

Neuromarketing Applied to the Urgent Care Center
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[Reference: Morin, Christopher and Patrick Renvoise, *Neuromarketing: Understanding the Buy Button in Your Customer's Brain*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007. ISBN #978-0-7852-2680-2](#)

The popular business book, *Neuromarketing*, describes how tapping into the “old,” “primitive” or “fight or flight” brain—where consumers ultimately make buying decisions—can help marketers develop messages and tactics that prompt consumers to action.

Because urgent care—with high-visibility locations, extended hours, and walk-in convenience—is effectively a “retail” delivery channel for health care, marketing concepts that have been successful in other “retail” businesses are essential for raising awareness that an urgent care center exists, introducing patients to the center’s scope of services, and educating patients on when to utilize urgent care vs. the emergency room or primary care.

Neuromarketing describes the “old brain” as a “primitive organ”—focused on survival, it relies on contrasts, concrete concepts, visual stimuli, and other sensations for decision-making. In the context of marketing this means people respond to pictures rather than text, they gloss over details and abstract concepts, and they’re emotional and self-centered in their buying behavior.

Triggering the consumer’s “old brain” entails marketing tactics and messaging that:


- **Identifies consumers “pain” and shows them why urgent care is a “solution.”** The “old” brain is less interested in the services, capabilities, and qualifications of an urgent care facility than what that facility can do for them. Marketing must answer the question “why would I go there?” Pain points addressed by urgent care include long wait times to get a primary care appointment, lack of accessibility to care after-hours, and the high cost of emergency room co-pays. Urgent care marketing should lead with these pain points.
- **Differentiates urgent care from other medical providers.** All too often, urgent care operators use marketing terms highlighting accreditation, board-certification, or affiliations that relate only to other medical providers. But even consumer-relevant terms like “convenient, high quality and affordable health care” can be meaningless when they describe any number of health care options. Instead, urgent care providers need to demonstrate what’s unique about their center that solves consumer “pain.” Messages that resonate well with consumers communicate the difference between 1) waiting 45 days for a primary care appointment versus immediate walk-in service; 2) \$100 emergency room versus \$35 urgent care co-pays; or 3) driving downtown to a busy general hospital versus going around the corner to the neighborhood clinic.
- **Demonstrates the unique benefits or “gain” of using urgent care.** Although the advantages of urgent care may be “obvious” to the “enlightened,” unfamiliar consumers will require “proof” that the benefits of trying urgent care exceed the risks or costs. Provide customer stories, demonstrations and/or contrasting data that urgent care gets consumers back to work and life activities more quickly, saves time and money over the ER, and reduces hassle over primary care.

Marketing tactics and messaging should be built in such a way to “deliver an impact” to the old brain—consider the following “building blocks” and “impact boosters” to make your advertising more effective:

Six Message Building Blocks: <i>Fundamental elements of a strategy to reach the “old” brain.</i>	Seven Impact Boosters: <i>Boost credibility of messages so they are more meaningful and memorable.</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grab consumer’s attention using a word-play, rhetorical question, or by relating a story. 2. Use illustrations that show consumers how urgent care will solve their problem. Imagery should relate to the target audience—before/after illustrations that address consumer pain are especially effective. 3. Make claims (selling points) memorable by keeping them as relevant, short and simple as possible and then repeating them frequently. 4. Prove that the gain from utilizing urgent care exceeds the cost by using testimonials, data and demonstrations. According to the book, 70% of marketing content should be focused on “proof of gain.” 5. Handle consumer objections by acknowledging their concerns and then refuting with additional proof of gain. 6. Close the message by re-stating the claim, asking for feedback, and then securing a commitment. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Word messages with “you”—relating to the consumer immediately triggers the “old brain.” 2. Demonstrate your credibility through expressions of your passion, expertise, integrity or similarity to the target audience. 3. Utilize contrast—before/after, now/later, with/without, and you/your competitors. 4. Appeal to “emotion” rather than “reason”—your message must resonate in a consumer’s “gut.” 5. Vary tactics to appeal to different learning styles—people respond to audio, visual or physical messages—multi-tactic campaigns are most effective. 6. Grab attention and stir emotions by recounting good stories—just make sure there’s a clear point or punch line. 7. Understand “less is more,” by being short and comprehensive—remove anything that clouds the message.

Neuromarketing demonstrates that consumers make buying decisions based on emotion, typically using logic and facts only to justify their decisions. Generally consumers are disinterested in the operational factors that a physician feels differentiates a center. Rather, key to marketing success is simple, easily understood, visual representations that stir emotions by recounting pain points and situations that consumers relate to. Urgent care is unique as a product in that there is no “direct response,” but if your messages are effective, consumers will “select” your center long before they ever have a need.

Urgent Care Marketing Examples:

	<p>Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, Ohio grabs attention with a word-play that details one of the symptoms that might bring a child in to urgent care.</p>
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IF IT'S NOT AN EMERGENCY,
why pay for one?



<p>SYRACUSE M-F 9 am – 9 pm; Sat-Sun 9 am – 1 pm 745 South 2000 West 801.525.2410</p>	<p>LAYTON M-F 8:30 am – 9 pm; Sat-Sun 8:30 am – 5 pm 2075 North 1200 West 801.779.6200</p>
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Insurances Accepted

<p>Aetna Beach Street DHBA Educators Mutual Medicare and Medicare Advantage Plans</p>	<p>GDH HealthPartners PPIP Regence BlueCross Blue Shield Select Health United Healthcare</p>	<p><small>Most insurances accepted, however it is best to always confirm with your insurance carrier that your physician is on your plan</small></p>
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Intermountain InstaCare, which operates 22 walk-in centers in Utah, appeals to a consumer's sense of value in a short and simple comparison of its pricing to the emergency room.

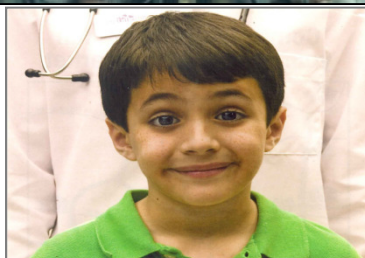


We'll make it better.

Corner of Los Altos Pkwy. and Ion Dr. 000551

Saint Mary's Urgent Care

St. Mary's Urgent Care in Reno, Nevada uses humor to capture attention of outdoor enthusiasts and depict a common "before" situation—the message is "urgent care solves your pain."



**"Hey Mom,
I need a
physical by
Monday!"**

**Let The Little Clinic help —
camp and school sports
physicals for only \$29!**

- No Appointments little or no waiting time
- Located inside your neighborhood supermarket
- Open 7 days including nights and weekends
- Professional, caring Nurse Practitioners

The Little Clinic.
Convenient Neighborhood Medical Care
Located inside select Kroger Supermarkets
See reverse side for locations.

For additional locations and general information, visit www.thelittleclinic.com

The Little Clinic's imagery is one that many mothers can relate to—the solution to her "pain" is a weekend walk-in physical for \$29.



Here when you need us at five Triangle locations offering extended hours every day of the year, including holidays.
No appointment necessary

Duke Urgent Care
Rapid walk-in care for all of life's bumps, bruises, and bugs

dukeurgentcare.org 1-888-ASK-DUKE

Duke Urgent Care in Raleigh/Durham, North Carolina likewise makes an emotional appeal to time-starved parents.