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## Integrated marketing communications plan for HospiceADEASY

Megan Elizabeth Horn  
*University of Northern Iowa*

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INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS  
PLAN FOR HOSPICEADEASY

A Project  
Submitted  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Designation  
University Honors

Megan Elizabeth Horn  
University of Northern Iowa  
May 2011

This Study by: Megan Horn

Entitled: Integrated Marketing Communications Plan for HospiceADEASY

has been approved as meeting the thesis or project requirement for the Designation  
University Honors

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steve Corbin, Honors Thesis Advisor, Department of Marketing

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jessica Moon, Director, University Honors Program

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### **Executive Summary**

HospiceADEASY ([www.hospiceadeasy.com](http://www.hospiceadeasy.com)) is an online store where hospices can purchase high-quality, pre-produced, customizable hospice promotional materials. Available materials include billboards, brochures, e-marketing materials, print advertisements, 30-second radio ads and 30-second TV ads. HospiceADEASY is operated by ME&V, a full-service marketing, advertising and fundraising agency. ME&V has a wealth of experience in hospice marketing, fundraising, higher education marketing, healthcare marketing and more.

This plan sets out the steps HospiceADEASY should take to increase its sales and reach a wider audience. It covers all the bases from traditional direct mail advertising to new forms of online communications and can be implemented, in full or in part, by ME&V. It provides all the necessary tools to create a campaign based on research and strategy. There are measurable goals, a timeline and an itemized budget to help ME&V in implementing the campaign.

A marketing plan for HospiceADEASY is important because the product is the first and only of its kind. Hospices are not aware of the products and services HospiceADEASY provides, which means they are unable to reap the benefits. This plan will inform hospices about HospiceADEASY's free and low-cost resources for hospices, which will in turn allow them to serve their patients better.

The following plan uses a variety of industry terms. Below are the key terms and their definitions as it pertains to this marketing plan.

*Social Media* – The collection of Internet- and mobile-based tools for sharing and discussing information (Social Media).

*Social Network/Social Media Platform* – Any of the individual communication systems that make up the whole of social media. Example: Facebook is a social network.

*Electronic Media* – Any media having to do with the Internet, including social media, Web

advertising, websites, mobile media and more.

*Advertisement* – A paid form of promotion.

*Promotion* – Any form of communication about a brand to existing or potential customers.

*Promotional Materials* – Any materials used to communicate about a brand.

*Search Engine Optimization (SEO)* – Writing content and code for a website that improves the site's page rank in organic search results.

*Pay-Per-Click Advertisements* – Online text ads that drive traffic to a website and are charged based on the number of user clicks.

*Search Engine Marketing (SEM)* – The combination of SEO and pay-per-click advertising to drive more visitors to a website and into the buying cycle.

*Bounce Rate* – The percentage of visitors who leave the site after only looking at one page.

## **Primary Research – Survey**

### **Methodology**

A survey was developed to measure various aspects of hospice marketing. Questions were created with the council of research experts at ME&V and marketing professors at the University of Northern Iowa. It included a variety of question formats including multiple choice, short answer and Likert scale. See Appendix 1 for the survey questions.

Survey questions, methodology and consent (see Appendix 2) were reviewed by the UNI Institutional Review Board. It was granted exemption and needed no further review. Once completed and approved, the survey was built on SurveyGizmo.com, a secure online survey platform. ME&V provided a mailing list of hospices around the country. A link to the survey was sent to the approximately 300 hospices with a valid e-mail address. See Appendix 3 for the e-mail sent to hospices.

Recipients had three weeks to respond to the survey. A total of 50 surveys were completed by hospice marketers around the nation, resulting in sufficient data to conduct statistical analyses. The 50 responses were analyzed using SPSS and the results can be found in the following pages.

### Survey Results

*Question 1:* How do you prefer to be informed about new products and services that can assist you in your hospice advertising and promotional efforts?

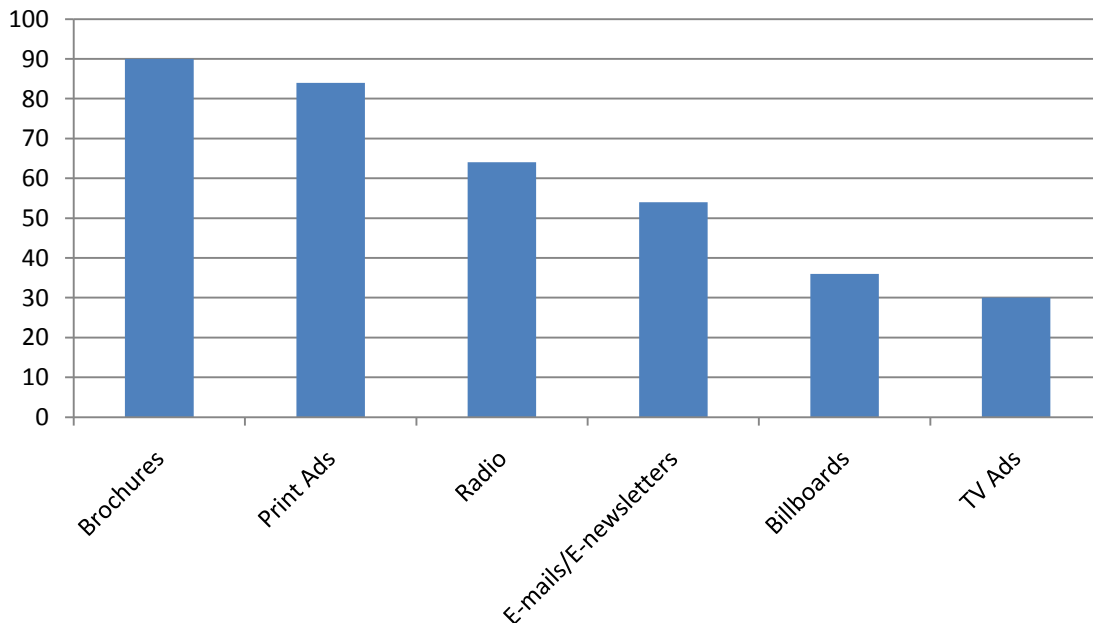
The top answers were:

E-mail	84% of respondents
Brochures	46% of respondents
Direct Mail	38% of respondents

Other popular answers included social media, newsletters and conferences.

*Question 2:* What mediums do you use to advertise and promote your hospice services?

Brochures	90
Print ads	84
Radio	64
E-mails/E-newsletters	54
Billboards	36
TV ads	30
Other (please explain)	Some responses included: word of mouth, community involvement, social media, phone book, website, giveaways, conferences/seminars, news releases, clinical relations coordinator. One hospice responded “we do not advertise”



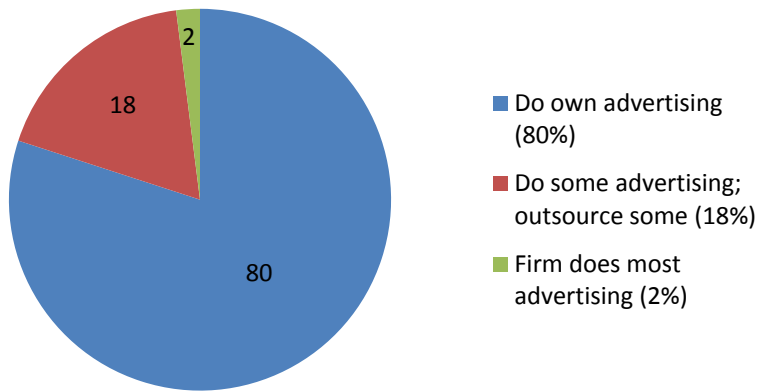


*Question 3:* What has been your most effective advertising/promotion medium? Why?

