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strategic healthcare initiatives

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Effective Innovations in Women's Health Service Line Strategic Planning

A white paper by:

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A successful women's health service line is a cornerstone for all successful health care enterprises. Women are the major consumers and influencers of health care, and the growth of this service line is the life blood that will insure the long term survival of health care organizations. Challenging financial trends require planners to become more innovative in their planning for women's services. The next big growth potential may lie in the smaller niche markets or in the ability to successfully integrate strategies across service lines.

A broader definition of women's health encourages innovation across service lines to capture the hearts and minds of all women regardless of their point of contact. The limiting view of women's health as OB/Gyn has given way to gender based medicine and niche programs such as women's heart programs. Growth in women's health may come in your orthopedics program or it may come in the ability to "right size" your existing women's health program with innovative strategies.

The Power of Women

The Advisory Board noted that, "Women represent 60 percent of [US hospital] volumes. . .generating \$200 billion in contribution profit annually, and that does not include the contribution from the family." Women utilize more health care resources more frequently than men throughout their lives. Women control \$5 trillion in US business and consumer spending and influence 80% of all such spending nationally according to Gallop. Marti Barletta, President of TrendSight states, "Women are the number one economic opportunity in America, the largest market segment in the world, the chief purchasing officers of just about everything consumer, corporate or small business – and most importantly, there is no close second."

Consumer Spending

- ❖ Women operate as the "chief purchasing officers" in almost all households, and they are estimated to make 80% of all household buying decisions
- ❖ In addition to traditional female categories of spending, women are responsible for more than
 - 50% of all do-it-yourself purchases
 - 51% of electronics
 - 89% of bank accounts
 - 80% of healthcare

Household Income

- ❖ Women bring in at least half of the income in 55% of US households
- ❖ In 27% of US households, single women are the sole earners
- ❖ 30% of working wives earn more than their husbands

Corporate Spending

- ❖ In corporations, they constitute 50% of managers and professionals
- ❖ Women have accounted for 70% of all privately held start-ups and small businesses over the last 15 years
- ❖ For the first time in history, women represent a larger segment of the work force

Women and the Internet

- ❖ Women account for 60% of internet users
- ❖ They use the internet to manage their lives, from shopping to health and wellness research, to social networking and paying bills online

Word of Mouth

- ❖ Women are 3x more likely to share personal stories with a friend than men
- ❖ 64 million US women regularly share advice on products or services
- ❖ 25 million of them wield their influence online via blogs and social networking
- ❖ 95% of women will ask for the advice of other women in the selection of a healthcare provider or facility
- ❖ If women are satisfied with their services they will tell 3 – 5 people, if they are dissatisfied, they will tell ten times that number

About Women . . .

Women are totally individual and unique in their world views. Planners are faced with a conundrum of disease state and life segment planning strategies combined with a twist of individuality and personalization. This is what makes strategic planning in Women's Services so complex.

First and foremost, women do not fit into nice, neat categories and they resent being grouped into them. That being said, there are generational themes within the women's population that can be helpful in strategic planning.

Senior Women (65 – 100+)

- ❖ Post depression and WWII era
- ❖ Frugal and grounded
- ❖ Traditional in values but push the margins
- ❖ 80% of women were married in the 1950's
- ❖ The "Red Hat" club
- ❖ The wealthiest retirees in history
- ❖ Volunteerism
- ❖ Social activism
- ❖ Active in all regards, even sexually

Senior Women (65 – 100+) cont

- ❖ Use time and resources to push political agenda – AARP, etc.
- ❖ Travel
- ❖ Knowledge and experience seeking
- ❖ Longest life span in history
- ❖ Discerning and demanding of value
- ❖ Huge growth segment of population

Boomer Women "Tie-Dye Generation" (45 – 65)

