to the consumers. In addition, the company's medical devices could be presented in several posts. Furthermore, the arthrosis information evening should be advertised within one of the posts followed by a post-reporting of the event. There are many different options. Further post suggestions can be found in the guideline attached.

In general, it is extremely important on Facebook that a company responds to comments on a regular basis, which implies that one employee should be assigned for community management.

#### **3.4.5 Word-of-Mouth (WOM)**

Since, people have the tendency to trust reviews and follow recommendations from other people, especially in health care, word-of-mouth marketing is a relevant part of a company's communications strategy.

The aim for Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar should be to get consumers to write reviews on the review pages "Jameda" or "Sanego" and on Facebook. The best way to approach this issue is by asking the patients at the end of an appointment to share their opinion online. Obviously, there is no possibility to control what patients are publishing online. However, it is totally fine if some of the reviews turn out to be negative as it makes the reviews as a whole more trustworthy. If all comments would be positive, consumers would ask themselves if they are faked by the company. Note: as in the case of Facebook it is important to respond to comments published on review sites.

Another way, in which word-of-mouth marketing could be used by the company would be to quote statements made by patients. For example, at the end of the arthrosis information evening, a feedback form could be handed out asking the participants if they would recommend the event to others. A few days afterwards, a report about the event could be posted on Facebook, stating that for example "95% would recommend the event to others". Such proven statements can have a huge impact on the number of visitors of the next event.

The GANTT chart below has been created by the author in order to illustrate how an implementation schedule of the different channels could look like over the next months.

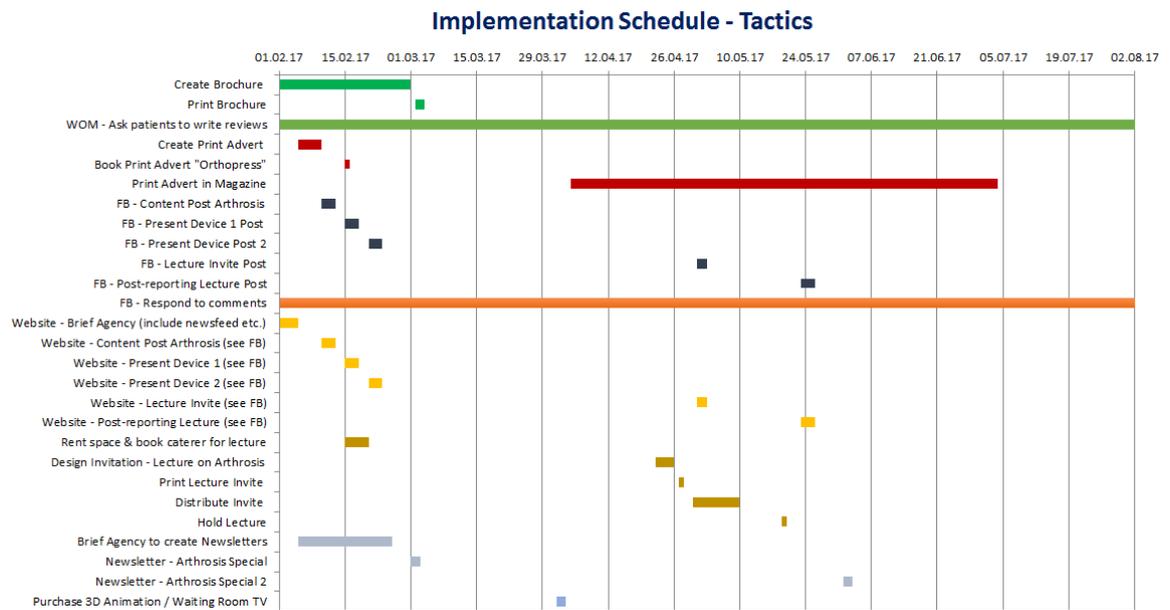


Figure 8. Implementation Schedule – Tactics (Stock 2016)

### 3.5 Action

As soon as the tools for the company’s marketing communications strategy have been defined and scheduled, the company has to decide who is going to take over the different tasks. Right now, Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar cooperates with an external service provider and an agency called Shadowplay GmbH. The external service provider takes care of the Newsletter, while Shadowplay GmbH is responsible for the creation of brochures. In the future, it will be essential to have one employee who is solely responsible for marketing activities with a focus on online marketing.