The responses to this question ranged greatly. Many said radio ads, print ads, brochures, billboards, referrals, video and their website. Several (4) acknowledged that this is a difficult question to answer, as tracking advertising effectiveness is not always easy.

*Question 4:* Please select one of the following that best describes your advertising/promotion.

Most (80 percent) of the hospices do their own advertising. Some split their advertising between in house and a firm. And only one hospice has most of its advertising done by a firm.



*Question 5:* Have you purchased pre-produced ads or promotional materials online?

Only five hospices (10 percent) have purchased pre-produced advertisements or promotional materials online. The other 90 percent have not.

**The following questions were just answered by the 10 percent of hospices that have purchase online ads or promotional materials.**

*Question 6:* From what website did you purchase your pre-produced hospice ads/promotional materials?

- NHPCO (2)
- Eric Mower and Associates
- Promos&Logos.com
- Hospice Strategy Group

*Question 7:* What did you like about purchasing pre-produced hospice ads/promotional materials online?

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| Convenience  | 5 (100% of respondents) |
| Ability to add my hospice’s logo/contact information | 5 (100% of respondents) |
| Low Cost   | 2 (40% of respondents)  |
| High-quality advertisements                          | 2 (40% of respondents)  |

*Question 8:* What did you **dislike** about purchasing pre-produced hospice ads/promotional materials online?

- Not personalized enough to our brand and brand message (purchased from Eric Mower and Associates)
- Could not use it again without paying (purchased from Hospice Strategy Group)
- Not always sure of the quality of an item or the size of the imprint area for agency name (purchased from PromosandLogos.com)
- Everyone else used this also...lack of individuality (purchased from NHPCO)
- The product was not exactly what I had thought it would be when it arrived (purchased from NHPCO)

*Question 9:* Which of the following types of pre-produced ads/promotional materials did you purchase online?

Print ads	3
Billboards	1
Radio Spots	1
Brochures	1
Other	PSA, giveaway items, video clips

*Question 10:* I would purchase pre-produced, customizable hospice ads or promotional materials online again.

Neutral/no opinion	2
Strongly disagree	1

*Note:* 2 participants did not respond

*Question 11:* Which of the following types of pre-produced ads/promotional materials would you purchase online?

Print ads	2
Radio ads	1
Billboards	1
Brochures	1

**The following questions were just answered by the 40 percent of hospices that have NOT purchased online ads or promotional materials.**

*Question 12:* I would purchase pre-produced, customizable ads or promotional materials online to promote my hospice.

Neutral/No Opinion	69.2% of respondents
Strongly Disagree	26.9% of respondents
Strongly Agree	3.8% of respondents

This question was asked on a 1-5 Likert scale. One being strongly disagree, 3 being neutral/no opinion, and 5 being strongly agree. The average was 2.61, meaning on average, hospices will not purchase online ads or promotional materials. The number, however, was not statistically significant.

*Question 13:* Which of the following types of pre-produced ads/promotional materials would you purchase online?

Print ads	51.4% of respondents
E-mail Newsletters	40.0% of respondents
Radio Spots	25.7% of respondents
Brochures	20.0% of respondents

**The following questions were answered by all participants.**

*Question 14:* What topics/themes would you like to see in those ads/promotional materials?

Quality Care	64% of participants
Support for Family Members	60% of participants
Funding Assistance	20% of participants
Other	Education about hospices, benefits, comfort, myth busting, testimonials, disease-specific information

*Question 15:* What factors would keep you from purchasing pre-produced ads/promotional materials online?

Ads not developed specifically for my hospice	70% of participants
Other hospices using the same ads	64% of participants
Lack of security online	2% of participants
Other	Cost (9), depersonalization, prefer to use real patients in materials, assistance is available for free

*Question 16:* Do you have any other comments about purchasing pre-produced ads/promotional materials online?

- We like to maintain control to be sure to differentiate our hospice from others
- They frequently do not reflect the patient population we serve
- Difficult to differentiate your unique programs and services when others use the same ads and materials. Should have an exclusive territory right in the state you serve.
- As long as they are branded and provide the same language, I would consider using
- Our marketing communications plans are zero-based, and unique to the service line
- Concern about using 'canned' materials that look that way; cost is always an issue
- It is a good idea, but if resources like that are available for free, we would be unlikely to purchase them

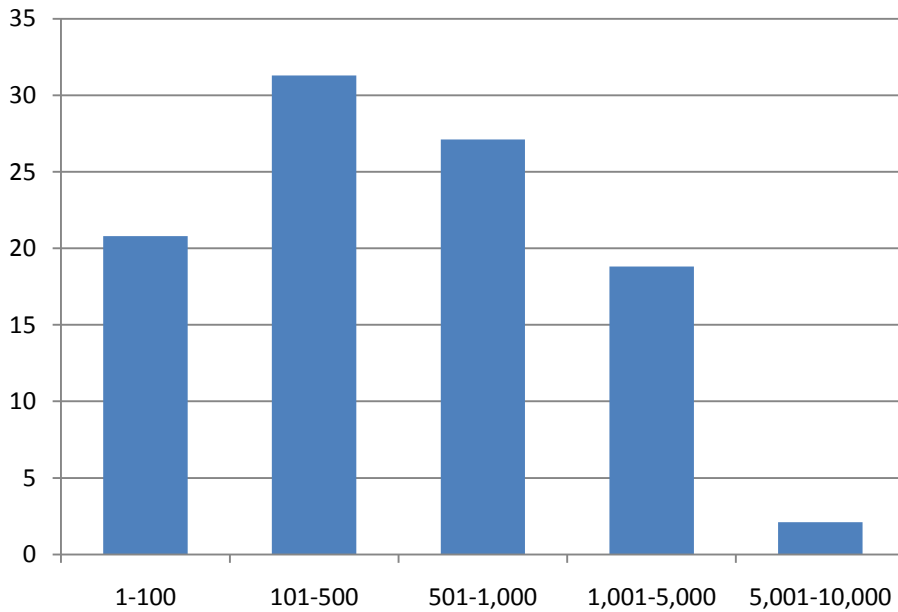
- I would consider this for a very high quality product that could be adequately personalized for our hospice
- We do utilize our national organization, NHPCO for some marketing materials

*Question 17:* What is your hospice’s zip code?

Responses were collected from hospices throughout the United States including in Iowa, Florida, Washington, Texas, Idaho and more.

*Question 18:* How many patients does your hospice serve annually?

1-100	20.8% of respondents
101-500	31.3% of respondents
501-1,000	27.1% of respondents
1,001-5,000	18.8% of respondents
5,001-10,000	2.1% of respondents



### **Survey Interpretations and Recommendations**

Overall, the survey results were inconclusive in determining whether or not hospices are interested in purchasing pre-produced ads online. Question 12 showed that respondents were neutral, leaning toward disagree, about whether they would be interested. But in question 13, most of the respondents said they would purchase at least one of the following online: print ads, e-mail newsletters, radio ads and brochures.