- ❖ 36 million women
 - 1 in 3 women in the US is a "boomer"
- ❖ Predicted to live to age of 86
- ❖ "Sandwich Generation" – making health decisions for parents and children
- ❖ Non-traditional, non-conformist
- ❖ As unique as each "tie-dye" shirt
- ❖ The "Women's Movement"
- ❖ Driven to succeed . . . "Live to Work"
- ❖ Sleep and time deprived
- ❖ 50% of Americans live in non-traditional family structures where the heads of household aren't married
- ❖ Women spend 50% more time providing care than male caregivers
- ❖ 50%+ divorce rate
- ❖ "Sexual Revolution"
- ❖ "Superman Syndrome" – "I can have it all . . ."
- ❖ High level of stress and responsibility
- ❖ Multitasking experts
- ❖ Long term company loyalty – what can I do for the company?
- ❖ Rebounding grown children
- ❖ Delayed retirement
- ❖ Age defying
- ❖ Health oriented

Gen X Women (25 – 45)

- ❖ Immediate gratification
- ❖ "The me generation"
- ❖ Risk takers
- ❖ Multitask with goal of leisure time

Gen X Women (25 – 45) cont.

- ❖ Values time more than money “Work to Live”
- ❖ Health oriented
- ❖ Highest users of internet
- ❖ On time information only – don’t waste my time
- ❖ Values freedom
- ❖ 48% of couples lived together unmarried
- ❖ More equal relationships with male partners in work and home
- ❖ No long term company loyalty – “What can the company do for me?”
- ❖ Convenient and customized oriented

Women’s Concepts Across Generations

In spite of the polarities and dissimilarities between different generations of women, there are some concepts that are universal across the generations.

- Relationship oriented – Relationships are a high priority for women whether they are personal, professional or with a vendor. Women are much more likely to engage if they feel a personal relationship exists. They desire a partnership with their health care providers and they will usually consult their significant others in health care matters.
- Interdependent – Women are very interdependent with their significant others and will seek them out for support and counsel. Women are more likely to engage if you include or accommodate their significant others.
- Communication – The number one reason that women change health care providers is poor communication. Women have very high needs for intensive, timely and personal communication. Physician’s offices who work with predominantly women receive an average of 40 – 60 telephone calls a day per provider. Telephone triage is a critical point of entry service in Women’s Health. Girls obtain verbal skills earlier and to a greater degree than boys. Women are natural born communicators and health educators. If you educate a man you educate one person but if you educate a woman you educate the world.
- Knowledge Seeking – Women seek out health information significantly more frequently than men do. Boomers and Gen Xers rely heavily on the internet for information whereas senior women seek out health information through seminars, magazines and television. Women desire to be empowered through knowledge about life style and wellness which helps them feel less vulnerable to disease, disability and death. This will build her trust and loyalty because she perceives that you understand what is important to her.
- Emotional – Women perceive almost all interactions within an emotional context and have a higher retention rate with an emotional link. In general, women will take in factual information but they reformulate it into an emotional context. Women base 85% of their decisions on emotional factors.
- Personal – Women want personal care that is unique to them. Men often prefer to remain anonymous whereas women desire to be known and nurtured at their discretion. Women may choose to be very private about certain services that they are sensitive about. They want the control and freedom to make these choices.
- Respect – Women desire mutual respect with their providers and to be treated as a partner in the relationship. If women feel disrespected, they will emotionally disengage and shut down. It is likely that she will never forgive and forget.
- Intuitive – Women read situations and people very quickly and make an intuitive judgment. With women, you really only get one chance to make a first impression. If you make a good first impression, it will be lasting and will

promote long term loyalty. If you make a bad first impression, you will never get a second chance.

- Wholistic – Women want to be viewed as a whole complex, unique being not a body part or a disease. In this case, the whole is much greater than the sum of its parts. Women are the most complex organism on earth! Women are an integration of the following dimensions: biological, psychological, sociological, cultural, sexual and spiritual. They expect to be treated as a multi-dimensional person.
- Trust – Trust is a huge issue for women, especially when it comes to health care. Women cannot focus on their health and well being if they do not feel safe. If they do not feel that they are being communicated with honestly, then they will not feel safe and they will not trust their providers. Trust, honesty and safety are the basis in which women formulate their relationships. A violation of any of these elements will be perceived as betrayal and the relationship will be damaged. That is why meticulous consistent messages need to be presented to women.