A table assigning the responsible people to the different tasks can be found in the guideline in the appendix. Due to readability issues it has not been possible to insert the table into this part of the thesis.

### 3.6 Control

In order to ensure that the defined objectives will be reached it is important to constantly monitor the communications campaign. Since, the plan is to reach the goals within six months after the implementation it makes sense to review the campaign in two-month intervals. The author has defined Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) which should be used as reference points for the success or failure of the communications activities. If it

becomes clear that the objectives will not be reached adjustments have to be made as early as possible. The table below shows the selected KPI's assigned to the individual objectives.

Table 1. KPI's Integrated Marketing Communications Plan (Stock 2016)

<p><b>1. Objective:</b> Raise the consumer's awareness of arthrosis and the company's diagnostic services and treatment options</p>
<p><b>KPI's</b>  # shares of arthrosis posts on FB  # likes of arthrosis posts on FB  # comments of arthrosis posts on FB  # of people doing the arthrosis self-check  # of patients making appointments to diagnose / treat arthrosis  # of lecture participants  Average open rate of arthrosis newsletter</p>
<p><b>2. Objective:</b> Increase the number of MRI scans used to diagnose arthrosis by 5% over the next 6 months</p>
<p><b>KPI</b>  # of MRI scans performed to diagnose arthrosis after the start of the communications campaign</p>
<p><b>3. Objective:</b> Increase the number of MBST® treatments and Hyaluronic Acid Injections by 10% over the next 6 months</p>
<p><b>KPI</b>  # of MBST treatments and Hyaluronic Acid Injections sold after the start of the communications campaign</p>

## 4 Conclusion

The last chapter reflects the results of the thesis and presents future ideas and recommendations for the case company. Furthermore, the author will review the thesis process and its own learning during the whole project.

### 4.1 Results

The objective of this product-oriented thesis was to create an integrated marketing communications plan in form of a guideline for the case company, Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar. The guideline is based on the theoretical framework, which introduced health care marketing, the marketing communications mix and Smith's SOSTAC planning model. With the theory in mind, the author created an integrated marketing communications (IMC) plan for the case company.

One of the most critical parts of the plan was the selection of suitable marketing communication tools. For each of the chosen tools, a detailed "how-to" description can be found in the guideline, which should simplify the implementation process for the case company. If the company manages to follow the guideline, it will most likely be able to reach the defined goals provided that the individual stakeholders fulfil their responsibilities.

By reviewing the thesis there are five important key findings, which should be highlighted:

1. Developing an integrated marketing communications plan for medical practices has become more relevant than ever before. The theoretical framework has shown that marketing in health care is nowadays as essential as within any other industry, due to the constantly increasing competition among medical practices. In addition, consumers have realized that they can choose between many options.
2. Creating a marketing communications strategy is extremely challenging for the majority of doctors. Firstly, because of a lack of know-how caused by the circumstance that the medical studies do not cover the subject marketing. Secondly, due to a missing recognition of marketing in health care. To improve this situation medical practices would either need to hire an employee who would be solely responsible for marketing activities or cooperate with an agency.
3. The case company has to focus its promotion activities on its diagnostic options and treatment methods for one disease, instead of trying to advertise the whole range of services offered.

4. The most suitable communications tools for the case company are advertising, direct marketing, events, word-of-mouth and especially online marketing. To ensure a high and long-lasting impact these tools have to communicate a consistent message.
5. Online marketing plays nowadays a significant role in health care. Therefore, it should not be neglected when developing an integrated marketing communications plan. The majority of people uses the internet to look for doctors. Review portals have become very popular, due to the fact that people mostly trust the opinions and recommendations of other patients. Therefore, the company has to put an emphasis on establishing a good online presence.

## **4.2 Recommendations and Ideas**

For the future there are several aspects, which the company should look into:

Since, people are increasingly looking for information online the company should consider looking for an agency, who could take care of its digital marketing. Search engine optimization (SEO) is crucial for the company to improve its google ranking. People will only find the company easily if the articles on the website are SEO optimized. Furthermore, the agency could monitor and evaluate the current online performance of the company by using tools such as Google Analytics.