The largest barriers to hospices purchasing online ads were that the ads are not specifically designed for their hospice and that other hospices would be using the same ads. To overcome these barriers, the HospiceADEASY ads must reassure their customers that the ads are relevant to their hospice and that once they purchase the ads, they are the only hospice allowed to use it in that zip code.

Based on the survey, it seems there is adequate interest by small- and mid-sized hospices. Large hospices will not use the product, as they have larger budgets and larger marketing teams.

The following marketing plan is based on the results of the survey.

### **Situation Analysis**

HospiceADEASY ([www.hospiceadeasy.com](http://www.hospiceadeasy.com)) is an online store where hospices can purchase high-quality, pre-produced, customizable hospice promotional materials. Available materials include billboards, brochures, e-marketing materials, print advertisements, 30-second radio ads and 30-second TV ads. HospiceADEASY is operated by ME&V, a full-service marketing, advertising and fundraising agency. ME&V has a wealth of experience in hospice marketing, fundraising, higher education marketing, healthcare marketing and more.

Currently, ME&V has developed 34 print advertisements, three radio spots and three TV spots. They have yet to develop billboards, brochures and e-marketing materials for the site.

Hospices purchase HospiceADEASY's pre-produced marketing materials online. When they purchase the materials, they receive native files, which they can edit and customize to fit their needs. Each item on HospiceADEASY has space for the purchaser's logo and contact information.

Thus far, ME&V has only advertised HospiceADEASY through the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO). They have advertised on the NHPCO website as well as in their monthly newsletter—the NewsLine. In addition to paid advertising, ME&V has promoted the product through search engine optimization (SEO) and e-mail marketing. They send out a monthly e-newsletter, Hospice E-Tips, to those interested in hospice marketing. HospiceADEASY is in the sidebar of most of those newsletters. Currently ME&V does not track traffic on and within the HospiceADEASY site, so there are no existing statistics.

### **Competition**

HospiceADEASY is unique. It is the only fully online source for pre-produced hospice ads. However, the product does have competitors, both free and cost-per-piece.

Caring Connections, a program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO), provides resources for hospice outreach. This includes a variety of promotional materials, in direct competition with HospiceADEASY. The Caring Connections promotional materials are free, but are not as customizable as those available from HospiceADEASY. NHPCO also provides tools for hospices to develop promotional efforts in house. These resources include samples, how-to documents and promotional guides.

As a source of advertising, HospiceADEASY has an infinite amount of general competitors. These include hospice marketing agencies (such as Transcend Hospice Marketing Group) healthcare marketing agencies (such as Healthcare Success Strategies, HC&B and the Healthcare Marketing Group) as well as general advertising agencies.

Its competitors also include online advertisement template services such as Stock Layouts ([www.stocklayouts.com](http://www.stocklayouts.com)). Stock Layouts provides non-hospice-specific templates for various mediums (print, brochure, postcard, poster, and more) at prices similar to HospiceADEASY products. They even have free templates as well as healthcare-specific templates.

## **Environmental Factors**

### *Economic*

As the economy sits in a less-than-ideal state and our country goes through drastic healthcare changes, hospices—especially small, nonprofit hospices—are “working with more constrained budgets” (Duan, 2010, paragraph 1). Hospices are trying to attract more patients with less money. They are looking to cut marketing expenses without losing their reach. This budget crunching will lead hospices to search for new, cost-efficient ways to market their organization.

*Technological*

Hospices must have computer and Internet access and be willing to purchase online HospiceADEASY ads. The hospice's computer must have a program for editing the ads such as Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Quark, or at a minimum, Microsoft Paint.

*Legal*

When designing the HospiceADEASY ads, ME&V purchased extended rights to the istock photos they utilized. Purchasing extended rights to the photos allows ME&V to place them in ads and sell them, something not allowed by the basic istock licensing.

*Political*

With the upcoming healthcare reform, hospices will be spending time and money on meeting the new requirements, which may take time and money away from their marketing efforts. This is especially true for HospiceADEASY's target market of small- and mid-sized hospices.

**SWOT Analysis***Strengths*

HospiceADEASY is the only online provider of pre-made advertisements exclusively for hospices. The ads were developed by a professional, well-known healthcare marketing agency. There are a variety of ads to choose from and they are easy for hospices to obtain. The entire process is online, so they can instantly purchase, customize and use the ads.

*Weaknesses*

The product is not highly sought after. Because it is a new idea, hospices are not aware that pre-made advertisements are available online. This poses a challenge because hospice marketers must be exposed to the product then persuaded to take advantage of it. Because the ads



are pre-made and available to all hospices, some are afraid that other hospices in their area will purchase and use the same ads.

### *Opportunities*

This product is unique in the hospice advertising market. Firsts in the market tend to make the most impact, so HospiceADEASY has the opportunity to establish themselves as the first and the best for online pre-made hospice advertisements. Most small hospices cannot afford ME&V's marketing services. HospiceADEASY allows ME&V to assist small hospices with an advertising service they can afford.

### *Threats*

There is an increasing availability of free hospice marketing tools. Organizations such as the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) provide ad templates, marketing recommendations and more to hospices at no cost.

The decrease in print and traditional advertising may pose a threat to HospiceADEASY. Though it does provide a wide range of marketing materials—ads, TV commercials, billboards and radio ads—those mediums are on the decrease. Thankfully the hospice industry's decline in traditional advertising is slower than in many other industries.

### Target Market

HospiceADEASY is a niche product. The target market is small but relevant. All 4,000 plus hospices in the United States are in HospiceADEASY's potential target marketing.

However, some hospices are more likely to use the product than others. The following chart lays out low, medium and heavy potential HospiceADEASY users in various situations.

	<b>Majority of marketing efforts</b>	<b>Portion of marketing efforts</b>	<b>Only a small part of marketing efforts</b>
<b>Small nonprofit hospices</b>	<b>Heavy</b>	Low	Low
<b>Small for-profit hospices</b>	<b>Heavy</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Medium</b>
<b>Large nonprofit hospices</b>	Low	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Medium</b>
<b>Large for-profit hospices</b>	Low	Low	Low

Small, nonprofit hospices with small budgets will be the group most interested in HospiceADEASY. They often lack the manpower to create their own marketing materials and the financial resources to outsource the work.

Other groups interested in HospiceADEASY are small for-profit hospices and large nonprofit hospices. They experience the same limitations as the small nonprofit hospices, just to a lesser extent.

The hospices least likely to use HospiceADEASY are large, for-profit hospices. They have much larger budgets and more manpower than small and nonprofit hospices. If they were to utilize HospiceADEASY, it would be if they were in a pinch and needed a high-quality ad fast.

### **Plan Objectives**

Goal 1: Increase reach and awareness of the HospiceADEASY product among hospices throughout the nation.

Objective 1: Reach at least 50 percent of the small for-profit, small nonprofit and large nonprofit hospices in the United States by December 2012.

Objective 2: Show high awareness in at least 25 percent of the targeted hospices by December 2012.

Goal 2: Increase traffic to and within the HospiceADEASY website.