Women's Concepts Across Generations

- ❖ Relationship oriented
- ❖ Interdependent
- ❖ Communication intense
- ❖ Knowledge seeking
- ❖ Emotional
- ❖ Personal
- ❖ Respect
- ❖ Intuitive
- ❖ Wholistic
- ❖ Trust

What Women Want . . .

Our proprietary database of thousands of women interviewed across hundreds of focus groups across the US and across the

female life span, revealed that “**Women want high quality, convenient, private, timely, personal, female focused health care.**”

Unique Aspects of Strategic Planning in Women's Health:

Gender Based Medicine

Gender based medicine is the next generation of Women's Health Care. It is a new specialty that views women's health in a much broader perspective. Gender based medicine in women is defined as disorders that are unique to women, disorders that are predominantly in women and disorders that have a different disease course for women. This specialty embraces the uniqueness of women as a gender and totally rejects the notion of women as simply smaller male human beings. The challenge with gender based medicine is that you are imposing a population based matrix model onto a hierarchal organ and disease based model.

Trends in Women's Health – The Riches are in the Niches

Demographic and market trends reveal that the significant business development opportunities are in boomer and senior women. To a much less extent Gen X women due to the low margins and high risk in obstetrics. Product development will be in the niches, but your umbrella brand should be focused on total women's wellness and lifestyle solutions. Women need to believe that you and your entire team honestly care about them and their well being.

Boomer and Senior Women Opportunities

- ❖ Urogynecology and pelvic floor services
- ❖ Cardio-vascular services
- ❖ Orthopedic services
- ❖ Gastroenterology services
- ❖ Cancer services
- ❖ Neurological health
- ❖ Mental health
- ❖ Podiatry
- ❖ Bariatrics/weight management
- ❖ Cosmetic surgery (stalled due to economy)
- ❖ Geriatrics