Additionally, the company should work closely with a PR agency. Articles for the website have to be written, as well as newspaper articles and other texts used for communications materials. Especially, on the website it is essential to provide interesting content to keep visitors on the website longer. Currently, the company does not have the resources to formulate such texts itself on a professional level.

Moreover, the company should consider creating an Instagram Account, at a later point in time. Some doctors are successfully using Instagram and it is a great way to show pictures of the orthopaedists, the medical practices interior and the devices used. People tend to draw conclusions about the quality of the offered treatments by looking at pictures which have been published online. Therefore, Instagram could be an interesting channel in the future.

### **4.3 Thesis Process**

The thesis process started off with the thesis planning workshop in autumn 2015. Luckily, a suitable case company was found quite quickly. After the completion of the planning workshop, the author originally planned on starting the thesis in April. However, this was not achieved, because of the circumstance that the author did an internship at this point of time, which left no time for research. Therefore, it was decided in consultation with the case company to postpone the project until September.

From September on the author studied journal articles, books and other sources, in order to get a clear overview and understanding of the theory behind health care marketing and integrated marketing communications. Afterwards, the thesis writing process started. Firstly, the theoretical framework was done followed by the second part of the thesis, the application of the theory. In order to be able to create the integrated marketing communications plan for the case company, the author met with one of the owners to gather information about the company's current situation, its patients, and its competitors. In a second meeting, the focus of the communications strategy was discussed with the company. Both, the author and the owners saw the greatest potential in promoting the company's diagnostic methods and treatment options for the disease arthrosis. As the last step, the author created the guideline for the case company. It seemed to be most useful to establish the guideline in a Power Point format since it facilitates a clear presentation of the several steps of the plan.

The case company was extremely happy when it received the guideline and the owners are planning on implementing the different communications activities as scheduled, from February onwards. The author offered to assist in answering any questions that may arise.

### **4.4 Reflection on learning**

Looking back at the thesis and the whole process there are many aspects which I learned:

First of all, I realized during the first few weeks that it is more useful to spend time on researching and reading different sources than starting the actual writing process right away. I always felt pressured to get going, however, without having found the right sources it takes ages to write a page.

Furthermore, it was quite difficult to meet with the case company, since I was working in Hamburg, besides writing the thesis. It took me 5 hours by train to get to their office. How-

ever, it was a good experience as I learnt how to become more efficient, how to structure myself and how to communicate in the best possible way with the case company. We agreed on email contact which worked perfectly.

In addition, I experienced that promoting health care services is not as easy as expected. Until the thesis, I had only worked in the marketing departments of companies that produce tangible products. Although, marketing health care services turned out to be challenging it was extremely interesting at the same time. I always had an interest in medicine and the thesis enabled me to get an insight into everyday working life at a medical practice.

Lastly, I am convinced that the thesis will serve as a basis for my master studies, since, I am planning on pursuing a Master's degree in either Marketing Communications or Digital Marketing. The theoretical knowledge which I gained during the thesis will help me to follow some of the modules more easily.

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# Guideline

## Integrated Marketing Communications Plan For Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar



## Background Information



- Health care marketing has become essential in order to stay successful in today's competitive environment (Oancea 2015).
- A **mix of tools** needs to be selected in order to advertise the offered services to the consumers (Keller 2016).
- These tools must communicate a **consistent** message to maximize the impact of the communication strategy (Keller 2016).
- **Note:** Health Care Marketing has legal restrictions → It must not be misleading or at the expense of patients (Thill 2013).

# Background Information

- The largest share of the company's total sales is generated with the offered MBST® therapy which is used to treat arthrosis.
- Arthrosis is worldwide the most common joint disease among adults and elderly people (Rabenberg 2013, 7).
- Therefore, it makes sense for the company's communication strategy to put a focus on the company's strongest source of revenue → its diagnostic and therapeutic arthrosis services.
- This decision can also be reasoned by the increasing demand of diagnostic and therapeutic services of arthrosis in Germany which is caused by the demographic change and the large number of elderly people. (Rabenberg 2013, 7.)

