



Branding/ Reputation

- EDITORIAL, *L. DONOSO BACH*
- THE ART OF INFLUENCING
- CLICK, LIKE, RETWEET: HEALTHCARE REPUTATION ONLINE, *M. ENNIS-O'CONNOR*
- SOCIAL MEDIA IN HEALTHCARE, *S. SYED-ABDUL*
- SOCIAL MEDIA: GETTING IT RIGHT IN THE MARKETING PLAN, *R. SMITH*
- THE RIPPLE EFFECT: SUSTAINABILITY IN HEALTHCARE, *W. CLARK*

AI AND RADIOLOGY, *P. CHANG*
HAPPY STAFF, SAFE PATIENTS,
U. PRABHU

QUALITY AND SAFETY: ROLE OF
THE BOARD, *L. ROBSON*

QUALITY AND SAFETY IN
RADIOLOGY, *L. DONOSO BACH,*
G. BOLAND

SPORTS MEDICINE IMAGING,
G. RODAS/ K. NASIF

THE PAYER DETERMINES, BUT IT IS
NOT THE PATIENT, *P. KAPITEIN*

EXCHANGING 'MAMMOGRAPHY'
SCREENING WITH 'BREAST
CANCER' SCREENING, *N. CAPPELLO*

POINT-OF-CARE ULTRASOUND
SCANNERS, *ECRI*

CONNECTING IMAGING AND
INFORMATION IN THE ERA OF AI,
D. KOFF

ELECTRONIC CLINICAL HANDOVER,
J.J. COUGHLAN

DECONSTRUCTION OF BUSINESS
PROCESSES TO DISRUPTION OF

BUSINESS MODELS, *P-M. MEIER*

ENHANCING THE PATIENT
EXPERIENCE, *D.G. RELIGIOSO,*
E.S. DECIUS

ROBOTIC COMPANION ON WARD,
M. KEEN

BRINGING LIVE MUSIC TO
ADULTS AND CHILDREN ACROSS
HEALTHCARE, *S. ROWLAND-
JONES*

HEALTH SPENDING IN GREECE
UNDER RESTRAINT MEASURES,
D. LAPPOU



The art of influencing

What's behind the phenomenon?

Top influencers from the healthcare field weigh in on what it has taken to establish credibility in their niche.

Industry influencers have always existed in one shape or form but today their reach has been leveraged by social media networks.

The modern-day influencer is a person who can impact opinions and bring 'food-for-thought' topics to the forefront through the power of their blogs, LinkedIn, Twitter or via another of the myriad of online channels.

While the act of 'liking' or 'sharing' on a social media channel and growing a reputation may appear on the surface to have superficial value (it doesn't take long to press a thumbs up!), an influencer's online presence is actually a result of and developed parallel to old-fashioned graft in their field. HealthManagement.org spoke to a selection of top healthcare influencers about how they have made their names.

João Bocas

*The Wearables Expert and
CEO Digital Salutem*

 @WearablesExpert



"I believe that healthcare is very unique in its own right so to be called a top healthcare influencer is such a privilege. With that in mind, I would like to breakdown 'Healthcare' and 'Influencer' into two separate parts in order to make sure that the blend of the two words together makes sense. Starting with healthcare; does this person clearly display a deep understanding and insight of the industry by his/her involvement on a daily basis in professional terms? Is this professional trusted and seen as a credible and respected opinion leader? Is this person passionate and actively involved in making a difference to people's lives with his/her contribution? Now addressing influence, which is probably even trickier, I have to ask what's the role of the influencer? How do we dictate influence? Is this professional contributing to the shaping up of the industry by connecting people, solving problems and sharing knowledge? I could come up with many more discussion points, although in my opinion some of these questions must be asked before we can call anyone a top health influencer."

João Bocas contributes regularly to industry events, either as a keynote speaker, moderator, chair or panelist where he shares his expertise and knowledge gained over the past 20 years. As a thought leader in wearables, internet of things (IoT), digital health and healthcare innovation, João explores the intersection of technology in modelling business models and shaping consumer behaviour. He is a Top 100 global digital health influencer, a foremost technology award programme that highlights bright lights in healthtech industries.

Bertalan Mesko

*Director, The Medical Futurist
Institute*

 @Berci

"To be selected as a top influencer, you need to forget what it is like to feel comfortable; remain extremely curious about the future, be ready to make mistakes and never share Coelho-like quotes like this..."

Bertalan Mesko, MD, PhD is a speaker, researcher and author. As a physician, he has a PhD in genomics and his books on the digital health sphere have earned him the status of an Amazon Top 100 author. More than 3 million readers follow his blog and he is one of LinkedIn's Top Voices – an accolade recognising those who have "gotten the professional world talking".




Marie Ennis-O'Connor
 Founder - Health Care Social Media
 @JBBC



"Becoming a health-care influencer doesn't happen overnight; it takes commitment, hard work, and above all a passion for wanting to improve healthcare communication. You build influence from the ground up by speaking at key events, getting featured in industry publications, and creating a strong visible presence online. Be authentic, friendly and helpful, and consistently provide content that is highly relevant and valuable to your audience and you will cement your influencer status."


One of Health IT's Top 100 global social media influencers in 2017, Marie Ennis O'Connor is a digital communications strategist and internationally-recognised keynote speaker, who specialises in providing consultancy and training services to healthcare organisations. She is on a panel of multi-sectoral experts in Path To Zero, the Economist Intelligence Unit's research, policy, and advocacy initiative that aims to surface innovative strategies to support the elimination of the Hepatitis C virus. She also serves as an external international board member of the Mayo Clinic Center for Social Media, and sits on the board of the Patient Empowerment Foundation.

Rafael Vidal
 Cardiologist, Hospital Universitario Lucus Augusti & Former Nucleus ESC Cardiologists of Tomorrow European Society of Cardiology
 @rafavidalperez

"You need to be open minded and it's essential that you share health content of quality and interest for a big audience. One key element to be an influencer is to be in the most important congresses to give a live coverage of these events, providing useful knowledge and essential information."

Rafael Vidal is a clinical cardiologist specialising in cardiac imaging and acute cardiac care. As well as being active in cardiac training through membership of education committees, he is also passionate about clinical research, cardiology specialist training and application of new technologies in health. He has appeared in the top ten influencers list of healthcare social media analytics company, Symplur.



Ian Weissman
 Radiologist - Milwaukee Veterans Affairs Medical Center Milwaukee
 @DrlanWeissman

"I really do not believe that there are 'top healthcare influencers'. I am always learning from every individual who shares their ideas and views on social media. The strength of this medium is that it is a team effort. What I try to do is to comment on or share articles about issues that I feel very strongly about. I believe in the power of the healthcare community across the world, and I believe that together we are producing positive change. I would encourage anyone who believes strongly in an issue to get involved. Your voice matters."

Radiologist Ian Weissman is a strong patient care advocate who believes in using innovation and leadership best practices to improve the patient experience. He is the first radiologist in the United States to earn the prestigious title of Leadership Mastery through the American College of Radiology's landmark Radiology Leadership Institute. Dr. Weissman strongly believes in collaboration, and is an active participant on Twitter, named, in spite of his above modesty, by multi-million member CompassPHS as one of the "10 fantastic physicians to follow."

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