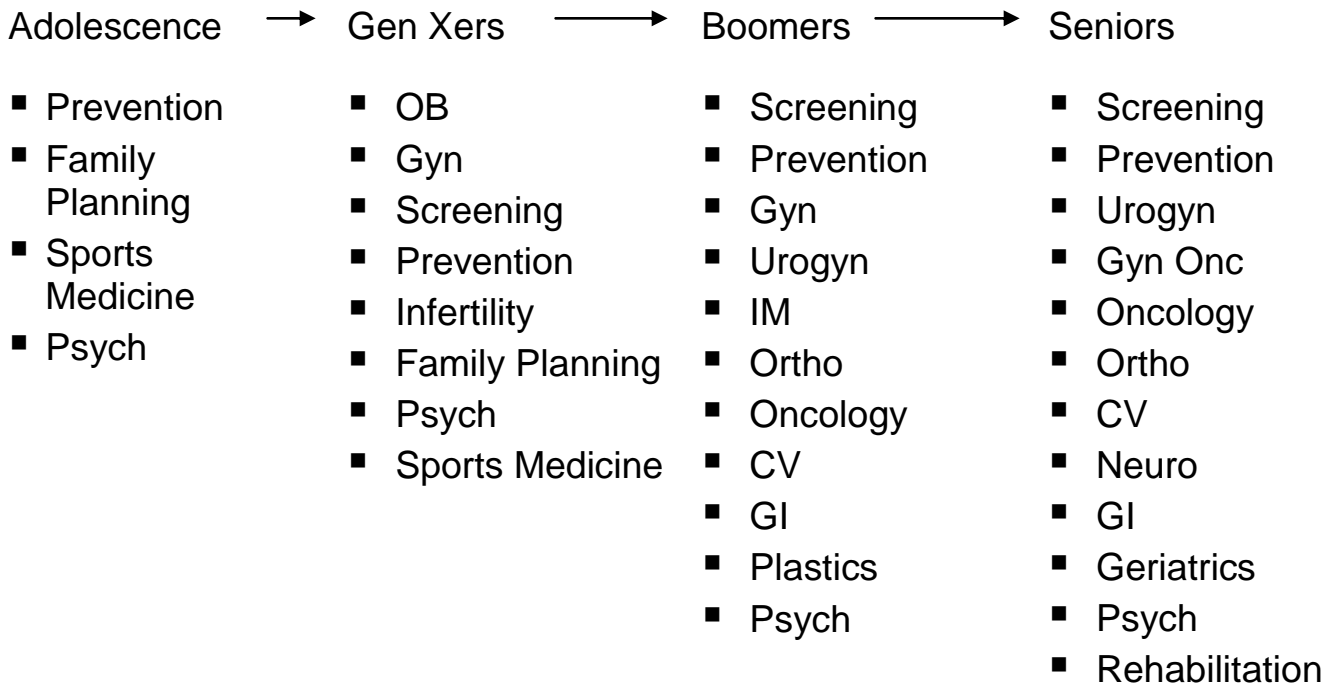
Gen X Women Opportunities

- ❖ Fetal intervention services
- ❖ Perinatology services
- ❖ NICU services – single room design
- ❖ Infertility services
- ❖ Sports medicine services
- ❖ Children’s hospitals developing maternity centers and fetal intervention centers

Opportunities Across Generations

- ❖ Women’s centers
 - Virtual
 - Bricks and mortar
- ❖ Women’s hospitals
- ❖ Retail

Lifespan Model of Opportunities



Multispecialty and Multidisciplinary

Women's health is a population based specialty which is very different than the typical medical model based upon diseases and organ systems. Therefore, women's health needs a strong base of primary care providers with an integrated network of multiple specialists. For example, the development of a Women's Pelvic Floor and Incontinence Center requires integration across the following specialties: urogynecologists, gynecologists, gynecologists, urologists, colorectal surgeons as well as the integration of referrals from: gynecologist, obstetricians, internal medicine, family practice and gastroenterology. Women's services are also multidisciplinary which relies heavily upon processes to integrate across disciplines. If we go back to our previous example of a Women's Pelvic Floor Incontinence Center, services will need to be provided by the following disciplines: physical therapy, radiology, nursing, medicine, laboratory and nutrition as well as support group services from social services and health education.

Health Care Employees Engagement

The majority of health care employees are women, therefore, the alignment and buy-in of this stakeholder group is even more important in women's services. Women will definitely seek out friends and family that work in health care for referrals and advice. In women's services, your health system employees are your primary sales force. Any strategic planning process in women's services should include an employee focus group.

Community Perception

Women's services is a very high profile business, and community reputation can be your greatest asset or your largest obstacle. It is absolutely critical to your survival that your hospital have a top-of-mind, good reputation in women's services.

A long term umbrella branding strategy in women's wellness along with at least one center of excellence in women's services such as a Breast Center, will give women the impression that you perform well in all women's services. That alone can maintain your reputation, as you build other products and services. If your hospital has a poor reputation, whether deserved or not, you will have to do something dramatic as a game changer. The legacy of a poor reputation in women's services can haunt you for decades. Women don't forget and forgive easily.

Female Focused

Women consistently want female-focused care, albeit not in those exact terms. Female-focused care involves the following tactics:

- Well decorated feminine environment
 - "It looks and feels different immediately"
- Relaxing environment – i.e., tranquility room
- Personal reception
 - Use of name
 - Personal itinerary
 - Knows patient background
 - Relationship established
 - Service standards re: answering and responding to phone calls and emails
 - Exceptional customer service

- Navigation
 - One stop shop
 - Integration processes
 - Virtual women's center
 - Referrals scheduled by office staff not patient
 - All providers, including referrals, know patient background
 - Use of technology
 - o Internet
 - o Kiosks
 - Personal itinerary
- Timely and convenient
 - Immediate results at visit - especially breast services
 - Immediate service upon arrival
 - Respect for time
 - On time, every time – “30 minute guarantee in and out”
 - Hours are convenient for lifestyle
 - Locations are safe and convenient
 - Close and easy parking
 - Childcare
- Privacy
 - Design of exam rooms
 - Process of visit staging areas
 - Exam gowns/clothing
 - Appropriate scheduling of types of patients – i.e., infertility with OB, hysterectomy with OB, etc.
 - Waiting room options
 - Private communication and counseling

Your market differentiation will need to occur in your niche services, integration processes, facilities and center of excellence.