Objective 1: Attract at least 200 relevant visitors per month to the site within the first Year (Jan. 2012-Dec. 2012).

Objective 2: Work up to and maintain an average of 300 site visitors per month by December 2013.

Objective 3: Increase traffic by 10 percent each year after 2013.

Objective 4: Maintain bounce rate of less than 40 percent.

Goal 3: Increase sales on the HospiceADEASY website.

Objective 1: Make sales of at least \$100,000 in the first year (Jan. 2012-Dec. 2012).

Objective 2: Increase sales by 50 percent each year for the next three years (2013-2015).

Goal 4: Increase subscriptions to HospiceADEASY's e-newsletter, Hospice E-Tips

Objective 1: Grow subscriptions to 500 by the end of the first year (Dec. 2012).

Objective 2: Increase sales and inquiries from newsletter promotions by 25 percent each year for three years (until 2015).

### **Creative Strategy**

Because HospiceADEASY is a product of ME&V, the creative strategy will align with ME&V's brand. HospiceADEASY will become a sub-brand of ME&V. By connecting it to ME&V's brand, HospiceADEASY will gain credibility. ME&V is a well-known healthcare marketing firm, and its positive brand will positively reflect on HospiceADEASY.

#### **Copy<sup>1</sup>:**

##### *Strategy statement*

Advertising for HospiceAdEASY will convince small- and medium-sized nonprofit hospices that HospiceADEASY is an affordable way to obtain high-quality advertisements to promote their facilities.

##### *Key fact*

Hospice marketing directors are interested in high-quality advertisements that can be customized with their facility's logo and contact information.

##### *Consumer problem*

Hospice marketers believe buying ads online is unsecure, and many are afraid of other hospices using the same ads.

##### *Communication objective*

Reassure hospice marketers that the service is secure and that they can reserve available campaigns in their zip code.

##### *Key benefit*

HospiceADEASY ads are created by a professional healthcare marketing firm. The ads are high-quality, but affordable.

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<sup>1</sup> Copy strategy format adapted from Mike Klassen, Associate Professor of Marketing, University of Northern Iowa

*Unique selling proposition*

HospiceADEASY is the only online provider of pre-made, customizable advertisements specifically for hospices.

*Tone*

The HospiceADEASY ads must be sincere, just like the ads it will be selling. Hospice services are not a light matter, so the ads cannot be humorous or light-hearted. The copy should be direct and reflect the ads that hospices can purchase through HospiceADEASY.

*Power copy*

HospiceADEASY makes marketing your hospice easy.

**Graphics:**

*Color*

HospiceADEASY uses a blue (CMYK = 86, 37, 42, 9) and pink (CMYK = 56, 82, 43, 30) color scheme. The ads will follow the same color scheme as the HospiceADEASY website. Alternatively, the ads can use the ME&V Healthcare blue.

*Fonts*

**Tahoma Bold** for headings and Sylfaen for body copy.

*Look and Feel*

ME&V's brand revolves around its logo, the square. From ME&V's promotional brochure:

The square is a fundamental shape not found in nature. People must make a square happen. Just the way successful marketing is not natural—you must make it happen, day in and day out. A square is a building block. Our square represents the fundamental elements of marketing and branding.

A square is always consistent: this represents one of the simplest yet absolutely essential tenets of successful marketing. A square is a representation of pure symmetry, balance, stability and substance. But more importantly when you square something you raise it to the second, higher power—you add greater power to the brand (ME&V Brochure).

HospiceADEASY promotional materials will follow this strategy to further connect the two brands.

### *Photos*

Photo selection is key in promotional materials. Humans are visual creatures, and photos can draw emotions more quickly and more powerfully than words. The photos used in the HospiceADEASY materials will be similar to photos used in hospice ads, including the ads on HospiceADEASY. This means photos will include mostly elderly people and their families. By using photos similar to those used by hospices, hospice marketers will see their ads in the HospiceADEASY ads, and hopefully make their ads HospiceADEASY ads.

**Integrated Marketing and Communications Program**

According to the American Association of Advertising Agencies, integrated marketing communication recognizes the value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines including advertising, public relations, Internet, and sales promotion and combines them to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact (Integrated Marketing Communications).

The following components will come together as an integrated campaign for HospiceADEASY to portraying a unified message: advertising, public relations, electronic media and miscellaneous promotions.

**Advertising**

Advertising is defined as “the activity of attracting public attention to a product or business, as by paid announcements in print, broadcast or electronic media” (Advertising).

Mass media advertising will not be cost efficient for HospiceADEASY, however, targeted advertising to hospices could result in an acceptable return on investment. In talking informally with hospice marketing directors, I discovered that hospices get most of their information from the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO).

Below are the print publications, many through NHPCO, in which HospiceADEASY can advertise, as well as size recommendations and costs.

**The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization’s NewsLine .....\$1,380**

NewsLine is NHPCO’s monthly magazine. It is distributed to a majority of the hospices in the United States in print. It is also available online for members and nonmembers to access (NHPCO Communications).

1/4 page horizontal, 4 color; 4 ads @ \$345 each

**The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization’s Insights.....\$1,380**

Insights is a twice-per-year publication for all NHPCO members. It includes articles by members of NHPCO’s National Council of Hospice and Palliative Professionals (NHPCO Communications).

1/4 page horizontal, 4 color; 4 ads @ \$345 each

**The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization’s NewsBriefs.....\$3,300**

NewsBriefs is NHPCO’s weekly e-mail newsletter that provides news and updates to NHPCO members (NHPCO Communications).

Banner ad, 4 color; 6 ads @ \$550 each

**The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization’s Vendor Guide.....Free**

NHPCO has a compilation of vendors, providers and professionals. It can be found at <http://iweb.nhpc.org/iweb/BuyersGuide/VendorSearch.aspx>. ME&V is listed as a provider, but HospiceADEASY is not (NHPCO Communications).

Text ad; free of charge

**Journal of Pain and Symptom Management.....\$2,685**

Published monthly, this is “NHPCO’s official, peer-reviewed journal, providing results of important new research and clinical information related to pain management and palliative care” (NHPCO Communications).

¼ page vertical, 4 color; 3 ads @ \$895 each

**American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine .....\$1,740**

The American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine is a peer-reviewed journal that is distributed to hospices and other healthcare facilities eight times each year (AJHPM Advertising Rate Card).

¼ page, black and white; 1 ad @ \$1,740 each



Along with print advertising, HospiceADEASY needs to utilize sidebar advertising on various websites. Below is a list of websites HospiceADEASY should advertise on to target hospice marketers.

**My.NHPCO Video Ad .....\$2,250**

My.NHPCO has a variety of educational and resourceful videos on its website. It is now offering advertising opportunities before these videos (My.NHPCO Advertising).