# Background Information

Overview of diagnostic and therapeutic services which will be promoted in the communications strategy

**Diagnostic Services**

→ Promote open MRI



**Therapeutic Services**

→ Promote MBST® therapy and hyaluronic acid injections



# Objectives

*By concentrating the promotion on the company's diagnostic methods and treatment options for arthrosis the objective's listed below should be reached which will increase total sales in the long-term:*

1. Raise the consumer's awareness of arthrosis and the company's diagnostic services and treatment options
2. Increase the number of MRI scans used to diagnose arthrosis by 5% over the next 6 months
3. Increase the number of MBST® treatments and Hyaluronic Acid Injections by 10% over the next 6 months

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# Strategy

## Target Audience

- People between 35 - 50 years old suffering from a sport related or early stage arthrosis
- People aged between 51 and 70 suffering from an age related early or intermediate arthrosis

## Messages

Two messages will be communicated through the different tools to the consumers:

- One of the messages will point out the wide distribution of arthrosis among adults and elderly people and the importance of diagnosing it at an early stage to preserve physical mobility.
- The other message will highlight the company's non-surgical approach (surgery should only be used if it is necessary) and the offered treatment methods.

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# Tactics

A 360° campaign will be used, meaning that several communication tools have been selected in order to maximize the chances of reaching as many consumers as possible.

## Advertising

- Print advertising in magazines
- Brochures
- Waiting Room TV / iPad

## Online Marketing

- Website
- Social Media (Facebook)

## Direct Marketing

- Newsletter
- Invitations

## Word-of-Mouth

- Rating Websites
- Customer Judgment

## Events

- Lectures

# Tactics



# Tactics – Print Advertising

## What?

- Place a print advert in the magazine "Orthopress South-West"

## Why?

- High reach: circulation of 140.000 thousand
- Consumers can be targeted very easily since the magazine is especially for orthopaedists and their patients

## Costs:

- ¼ page horizontal; 1.957,00€



## How to?

- Book print advert online  
→ Website: [crossvertise.com](http://crossvertise.com)
- Select issue  
→ Orthopress is published four times a year
- Request advert to be placed next to an article on arthrosis: People suffering from arthrosis will most likely read the article and will come across the advert
- Place the magazine in the waiting area

# Print Advertising - Design Suggestion

## Looking for non-surgical options to treat arthrosis?

We at Orthopaedic Health Centre Rhein-Neckar believe in non-surgical treatment methods.

Our goal is to help you stay active and remain mobile by using mainly MBST® Therapy and Hyaluronic Acid Injections to treat arthrosis.



**94 % of our customers would recommend us\***  
**Convince yourself – make an appointment!**

\*Source: Jameda, 28.12.2016



**Orthopädisches Zentrum**  
**Rhein-Neckar**  
*damit Sie in Bewegung bleiben*



**Orthopädisches Zentrum Sinsheim**  
Hauptstraße. 71  
74889 Sinsheim

Fon +49 (7261) 94 95 50  
Fax +49 (7261) 94 95 523

**Orthopädisches Zentrum Walldorf**  
Bahnhofstraße 1-3  
69190 Walldorf

Fon +49 (6227) 35 888 90  
Fax +49 (6227) 35 888 973

**Orthopädisches Zentrum Hockenheim**  
Wilhelm Maybach Str. 2  
68766 Hockenheim

Fon +49 (6205) 30 59 40  
Fax +49 (6205) 30 59 423

# Tactics



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# Tactics – Info Brochure

## What?

- Create an info brochure on arthrosis

## Why?

- Good way to provide a clear overview of arthrosis to the patients
- Patient can take the brochure back home or bridge the waiting time while reading it
- Even if the patient does not suffer from arthrosis right now he or she might remember the brochure when the symptoms start

## Costs:

- 400€ (depending on size)

## How to?

- Hire external agency to design a brochure on arthrosis
- Make sure to put full address and opening hours on the flyer
- Place the flyers in the waiting area
- Publish a digital version of the flyer on Facebook and on the website

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# Tactics



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# Tactics – Waiting Room TV / iPad

## What?

- Show 3D animations of arthrosis on TV and iPads
- Show diagnostic methods and treatment options offered at the orthopaedic health centre

## Why?

- Great way to illustrate and explain the disease to patients
- Raise the awareness for arthrosis and show how important an early treatment is
- Opportunity to present the company's range of services
- Patients are bored during the long waiting times – providing them with interesting content occupies them

## Costs:

- Tbd (depending if agency is hired)

## How to?

- Purchase videos from external provider
- Develop slides which illustrate the diagnostic methods and treatment options (either internally or hire creative agency to make suggestions)



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# Tactics



# Tactics – Newsletter

## What?

- Send out newsletters on arthrosis topics in addition to the monthly newsletter: symptoms, diagnosis, treatment etc.