Social Networking Technology

The boomers and Gen Xers are the largest group and most active internet and mobile device users. Women in these generations are accustomed to the convenience of information and interaction at their fingertips. Hospitals that target these generations must have a very bold and robust strategy for their website, internet communication and social networking strategies.

Unique Aspects of Strategic Planning in Women's Health

- ❖ Gender based medicine
- ❖ Trends in women's health
- ❖ Multispecialty
- ❖ Multidisciplinary
- ❖ Healthcare employees engagement
- ❖ Community perception
- ❖ Female focused
- ❖ Generation gap factor
- ❖ Social networking technology

Generation Gap Factor

As discussed previously, the three generations in women's services are distinctly different. Although, the universal concepts across the age groups provide a significant base upon which to build women's services. The challenge is to provide women's services that meet wholistic women's health needs across the lifespan. Specialty services that are generation specific make it much easier to develop the product and marketing, yet it is strategically imperative that all women's services, products and providers are integrated under the umbrella brand of women's wellness and life style solutions.

Innovations in Women's Health Planning

Needs Based Market Segmentation -

Needs based market segmentation is a planning strategy that is very important in Women's Health Strategic Planning. “The riches are in the niches”, and you have to find the niches that are needed in your market. A thorough demographic analysis of the female population along with the application of incidence and prevalence data will help you identify what your potential market is for various niche

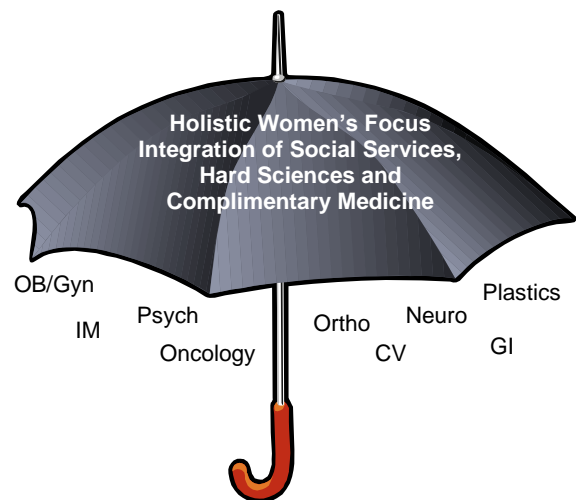
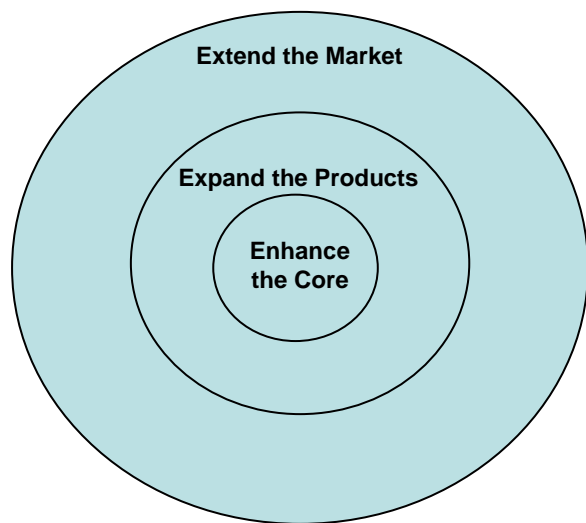
services. Comparing the potential market with market trends will help you identify gaps in products and services.

Mining Your Service Mix – Mining your service mix for niche opportunities is another strategy that is very important in Women’s Health. For example, 65 – 75% of your orthopedic patients should be women. If your percentage is lower than that, you either have a competitor that is skimming your business or you have an unmet need.