Five- to ten-second spot, 3 months @ \$750 per month

**My.NHPCO In-Content Ad .....\$1,800**

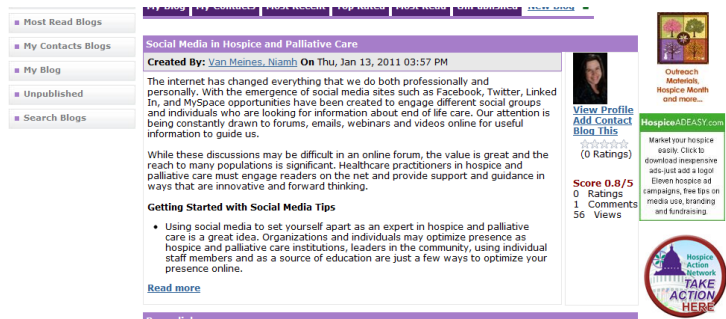
My.NHPCO allows advertisers to place ads in content related to their services. HospiceADEASY can place ads on My.NHPCO pages related to hospice marketing and promotion (My.NHPCO Advertising).

Text ad with logo, 3 months @ \$600 per month

**My.NHPCO Banner Ad.....\$2,400**

Organizations can advertise on the side and top of My.NHPCO pages. HospiceADEASY is currently utilizing this ad medium (see below), but with little outcome. Changing the ads to follow the creative strategy outline above should result in higher click through rates.

Banner image ad, 3 months @ \$800 per month



**Public Relations**

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, public relations is “the actions of a corporation, store, government, individual, etc., in promoting goodwill between itself and the public, the community, employees, customers, etc.” (Public Relations).

A large part of public relations is relations with the media. Providing media with information to assist them in writing stories and creating content builds a mutually beneficial relationship. Journalists get interesting topics to write about and organizations get publicity.

For HospiceADEASY to take advantage of relationships with the media, the relationships must be highly targeted. HospiceADEASY’s target audience is niche, so must be the public relations efforts. A good place to start in public relations is with publications in which an organization advertises. Advertising with a publication may increase the chances that that publication will give content space to an organization. Some of the publications listed above may allow editorial content to be submitted with the purchase of advertising space.

Below is a list of hospice-related publications and contact information that would be beneficial to send news releases and targeted HospiceADEASY pitches to.

**NHPCO Newslines**

Sue Canuteson, editor and writer  
scanuteson@nhpco.org  
703-837-1500

**NHPCO Insights**

Sue Canuteson, editor and writer  
scanuteson@nhpco.org  
703-837-1500

**NHPCO**

Jon Radulovic, Vice President of Communications  
jradulovic@nhpco.org  
703-837-3139

\*Jon is the VP of Communications for NHPCO. He is a very important person to build a relationship with regarding HospiceADEASY.

**The Hospice Letter**

Mary Ann Rollano, Editor

hrp@healthrespubs.com

888-843-6242

When pitching these publications, the pitch angle will depend on the editorial calendars, writer interest and more. However some general pitches include: announcing new HospiceADEASY campaigns, profiling hospices that have successfully used HospiceADEASY ads and the benefits of using HospiceADEASY ads.

Traditional print media are not the only ones to target. Blogs are becoming more and more popular as people look to get their news online in short, quick spurts. Below is a list of blogs HospiceADEASY can send targeted pitches to. Blogs do not accept sales-oriented stories like traditional media might, so pitches need to include information beneficial to each blog's readers.

When pitching blogs, HospiceADEASY should provide plenty of general hospice marketing tips—information that benefits readers. Including this will make the pitches less “salesy,” and the blogs will be more likely to write a post about, or linking to, HospiceADEASY.

**The Hospice Advocate**, by the Hospice Action Network ([www.hospiceactionnetwork.org/blog](http://www.hospiceactionnetwork.org/blog))

The Hospice Advocate is a resource for hospice managers and members of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO). The blog would likely be interested in pitches about hospice marketing, as long as the information benefits readers. An article would reach all the Hospice Advocate readers, as well as the 4,000+ Hospice Action Network Facebook fans and 500+ Twitter followers.

**Contact:** Tony Kudner

Program Assistant, Public Policy  
akudner@nhpcohan.org  
703-837-3150

**Alive Hospice** ([www.alivehospice.org/blog](http://www.alivehospice.org/blog))

The Alive Hospice blog provides advice and resources to hospice managers. It has more than 1,200 fans and followers on its social media networks, meaning a HospiceADEASY post would reach at least that many, plus any RSS and e-mail subscribers.

**Contact:** Jared Porter, Blogmaster  
jporter@alivehospice.org  
615-963-4803

**Hospice & Caregiving Blog**, by the Hospice Foundation of America ([blog.hospicefoundation.org](http://blog.hospicefoundation.org))

The Hospice & Caregiving blog covers all things hospice. It discusses end-of-life care, hospice management, palliative care and more. A HospiceADEASY article would reach nearly 1,000 subscribers, Facebook fans and Twitter followers.

**Contact:** Krista Renenger, Editor  
hfaoffice@hospicefoundation.org  
800-854-3402

**Pallimed** ([www.pallimed.org](http://www.pallimed.org))

Pallimed, a top 100 healthcare blog, is written and maintained by hospice and palliative care professionals. The blog has nearly 3,000 subscribers, more than 1,000 Twitter followers, about 300 Facebook fans and an unknown number of e-mail subscribers. Pallimed has had several posts about hospice marketing, and is even open to guest posts.

**Contact:** Christian Sinclair, Editor  
[ctsinclair@gmail.com](mailto:ctsinclair@gmail.com)

**Electronic Media**

The HospiceADEASY website is already established and live. It includes 11 print campaigns, three radio spots and three TV spots. It also has space for billboards, brochures and e-marketing. The site also includes various resources for hospices regarding marketing. Some of the resources are free and some are low-cost.

The site is incomplete until the billboards, brochures and e-marketing sections are complete. HospiceADEASY should create and upload these materials before the integrated marketing communications plan is implemented.

The billboards should be simple with little copy. They should follow the design and message of the other HospiceADEASY campaigns. They should come in a variety of sizes to accommodate the various different billboard sizes there are—including digital.

The brochures should also follow the design and copy strategy of the other campaigns. But the brochures should allow the hospices to input plenty of copy about themselves. Brochures are not pieces that can be standardized—each hospice needs to be able to fully customize the content of the brochure. In other words, the HospiceADEASY brochures should serve as a template for hospices that cannot design their own brochures but want to input their own copy.

The e-marketing materials, again, should follow the same design and copy strategy as the current campaigns. HospiceADEASY should provide e-marketing materials in two groups: e-mail shells and content. The e-mail shells would be the design aspect of the e-mail messages. Hospices would be able to purchase these to use over and over in their e-mail marketing. The content could be made up of a variety of articles for hospices to use in their e-mail marketing. The database could be consistently updated with new hospice marketing and hospice e-newsletter articles.

HospiceADEASY is promoting a fully online hospice advertising process, so much of the site's communications must be online. This section includes the ways and means to advertise online to sell HospiceADEASY products.

### **Search Engine Optimization**

The current metatag description for the HospiceADEASY site is: "The site for helpful free information on hospice marketing, fundraising and branding where it is easy to download economical advertising and marketing materials you can customize to use in your local nonprofit hospice marketing area" (HospiceADEASY Source Code). That description is long and does not truly define what HospiceADEASY provides. A better metatag description would be: "Free hospice marketing tips & tools and low-cost customizable ads that make marketing your hospice easy."

