

BACKGROUND

Keck Medicine of USC is the University of Southern California's medical enterprise, one of only two university-based medical systems in the Los Angeles area. Keck Medicine provides highly specialized care for some of the most acute patients in the country. The Health System was ranked among the top 20 hospitals nationwide on U.S. News & World Report's 2020-21 Best Hospitals Honor Roll and among the top 3 hospitals in Los Angeles and top 5 in California. This was particularly impressive given that Keck Medicine of USC was relatively new, having only been a health system for 10 years.

THE CHALLENGE

Prior to 2022, Keck was positioned as the premiere destination for handling the world's most complex medical conditions and providing the best possible outcomes. The theme line was: *Beyond Exceptional Medicine*. However, Keck operates in an exceedingly competitive market. They are one of multiple nationally ranked medical centers. Like Keck, their competitors also have great doctors and great outcomes. Additionally, Keck does not have a robust primary care practice, which means they lack the natural pipeline of referrals to specialty care that help their competitors organically build their volume. And as a young health system, awareness of Keck was much lower than their well-established major competitors. To compete in this environment, we needed to differentiate the brand beyond functional attributes (great doctors and outcomes) and make an emotional connection by standing for something bigger and putting the consumer first. This required repositioning the Brand and significantly changing our messaging strategy.

CONSUMER INSIGHTS

The Keck brand marketing target audience was Los Angeles-based consumers, typically older (50+), who have PPO plans and who are not yet in need of specialty care. They understand that to reach their fullest potential they must be healthy and so, they take a front-row seat in their health journey. Our role was to empower everyone who encounters Keck to fulfill their greatest potential by making them as healthy as they can be. Launch brand advertising focused on this understanding of our target consumer.

Year 2 advertising evolved the message to include functional information about the Health System that would motivate consumer consideration. We continued to connect emotionally *and* offer the possibility of a better experience, focusing on what consumers told us was both unique to Keck and most important to them, when considering where to get care. This included:

- Partnering with them throughout their entire journey, from diagnosis to treatment to follow-up care.
- Delivering personalized care designed to meet their unique needs.
- Giving them a team of specialists with deep experience and unique training.

THE STRATEGY

Operational data showed that approximately 17% of Health System volume was coming from new patients. To grow, we needed to attract more consumers who were new to the System. Brand advertising played a key role in turning consumers into new patients. The brand strategy was to build a relationship with our key audiences over time -- before they get sick. We wanted them to see us as a trusted expert -- and feel that we know them, and we get them. Then, when they are ready to seek services, they think of Keck.

KECK MEDICINE OF USC BRAND REPOSITIONING

The new brand positioning was *Experts in making even the impossible possible*. The theme line was *Limitless*. Brand messaging communicated that at Keck Medicine of USC we are committed to working with you to reach your greatest potential. We can do that because we are experts with deep experience, partnering with you to give you the personalized care you expect.

Our acquisition strategy was designed to close the sale with people who are actively seeking services. Each campaign was highly targeted, creating urgency around a specific service to motivate action.

- Conversion Focused: Raise awareness to motivate action – make an appointment
- Digital-First: Where health care happens
- Always-on: Be present when people need care
- A guided consumer journey via paid and organic search

RESULTS

Brand Marketing

Due to the Pandemic, advertising budgets remained flat in 2021 and 2022. Outspent by the competition, awareness and preference were still below the market leaders. By the end of 2022, NRC data showed that Keck Brand Awareness increased from 15.3 to 19.1 (+25%), Recall increased from 2.3 to 4.0 (+74%), and Preference increased from 1.9 to 2.1 (+11%). Willingness to Recommend increased significantly.

Service-line Marketing

Always on, digital-first volume-building campaigns, supported by the brand campaign, showed significant year-over-year improvement.

Keck Service Line	Year-Over-Year Performance*
Orthopaedics	+229%
Otolaryngology	+297%
Urology	+63%
Cardiovascular Institute	+176%
Spine	+132%
Head and Neck Tumor	+100%
Brain Tumor	+2100%
Lung Cancer	+794%
Breast Cancer	+752%

*FY2022 and FY2023 Paid digital appointment requests