## Why?

- Attract consumers with tailored content on a regular basis
- Possibility to target specific group of patients
- Possibility to demonstrate the company's expertise

**Costs:** Tbd

## How to?

- Include a question in the survey (which is regularly distributed in the waiting area) asking if the patients would like to receive information concerning arthrosis

I would like to receive information on:

- Arthrosis       ...       ...

- Instruct agency to suggest content on arthrosis
- Send articles on arthrosis to patients on a 3 months basis to avoid spamming the patients
- Include arthrosis self-check in one of the newsletter

# Tactics



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# Tactics – Lectures

## What?

- Give a talk on arthrosis, it's symptoms and treatment options

## Why?

- Raise awareness of the company itself
- Great way to present the company's services to the consumers
- Possibility of personal contact and exchange with

## Costs:

- Space rental: approx. 500€
- Catering: 300€ (drinks & finger food)

## How to?

- Rent space in advance and book caterer
- Place flyers advertising the lecture in the waiting area
- Invite patients personally at the end of the appointment
- Place posters in the city
- Send out the invitation attached to the newsletter
- Send out paper based invitations to the patients in the database
- Advertise event on Facebook: post invitation with a link to register for it

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# Lecture - Invitation / Flyer Design Suggestion

 <h2 style="text-align: center;">Arthrosis Information Evening</h2>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>When?</b> 19.05.2017 – 18:00pm  <b>Where?</b> Sinsheim Community Center  <b>Free Entrance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learn more about arthrosis, diagnostic methods and non-surgical treatment possibilities</li> <li>▪ Get to know the orthopaedists</li> <li>▪ Ask questions</li> </ul> <p>Please call to register +49 (7261) 94 95 50 or sign up under: <a href="http://www.orthopädieinsheim/lectures.de">www.orthopädieinsheim/lectures.de</a></p> <div style="float: right; text-align: center;">  </div>	

# Tactics



# Tactics – Website

## What?

- Establish a news feed on the home page
- Publish the content which is also published on Facebook
- Insert a link which leads to the review portal “Jameda”

## Why?

- It is important to inform the patients about news on a regular basis
- Content is essential to raise the patients interest and to have them stay longer on the website
- If the patient reads the reviews he or she might be quickly convinced

## Costs:

- No costs

## How to?

- Ask agency who is responsible for the website to include a newsfeed & to implement a link which leads to Jameda
- Have someone who is responsible for making sure that the content on Facebook and the website is coordinated
- General: Update the pictures shown on the website → some appear to be really old

# Tactics



# Tactics – Facebook

## What?

- Create posts on different topics:
  - Articles on arthrosis / Latest research results
  - Presentation of the company's medical devices (MRI, MBST etc.)
  - Announcement of arthrosis event and post-reporting
  - Invite patients to do an arthrosis self-check online

## Why?

- People primary use the internet to look for medical information
- 24 million people are using Facebook in Germany\* →high reach

## Costs:

- No external costs if content produced by the company itself

## How to?

- Look for content on arthrosis which might be interesting for patients → refer to an article in one of the posts
- Focus communication on different diseases every month. In the case of this communication strategy the focus will lie on arthrosis. The devices used to diagnose and treat the disease will be presented in weekly post s. The final post will be the arthrosis self-check.
- Respond to comments
- Post invitation to the lecture on arthrosis and ask people to like the post if they are interested in the event; Insert link to register for the event

\*Statista.com; 29.12.2016

# Facebook – Post Suggestions

### 1. Post – Relevant Content

**Orthopädisches Zentrum Rhein Neckar**  
9. November · €

**Arthrosis**  
Arthrosis Research UK has published exercises which can help to reduce knee pain. The exercises can be easily done at home. Have a look at: [www.arthrosisresearch.uk/kneepain/exercises.org](http://www.arthrosisresearch.uk/kneepain/exercises.org)

**Exercises to manage knee pain**

**Straight-leg raise (lying)**  
Bend one leg at the knee. Hold the other leg straight and lift the foot just off the bed. Hold for a slow count of 5, then lower. Repeat 5 times with each leg. Try doing it in the morning and at night while lying in bed.