Currently, the HospiceADEASY site is optimized for the following keywords and phrases:

"HospiceADEASY, ads, hospice, free ad, hospice ad, hospice ad stock, ad stock hospice, hospice advertising stock, advertising stock hospice, free hospice stock ad, free hospice ad stock, free stock newspaper ads, hospice marketing, hospice market, free hospice marketing, stock hospice ad library, stock ad hospice library, hospice ad images, stock hospice ad images, hospice ad images, stock hospice advertising, stock hospice ad agencies, write a newspaper ad, free stock hospice ad, retail newspaper ad, cheap hospice ads, free stock hospice ads, royalty free stock ads, istock hospice ads, stock ads, free stock ads, stock hospice ad shopping cart, nhpco ad, cheap stock ads, download stock hospice ads, stock hospice ad software, retail newspaper ad,

ads hospice, hospice promotion, turnkey ad campaign, hospice ad templates and preproduced hospice ad” (HospiceADEASY Source Code).

Optimizing for that many keywords is unnecessary. HospiceADEASY should cut the number of keywords down and optimize certain keywords on individual pages. Keyword research on Google AdWords revealed the most popular hospice-related search terms. These keywords should be worked into the HospiceADEASY page copy and also into the coding.

*All pages:*

HospiceADEASY, hospice ads, hospice advertising, hospice marketing, customizable hospice ads, hospice ad templates, marketing hospice, hospice ad campaigns, hospice month and hospice stock ads

*Print Ad page:*

Hospice print ads, hospice newspaper ads, hospice magazine ads, hospice print marketing and hospice print advertising

*Radio Spots page:*

Hospice radio ads, hospice radio spots and hospice radio advertising

*TV Spots page:*

Hospice TV ads, hospice television ads, hospice videos and hospice TV advertising

In addition to internally optimizing the site for SEO, HospiceADEASY must build external links to the site. This can be done by advertising online, building relationship with hospices and hospice providers that will put a link on their sites, using social media, and creating content others will share on social media. One way to build links is to create partnerships with other organizations in the industry. Put a link to their site on the HospiceADEASY site in exchange for a HospiceADEASY link on their site.

## **Social Media**

Social media has become an important way to connect and maintain relationships with customers, clients and stakeholders. There are a multitude of social media networks, some of which will work better for HospiceADEASY than others. Three of the most popular networks—Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn—will reach HospiceADEASY’s target market and reinforce its message many times over.

### *Facebook*

Facebook’s user base has grown to include more than 500 million people of varying demographics (Facebook Factsheet). A majority of users use the site everyday to connect with friends, co-workers and brands. According to an Experian Hitwise end-of-year study, “Facebook was the top-visited website and accounted for 8.93 percent of all U.S. visits between January and November 2010” (Experian Hitwise). For the first time, it surpassed Google in this category.

Facebook used to be for college students, but the 35+ age group is the fastest growing demographic (Schroeder, 2009). Many of HospiceADEASY’s target market—marketing directors of small hospices—are in the demographics commonly present on Facebook. Facebook allows organizations to create pages. The group format gives organizations a platform to connect with their users and build and maintain relationships with them.

HospiceADEASY should create a Facebook page to connect with hospice marketing managers across the nation. The page should be a place for hospice marketers to look for hospice marketing advice, tips and resources. HospiceADEASY Facebook page (and other social media profiles) should be positioned as the place to go for hospice marketing assistance. Creating this ongoing relationship with hospice marketers will maintain exposure and increase usage of HospiceADEASY materials.



When managing a Facebook page, it is important to spend plenty of time listening. It is important to research what hospice marketers are saying about their successes, their needs and their profession in general. A Facebook page is a great way to broadcast information, but it is also a tool for collecting information about a target market's needs and responding to inquiries and problems.

A great way to listen is to connect with other hospice-related Facebook pages. Some popular ones include: National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (1,500 fans), Hospice Action Network (4,100 fans) and Hospice community page (2,300 fans). Interacting with these pages will increase HospiceADEASY's network and exposure.

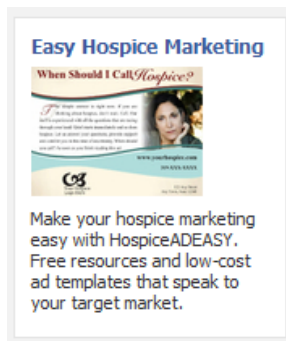
The page should be very interactive. Facebook's platform allows for great customization of pages. Sample HospiceADEASY campaigns should be uploaded under the picture and video sections of the page and a custom tab can be added to allow fans to sign up for Hospice E-Tips right on Facebook.

The page must be updated at least weekly, preferably 2-3 times per week, with information relevant to the page's fans. This can include links, tips, new ad campaigns, deals and more. Posts must be tailored to foster interaction with fans—to entice fans to respond. A successful Facebook page takes research, time and work, but the benefits are worth it. Pages help build brands and relationships with those brands. They allow for constant reinforcement with a target market and easy access when a need arises.

Facebook also allows organizations to target users with advertisements. Facebook advertisements are low-cost and very targeted. A targeted pay-per-click advertisement would reach the 12,940 Facebook users who have something related to hospice in their likes/interests. The approximate cost per click is \$1.75. The daily maximum can be set at any amount, the

suggested being \$10. If the HospiceADEASY ads reach the daily maximum (which is highly unlikely), the cost of the Facebook ads would be \$3,650 per year.

Facebook ads are trial and error. A/B testing to determine what HospiceADEASY's target audience clicks on the most would be highly beneficial. Multiple ads can be run at once, so ads can be created for several HospiceADEASY services: print ads, free resources, brochures, TV ads, videos and more. Ads can also be created toward the beginning of the campaign to attract Facebook page fans. Below is a sample HospiceADEASY Facebook ad that fits this campaigns integrated communication message.



The ads can get anywhere up to several thousand impressions with the target audience and anywhere between 0 and 10 clicks per day.

### *Twitter*

With 175 million users (About Twitter), Twitter is second to Facebook in social network size. Twitter is less popular with college- and high-school-aged people and more popular with the 35+ age group. The largest age group on Twitter is the 35-49 year olds, with 41 percent of users being in this group (Dr. Clip).

The largest group of Twitter users is made up of people with full-time jobs. This group gets on Twitter during the work day. The majority of Twitter traffic is on weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. in the respective time zones. Twitter serves as a beneficial supplement to

Facebook. It allows for easy account-to-account communication, message broadcasting, link and photo sharing, and messaging.

The username “HospiceADEASY” is currently open, so that is the username HospiceADEASY should utilize to create an account. The bio, a short 160-character description of the account, should align with the metatag description and the Facebook ad copy: “Your resource for free hospice marketing tips & tools and low-cost customizable ads. Have questions about hospice marketing? Ask the experts.”

There are an infinite number of hospice-related users to connect with on Twitter. A Twitter search for “hospice” will reveal such. Some big users to connect with include: @NHPCO\_news (850 followers), @HospiceAction (500 followers), @AliveHospice (1,000 followers) and @ Hospice\_news (4,100 followers). There are also hundreds of hospices to connect with.

Twitter is useful for broadcasting information about your organization, but it is also a great listening tool. By monitoring the many hospice-related Twitter accounts and a Twitter search for “hospice,” HospiceADEASY will learn what hospices want and need. Twitter searches can be saved, and some saved searches that would benefit HospiceADEASY include: “hospice,” “hospices,” “hospice advertising” and “hospice marketing.”