Competitive Advantage Services – An analysis of your current products and services is very important to identify any gaps or potential opportunities, and to identify sources of competitive advantage. You may discover that you need to enhance your core products, expand your products or extend the market. Regardless, you must identify at least one area in which to build a competitive advantage in women’s health. A hospital can be prominent in Women’s Services without being the market leader in obstetrical services. Depending on the stability of your market and migration patterns, they may be two distinct segments. If you have a very stable market, then loyalty building relationship and long term strategies with OB patients are essential.

Intra and Inter-Service Line Integration -

The final major innovation in Women’s Services Strategic Planning is to identify strategies and tactics to promote intra-service line integration and inter-service line integration. The integration of services, “one stop shopping” is very important to women. An example of a strategy to promote intra-service line integration is the development of a virtual women’s center. You may have many products and services in your women’s services portfolio but they may be in various locations with great variability in quality and structure. A virtual women’s center is one that is developed based upon an integrated planning process, integrated structure, standardization of branding, marketing and customer service, and the development of tactics to promote seamless integration within the service line. To the consumer, it appears that everything is well coordinated with great ease of access and consistent quality and message. Women’s services, by virtue of being a population based model, crosses many other service lines. In order to maximize the harvest across your service lines and to prevent leakage, you must make integration across service lines a top priority. One strategy is to develop a Women’s Services Umbrella Multispecialty Steering Committee that standardizes processes across the service lines.



Innovations in Women's Health Planning

- ❖ Needs based market segmentation
- ❖ Mining your service mix
- ❖ Competitive advantage
- ❖ Intra and inter-service line integration

Final Thoughts

Like it or not, women are THE MAJORITY CONSUMERS for all health care and non-health care enterprises. They are the life blood of the hospital, and the long term success of your entire business depends upon how well you capture the hearts and minds of the women in your community. Innovative strategic planning in women's services involves a thorough understanding of: wholistic theories of women, and what women want and how to give it to them in a value added context. Everyone in your organization will benefit from innovative strategic planning in women's services, especially your patients.

About the Author

Vicki Lucas, Ph.D.

For the past 25 years, Dr. Lucas has been recognized as one of the foremost leaders in Women's and Children's Health. She has served on the boards of every major women's health organization, including: International Congress on Women's Health, National Association of Women's Health, American Hospital Association Maternal Child Governing Council, Association of Women's Health, Obstetrics and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) Consulting Group, Spirit of Women National Foundation and Ireland Report on Women's Health. Dr. Lucas was Chairman of the Division of Women and Childbearing Families at the University of Texas and has held academic appointments at six major universities throughout the United States.

Dr. Lucas is currently adjunct faculty at Johns Hopkins University. She co-edited AWHONN's book on Women's Health and has published more than fifty articles and chapters on women's and children's health in peer reviewed publications. She is highly sought after as a keynote speaker and has presented more than 250 speeches across the United States and abroad. Dr. Lucas has served in senior executive positions over the past 15 years in Women's and Children's Services in two large health systems each with more than 11,000 annual births. She has been responsible for \$800M in annual revenue and has managed major building projects of \$75M and above. Dr. Lucas has provided consultation services to hundreds of clients across the United States and Europe and has procured over \$5M in grant funds throughout her career. Her combined expertise in clinical, finance and business allows her to successfully bridge the gap between business and clinical concerns. Dr. Lucas has extensive experience in strategic planning, risk reduction, business development, process improvement, market research, market planning, brand identification, facility planning, program development, product development, provider development, integration strategies and women's and children's service line development. She has conducted extensive market research and maintains a clearinghouse of data, white papers and strategies. Dr. Lucas has served as an advisor for the following organizations: CDC, NIH, HHS, State of Texas, State of Maryland, State of Pennsylvania, ANA, AHA, Center for American Nurses, The Advisory Board, The Jacobs Institute, The Snowmass Institute, The Ireland Report on Women's Health, Spirit of Women Hospital Network, American Medical Exchange, AAP, ACOG and AWHONN. She is currently the President of Vicki Lucas, LLC a consulting firm specializing in strategic business development in Women's and Children's Services.

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