**Step use**  
Step onto the bottom step of stairs with the right foot. Bring up the left foot, then step down with the right foot, followed by the left foot. Repeat with each leg until you get short of breath. Hold on to the banister if necessary. As you improve, try to increase the number of steps you can do in 1 minute and the height of the step.

### 2. Post – Present Devices

**Orthopädisches Zentrum Rhein Neckar**  
9. November · €

**Are you afraid of MRI scans?**  
With our new open MRI there is no need to be afraid anymore. Since, July we are successfully using an open MRI to diagnose arthrosis among other things.



### 3. Post – Present Devices

**Orthopädisches Zentrum Rhein Neckar**  
9. November · €

**Interested in non-surgical ways to treat arthrosis?**  
Then we are the perfect fit for you. We regard surgery as being the last option. With our MBST therapy we helped to improve the mobility of many patients. Let us help you - make an appointment!



# Facebook – Post Suggestions

### 4. Post – Lecture Invite

Orthopädisches Zentrum Rhein Neckar  
9. November · €

**Invitation**  
Many people are suffering from arthrosis. It is important to treat the disease at an early stage. Learn more about arthrosis non-surgical treatment methods at our event. Like the post if you are interested or sign up under: [www.orthopaediesinsheim/lectures.de](http://www.orthopaediesinsheim/lectures.de)

**Arthrosis Information Evening**

When? 19.05.2017 – 18.00pm  
Where? Sinsheim Community Center  
Free Entrance

- Learn more about arthrosis, diagnostic methods and non-surgical treatment possibilities
- Get to know the orthopaedists
- Ask questions

Please call to register +49 (0)7142 94 95 50 or sign up under: [www.orthopaediesinsheim/lectures.de](http://www.orthopaediesinsheim/lectures.de)

5

Gefällt mir · Kommentieren · Teilen

### 5. Post – Post-reporting Lecture

Orthopädisches Zentrum Rhein Neckar  
9. November · €

**Successful Arthrosis Event**  
*“The event showed me how important it is to treat arthrosis at an early stage – Tomorrow, I will definitely make an appointment!” (Irene, 53)*

On Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May our arthrosis event took place - 300 people followed the invitation. It was a great opportunity to exchange views with our patients. Don't miss our next lecture on arthrosis. The feedback showed:

95% would recommend it!

5

Gefällt mir · Kommentieren · Teilen

# Tactics



# Tactics – Word-of-Mouth

## What?

- Get people to write reviews / comments about the company

## Why?

- People tend to trust reviews and follow recommendations from other people → especially in health care

## Costs:

- No costs

## How to?

- Ask patients at the end of the appointment to share their opinion about the company on Facebook or on one of the review portals: Jameda or Sanego
- It is fine if some of the reviews turn out to be negative → it makes the reviews more trustworthy
- Check review portals & Facebook on a daily basis and reply to comments
- Hand out feedback form after arthrosis lecture → Quote peoples comments in Facebook Posts or reports about the event

# Word-of-Mouth – Example Using quotes

## Extract Feedback form arthrosis event

**Q.4** What did you like about the event?

Comment:

*The event showed me how important it is to treat arthrosis at an early stage – Tomorrow, I will definitely make an appointment!*