Twitter also fosters communication between accounts through @-replies and direct messages. HospiceADEASY can direct hospices to their services when they are in need. When HospiceADEASY Tweets extremely useful or interesting information, followers may retweet the tweet. This exposes HospiceADEASY to all of the retweeter’s followers, expanding its reach.

*LinkedIn*

LinkedIn is known as the professional networking site. It has more than 90 million members and executives from all Fortune 500 companies are LinkedIn members (About LinkedIn). LinkedIn is used to connect professionals in all types of industries. The hospice industry is no different. Many hospice executives and marketing managers have personal accounts, and there are countless hospice-related groups. In fact in a LinkedIn search for “hospice,” there are more than 44,000 results.

Some of the most popular groups are: Elder Care Professionals (2,900 members), Home Care and Hospice Executives (1,700 members), Home Health and Hospice (1,400 members) and NHPCO (600 members). There are hundreds of other groups to join and monitor, but these are the ones with the largest relevant memberships.

HospiceADEASY could create a LinkedIn group, however it is more beneficial to be active on other groups. A HospiceADEASY representative can join and monitor the hospice-related LinkedIn groups and participate when appropriate. This is the easiest, most constructive, use of time on LinkedIn. It will help position HospiceADEASY as a hospice marketing expert.

LinkedIn recently added advertising as a way to connect with your target on the network. An ad targeted to members of the healthcare industry at organizations with less than 1,000 employees in the United States will read approximately 55,000 users. This includes multiple employees from hospices, as well as members of hospice-related groups. The ads cost approximately \$2.25 per click. A limit can be set at any dollar amount, but the suggested is \$10 per day. The maximum HospiceADEASY would have to pay is \$3,650 per year, though that price is unlikely.

Each campaign can have up to 15 ad variations. Below is a sample ad that aligns with the rest of the campaign.



**Easy Hospice Marketing**  
Hospice marketing tips and tricks and customizable hospice ad templates

## **E-mail Marketing**

HospiceADEASY's newsletter, Hospice E-Tips, has 48 subscribers. Increasing the number of subscribers will increase exposure and message repetition to members of the target audience. The number of subscriptions will naturally increase as more visitors are attracted to the site via other communication methods. However, the newsletter should also attract more visitors to the site—it should be a two-way tool.

Linking to the newsletter in all promotions is important. It is also vital to persuade the target marketing that the e-newsletter is worth receiving—that it will provide valuable information that they need to know. If HospiceADEASY is making that promise, it needs to follow through. Hospice E-Tips must provide valuable information that hospices would not necessarily find on their own. The content must foster sales without blatantly asking readers to purchase the ads.

## **Google AdWords**

When people need information about something, they go to Google. Google has organic search results (which are boosted by SEO) as well as text ads on the right. Organizations can purchase words through Google, and when people search those words, the organization's ad will appear.

HospiceADEASY should purchase words based on the SEO keywords. Note: although it is optimizing for the keyword "HospiceADEASY," that keyword should not be purchased. The


HospiceADEASY site comes up at the top of the organic results, so it would be a waste of money to purchase “HospiceADEASY.”

Google tracks how many searches are done for different key words and phrases. It holds this data in a database searchable by the public. Below is a list of the keywords determined in the SEO section of this campaign with how many searches are performed for that keyword each month.

Hospice ads	73
Hospice advertising	46
Hospice marketing	1,300
Hospice month	590
Marketing hospice	1,300
Hospice video	320

Google AdWord campaigns must be highly targeted. Purchasing keywords like “hospice” and “marketing” separately will not result in any hits. The ads will be on page 15 of the results, and no one will click on them. But using “hospice marketing” and other similar, targeted keywords will expose the ads to the target market—those who are interested in hospice marketing and advertising.

Like Facebook ads, Google ads are very easy to change and may require testing to figure out the most effective ads. Below is a sample ad:



Easy Hospice Marketing  
Free hospice marketing tips  
Low-cost hospice ad templates  
[www.HospiceADEASY.com](http://www.HospiceADEASY.com)

The ads would cost approximately \$.60 per click and would receive between 1,000 and 1,300 impressions per month. With an average one- to three-percent click through rate, that means Google AdWords would cost a maximum of \$600 per year. Because this keyword is not popular for advertisers, the HospiceADEASY ad will be highly ranked, likely on the first page.

**Miscellaneous****Tradeshows**

At tradeshows, thousands of professionals from an industry gather in one place. They are big pools of potential customers for vendors. For HospiceADEASY, the big hospice tradeshow is through the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. NHPCO's 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Management and Leadership Conference will take place in April 2012 (dates and location yet to be announced). This conference attracts hospice leaders from across the United States.

A booth at this conference costs right around \$2,000, depending on location, date of reservation and membership status. The program also has advertising opportunities—a ¼-page ad for \$600 in the final program, given to all attendees. NHPCO also sells the attendee mailing list for \$300, which HospiceADEASY can use to send targeted ads and promotions.

HospiceADEASY should develop a booth consistent with the rest of the promotional materials. At the booth, HospiceADEASY should provide hospice marketing resources for free—white papers, how-to resources and more. They should also have computers at the booth to show hospice marketers the ad campaigns and demonstrate how easy they are to purchase and customize.

At tradeshows, attendees love to get free giveaways. Having giveaways is a great way to attract potential customers to your booth. Giveaways should be things recipients will use more than once—that way they see your information and are reminded of your service.

Pens are great giveaways, but everyone gives free pens. A good item to complement a pen is a pad of paper with the HospiceADEASY logo and website on it. Recipients will use the pads and be reminded of HospiceADEASY's services. Customized sticky pads can be ordered for around \$.40 per pad. For 1,000 pads, that comes to \$400, plus a small set up cost and shipping.

**Direct Mail**

Because HospiceADEASY is an Internet-based advertising system, direct mail costs should be kept to a minimum. However some direct mail is a good idea. ME&V has a mailing list of approximately 600 hospices throughout the nation. They will also obtain a list after the Annual Management and Leadership Conference.

The direct mail postcard should follow the same creative strategy as the rest of the HospiceADEASY promotions. The postcards should be addressed to the hospice's marketing managers.

**Sales and Discounts**

Like any product or service being sold, HospiceADEASY needs to have discounts and sales opportunities. There are many ways to put HospiceADEASY products on sale/discount.

Below are some options:

- Send 20 percent off coupon codes in Hospice E-Tips
- Give 10 percent off coupon codes at the Annual Management and Leadership Conference
- Mark everything 10 percent off in November, which is Hospice Month
- Offer a free white paper or hot tips sheet with the purchase of an ad
- Get 50 percent off a radio ad when you purchase a print ad



## **Timeline**

May 2011

Thesis is presented to ME&V.

June-August 2011

Add brochures, e-newsletter and billboards to HospiceADEASY site.

September 2011

ME&V chooses components of campaign to implement.

Purchase advertising space for 2012 in the recommended publications and websites.

October-November 2011

Design ads, postcards and tradeshow materials.

Create social media profiles. Begin building networks.

December 2011

Finalize ads, postcards and tradeshow materials. Send them to print.

Set up Google Adwords campaign.

January 2012

Launch campaign

- Continue to build Facebook page, invite hospice marketers
- Activate Google Adwords
- Distribute postcards
- Ensure ads run as scheduled

April 2012

Attend Annual Management and Leadership Conference

January-December 2012

Evaluate and adjust campaign as needed

Track sales, product awareness, site visitors, Hospice E-Tips subscribers

December 2012

Evaluate campaign

**Budget**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
<b>Advertising</b>	
Print Ad Placement .....	\$10,485.00
Web Ad Placement .....	\$6,460.00
Ad Creation (5 hours @ \$110/hour) .....	\$550.00
<b>Electronic Media</b>	
Facebook Ads.....	\$3,650.00
LinkedIn Ads .....	\$3,650.00
Google AdWords .....	\$600.00
Electronic Media Management, 1 year (75 hours @ \$110/hour) .....	\$8,250.00
<b>Tradeshaw</b>	
Registration .....	\$2,000.00
¼ page ad in program.....	\$600.00
Attendee mailing list .....	\$300.00
Post-it giveaways .....	\$400.00
Booth Materials.....	\$1,500.00
Booth Materials Creation (7 hours @ \$110/hour) .....	\$770.00
Travel (estimated)	
Flights (2 people) .....	\$600.00
Hotel (1 room, 3 nights).....	\$400.00
Misc. (food, cabs, etc.).....	\$300.00
<b>Postcards</b>	
Design (3 hours @ \$110/hour).....	\$330.00
Printing 4,500.....	\$1,100.00
Postage @ \$.205 each.....	922.50
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$42,867.50</b>

### Appendix 1: Survey questions

How do you prefer to be informed about new products and services that can assist you in your hospice advertising and promotional efforts? (Check all that apply.)

- E-mail
- Phone Calls
- Direct Mail Letters
- Brochures
- Social Media
- Newsletters
- Magazine Advertisements
- Web advertisements
- Other (please explain)

What mediums do you use to advertise and promote your hospice services?

- Billboards
- Radio
- Print ads
- TV ads
- Brochures
- E-mails/E-newsletters
- Other (please explain)

What has been your most effective advertising/promotion medium? Why?

Please select one of the following that best describes your advertising/promotion.

- We do our own advertising and promotion
- Our advertising and promotion is mostly done by a volunteer (or volunteers)
- Our advertising and promotion is mostly done by a firm (or firms)
- We do some advertising and promotion on our own but also outsource some to firms

Have you purchased pre-produced ads or promotional materials online?

- Yes
- No

*If no, they will be directed to question set A. If yes, they will be directed to question set B*

#### *Question set A*

Please indicate the degree to which you agree/disagree with the following statement (1=strongly disagree, 3=neutral/no opinion, 5=strongly agree):

I would purchase pre-produced, customizable ads or promotional materials online to promote my hospice.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Which of the following types of pre-produced ads/promotional materials would you purchase online?

- Billboards
- Brochures
- Print ads
- Radio spots
- TV Spots
- E-mail newsletters
- Other (please explain)

*Question set B*

From what website did you purchase your pre-produced hospice ads/promotional materials?

What did you like about purchasing pre-produced hospice ads/promotional materials online?

- Convenience
- Low Cost
- Ability to add my hospice's logo/contact information
- High-quality advertisements
- Other (please explain)

What did you **dislike** about purchasing pre-produced hospice ads/promotional materials online?

Which of the following types of pre-produced ads/promotional materials did you purchase online?

- Billboards
- Brochures
- Print ads
- Radio spots
- TV Spots
- E-newsletters
- Other (please explain)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree/disagree with the following statement (1=strongly disagree, 3=neutral/no opinion, 5=strongly agree):

I would purchase pre-produced, customizable hospice ads or promotional materials online again

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Which of the following types of pre-produced ads/promotional materials would you purchase online?

- Billboards
- Brochures
- Print ads
- Radio spots

- TV Spots
- E-newsletters
- Other (please explain)

*All participants answered the following demographic questions:*

What topics/themes would you like to see in ads/promotional materials you purchase online?

- Quality care
- Funding assistance
- Support for family members
- Other (please explain)

What factors would keep you from purchasing pre-produced ads/promotional materials online?

- Lack of security online
- Other hospices using the same ads
- Ads not developed specifically for my hospice
- Other (please explain)

Do you have any other comments about purchasing pre-produced ads/promotional materials online?

What is your hospice's zip code?

How many patients does your hospice serve annually?

- 1-100
- 101-500
- 501-1,000
- 1,001-5,000
- 5,001-10,000
- >10,000

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. If you have questions or comments, please contact Megan Horn at [hornm@uni.edu](mailto:hornm@uni.edu) or 515-297-3362.

## Appendix 2: Consent

The Institutional Review Board requires survey participants to provide consent before taking the survey. Below is the consent information participants were provided:

You are invited to participate in a survey for a University of Northern Iowa student research project. The university requires that you give your consent to participate in this project. The following information is provided to help you made an informed decision about whether or not to participate.

This survey is part of a student thesis project. The thesis project is developing a marketing plan for a website that creates pre-produced hospice advertisements. It will take approximately 10 minutes. You may refuse to answer any or all of the questions. This survey is being sent to a small sample of hospice marketers, so your participation is important.

The answers you provide will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Special precautions have been established to protect the confidentiality of your responses. **There are no personal or identifiable questions on the survey and your individual responses will not be shared with any third parties.** There are no risks (greater than in day-to-day life) to you as a participant in this project; nor are there any direct benefits. However, your participation is extremely valued. *Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.*

Because many hospices have smaller than ideal budgets and provide services at the end of people's lives, marketing a hospice is a challenge. Some hospices have turned to purchasing pre-produced advertisements online—advertisements produced by hospice advertising professionals that can be customized to include individual hospice's name and contact information.

As a hospice marketer, these advertisements could be important to your marketing activities. Or you could prefer to develop your own ads. Whatever the case may be, your feedback is important for those who make these ads.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time or to choose not to participate at all, and by doing so, you will not be penalized or lose benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Megan Horn at (515) 297-3362 or by e-mail at [hornm@uni.edu](mailto:hornm@uni.edu). Or contact Matthew Bunker, professor of marketing, at (319) 273-6947 or [matthew.bunker@uni.edu](mailto:matthew.bunker@uni.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research project, please contact the University of Northern Iowa Institutional Review Board (IRB) Human Protections Administrator at (319) 273-6148.

Thank you for your help and cooperation.

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement. I am 18 years of age or older.

Yes      No

### **Appendix 3: E-mail to Hospices**

The following e-mail was sent to 300 hospices to request they fill out the survey:

Please forward to the person in charge of your hospice's marketing efforts.

Dear Hospice Marketing Director,

I am a student at the University of Northern Iowa. For my senior thesis, I am developing a marketing plan for a website that sells professional, pre-produced advertisements and marketing materials for hospices.

As a basis for my research, I am conducting a survey of hospice marketers. It is an online survey and will take approximately 10 minutes. No personal or identifiable information will be collected, and your responses will not be published—they will be used strictly for my thesis research.

I would greatly appreciate you taking the time to complete this short survey. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me using the contact information below.

Click here to continue to the survey.

Sincerely,

Megan Horn

[hornm@uni.edu](mailto:hornm@uni.edu)

515-297-3362



## References

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