**Q.5** Would you recommend the event?

Yes

No



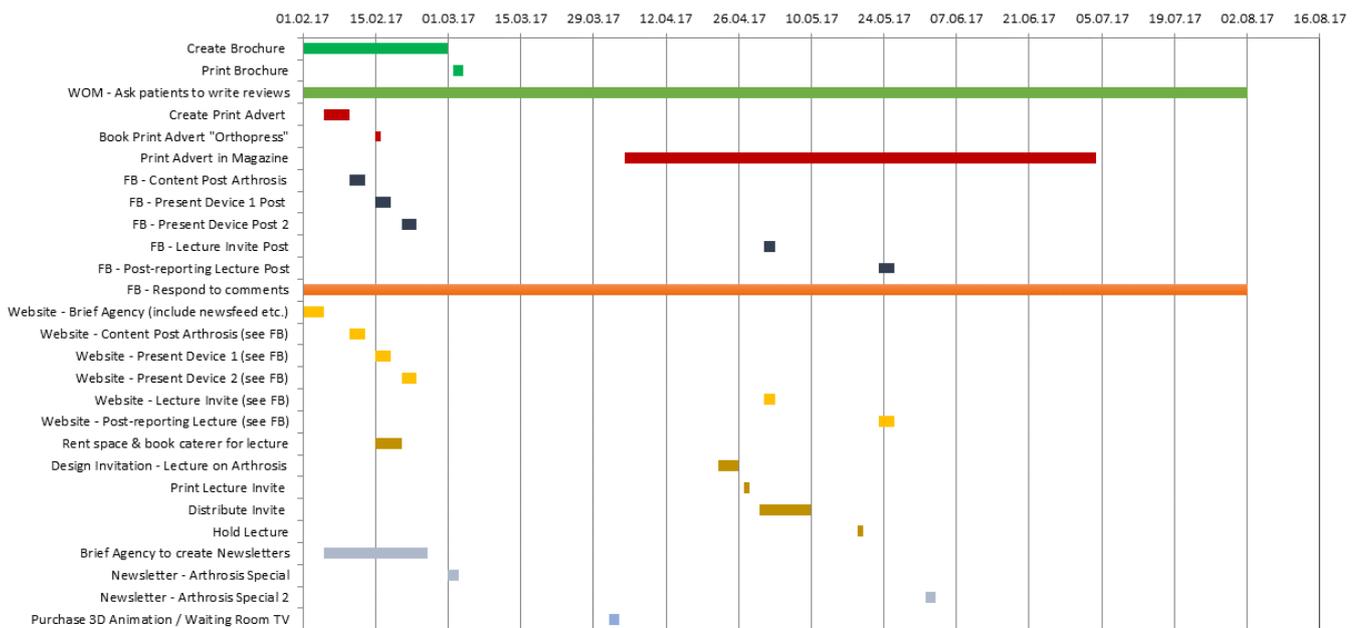
## After the event

Implement the participants comments by quoting some in a report about the event on the website / Facebook (see example FB section)



Timing - Tactics (Preparation for GANTT Chart)			
Task Name	Start	End	Duration (days)
Create <b>Brochure</b>	01.02.17	01.03.17	28
Print <b>Brochure</b>	02.03.17	04.03.17	2
<b>WOM</b> - Ask patients to write reviews	01.02.17	02.08.17	182 (ongoing)
Create <b>Print Advert</b>	05.02.17	10.02.17	5
Book <b>Print Advert</b> "Orthopress"	15.02.17	16.02.17	1
<b>Print Advert</b> in Magazine	04.04.17	04.07.17	91
<b>FB</b> - Content Post Arthrosis	10.02.17	13.02.17	3
<b>FB</b> - Present Device 1 Post	15.02.17	18.02.17	3
<b>FB</b> - Present Device Post 2	20.02.17	23.02.17	3
<b>FB</b> - Lecture Invite Post	01.05.17	03.05.17	2
<b>FB</b> - Post-reporting Lecture Post	23.05.17	26.05.17	3
<b>FB</b> - Respond to comments	01.02.17	02.08.17	182 (ongoing)
<b>Website</b> - Brief Agency (include newsfeed etc.)	01.02.17	05.02.17	4
<b>Website</b> - Content Post Arthrosis (see FB)	10.02.17	13.02.17	3
<b>Website</b> - Present Device 1 (see FB)	15.02.17	18.02.17	3
<b>Website</b> - Present Device 2 (see FB)	20.02.17	23.02.17	3
<b>Website</b> - Lecture Invite (see FB)	01.05.17	03.05.17	2
<b>Website</b> - Post-reporting Lecture (see FB)	23.05.17	26.05.17	3
Rent space & book caterer for <b>Lecture</b>	15.02.17	20.02.17	5
Design Invitation - <b>Lecture</b> on Arthrosis	22.04.17	26.04.17	4
Print <b>Lecture</b> Invite	27.04.17	28.04.17	1
Distribute <b>Lecture</b> Invite	30.04.17	10.05.17	10
Hold <b>Lecture</b>	19.05.17	20.05.17	1
Brief Agency to create <b>Newsletters</b>	05.02.17	25.02.17	20
<b>Newsletter</b> - Arthrosis Special	01.03.17	03.03.17	2
<b>Newsletter</b> - Arthrosis Special 2	01.06.17	03.06.17	2
Purchase 3D Animation / <b>Waiting Room TV</b>	01.04.17	03.04.17	2

### Implementation Schedule - Tactics



## Action

- Now that the communication tools have been chosen and the timeline has been defined it is important to decide who is going to put into action the different tasks.
- On the next slide the responsible people have been assigned next to the different tasks

## Actions

Task	Who is responsible?
Create <b>Brochure</b>	Agency: Shadowplay GmbH
Print <b>Brochure</b>	Agency: Shadowplay GmbH
<b>WOM</b> - Ask patients to write reviews	All orthopaedists and medical assistants
Create <b>Print Advert</b>	Shadowplay GmbH
Book <b>Print Advert</b> "Orthopress"	Owners
<b>Print Advert</b> in Magazine	Orthopress
<b>FB</b> - Content Post Arthrosis	Online Marketing Employee
<b>FB</b> - Present Device 1 Post	Online Marketing Employee
<b>FB</b> - Present Device Post 2	Online Marketing Employee
<b>FB</b> - Lecture Invite Post	Online Marketing Employee
<b>FB</b> - Post-reporting Lecture Post	Online Marketing Employee
<b>FB</b> - Respond to comments	Online Marketing Employee
<b>Website</b> - Brief Agency (include newsfeed etc.)	Owners
<b>Website</b> - Content Post Arthrosis (see FB)	Online Marketing Employee
<b>Website</b> - Present Device 1 (see FB)	Online Marketing Employee
<b>Website</b> - Present Device 2 (see FB)	Online Marketing Employee
<b>Website</b> - Lecture Invite (see FB)	Online Marketing Employee
<b>Website</b> - Post-reporting Lecture (see FB)	Online Marketing Employee
Rent space & book caterer for <b>Lecture</b>	Medical Assistant
Design Invitation - <b>Lecture</b> on Arthrosis	Agency: Shadowplay GmbH
Print <b>Lecture Invite</b>	Agency: Shadowplay GmbH
Distribute <b>Lecture Invite</b>	Medical Assistants
Hold <b>Lecture</b>	Orthopaedists
Brief Agency to create <b>Newsletters</b>	Owners
<b>Newsletter</b> - Arthrosis Special	External Service Provider
<b>Newsletter</b> - Arthrosis Special 2	External Service Provider
Purchase 3D Animation / <b>Waiting Room TV</b>	Owners

# Control

The table below lists suggestions for KIP's which should be used in order to monitor the marketing communications campaign.

## 1. Objective: Raise the consumer's awareness of arthrosis and the company's diagnostic services and treatment options

<b>KPI's</b>	# shares of arthrosis posts on FB
	# likes of arthrosis posts on FB
	# comments of arthrosis posts on FB
	# of people doing the arthrosis self-check
	# of patients making appointments to diagnose / treat arthrosis
	# of lecture participants
	Average open rate of arthrosis newsletter

## 2. Objective: Increase the number of MRI scans used to diagnose arthrosis by 5% over the next 6 months

<b>KPI</b>	# of MRI scans performed to diagnose arthrosis after the start of the communications campaign
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## 3. Objective: Increase the number of MBST® treatments and Hyaluronic Acid Injections by 10% over the next 6 months

<b>KPI</b>	# of MBST treatments and Hyaluronic Acid Injections sold after the start of the communications campaign
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## **Declaration of authorship of an academic paper**

I hereby declare that I have written this paper myself and used no other sources or resources than those indicated, have clearly marked verbatim quotations as such, and clearly indicated the source of all paraphrased references, and have observed the General Study and Examination Regulations of Reutlingen University for bachelor and master programmes, the specific regulations for study and examinations of my study programme, and the Regulations for Ensuring Good Academic Practice of Reutlingen University.

Neither this paper nor any part of this paper is a part of any other material presented for examination at this or any other institution

Reutlingen, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017

Katharina Stock