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Case Study:

The Impacts of Sunway Medical Centre Velocity's
Promotions on Its Brand Awareness During The COVID-
19 Pandemic

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Malaysia's Healthcare Landscape:

With the aim of giving medical attention to the prevention or treatment of illnesses provided by certified professionals, the healthcare system has been identified as one of the most important sectors for any country in the world. Each and every day, there would be a number of people who will be hospitalized due to illnesses that require more comprehensive medical attention. Be it government or private hospitals, both types of hospitals offer medical treatment that varies from emergency treatment, general diagnostic and treatment, to more specialized medical fields such as Oncology, Neurology, Obstetrics and Gynaecology among other fields. Although both types of hospital are aligned with the same purpose, there is a stark difference between them.

In Malaysia, every individual has the right to seek treatment that they prefer and this includes choosing between a government or also known as the public hospital, and a private hospital. And this right to choose also brings in the difference of how much they would need to pay for their treatment or cost of hospitalization. With the public healthcare being subsidized by the government of Malaysia, the cost for consultation will start from as low as RM 1.00 to RM 5.00 and the cost of hospitalization would range between RM 50.00 to RM 100.00 at the least (RinggitPlus, 2021). With this much cheaper cost, the cons of public hospitals are the facility would usually be overcrowded with patients and the waiting time would be long.

On the other hand, private hospitals are usually owned by individuals or a group of companies. With this concept, the cost of treatment at private hospitals are usually a lot more expensive compared to public hospitals with the minimum cost for consultation that starts from RM 80.00 and the cost of hospitalization would vary according to diagnosis and treatment received by the patient with the deposit of a minimum of RM300.00 onwards. With its higher cost, private hospitals offer more convenience to patients with its shorter duration of waiting time and the capability to give more special attention to the patients, on top of other general perks such more privacy, bigger and cleaner room, maintained building and environment of the hospital and a much more options for food and medicine selection.

With that being explained, according to data by The Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), the top principal cause of hospitalization for private hospitals are respiratory diseases and this can be closely tied with the COVID-19 pandemic (Department of Statistics Malaysia,

2018). Apart from COVID-19, other respiratory diseases include life threatening conditions such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases (COPD), Asthma, lung cancer, pneumonia, pleural effusion and chronic bronchitis.

1.2 Justification for choosing the area of interest:

For this Independent study, I have chosen the topic on “*The Impacts of Sunway Medical Centre Velocity’s Promotions on Its Brand Awareness During The COVID-19 Pandemic.*” The reason why I have decided on this topic is to observe and study what Sunway Medical Centre Velocity (SMCV) has done over the past 2 and a half years to create its own brand awareness and visibility in the public’s eye as one of the hospitals under Sunway Group. According to (Seturi, 2017) in her research that was entitled as “*Brand Awareness and Success in The Market,*” a successful brand name does not promise the same success for all of its subbusinesses. Thus, it requires a lot of observations, information analysis and planning from the new sub-business unit to ensure a good brand awareness is developed to make its own name to become known by the public. Moreover, a good brand awareness is important for businesses as it can also increase customers’ confidence before making a purchase decision (Moisescu, 2009), as well as it can become a first step to a continuous customer engagement with that particular business and brand.

This hospital first started its operation for the public in September 2019. As a comprehensive tertiary care hospital located in Cheras Kuala Lumpur, this hospital offers 234 beds, 66 consultant clinics and 6 operating theatres in its current 10-storey building. The hospital is also expanding its business with a new 22-storey building that is currently in construction and set to complete by the end of this year. This new building will host up to 600 beds, a confinement centre, a training centre among other facilities. Currently, SMCV has 3 Centres of Excellence namely Velocity Neurocentre (VNC), Velocity Heart & Lung Centre (VHLC) and Velocity Weight Management Centre (VWMC). For its medical specialization, this hospital provides a total of 46 comprehensive medical specializations ranging from normal specialty to a more comprehensive sub-specialty.

As a new hospital that was launched in the same time when the COVID-19 outbreak first started, it surely has limited Sunway Medical Centre Velocity’s ways to approach and gain more potential patients due to the Movement Control Order (MCO) that was announced on March 2020, a few months after the hospital started its operations. Thus, the hospital’s management could not conduct physical events during that time. In this independent study, I will be observing what kind of initiatives that SMCV has conducted to attract more customers and patients to come and seek treatment at the hospital.

For an overview, it could be seen that SMCV has put an emphasis on COVID-19, General Health Screening and Women and Children health as their main focus over the last two years. This includes providing initiatives such as COVID-19 Drive-Thru test, COVID-19 educational video series on Facebook, COVID-19 hospitalization treatment, Post COVID-19 care treatment, private vaccination centre and COVID-19 Antibody test. Although some of the promotions available at SMCV are similar with the promotions available at Sunway Healthcare's Headquarter Hospital (Sunway Medical Centre in Sunway City, Petaling Jaya), the packages offered by both these hospitals have their own differences to attract more potential patients on their own.

SMCV is also putting a focus on general health for men and women by promoting their health screening packages that range from basic to comprehensive, and other health screening promotions such as ear examination and hearing screening, eye examination package, nasal endoscopy package, urinary incontinence package, endoscopy and others. With these packages, SMCV is offering a much cheaper cost compared to other private hospitals and almost the same range as most general practitioner (GP)'s clinics offer.

From my initial observation through the various promotion initiatives, packages, past campaigns and treatment capabilities that the hospital can offer, it can be seen that SMCV is putting women and children health specialization as its main forte. This is because the hospital is able to provide the diagnostic, treatment and even health packages for women which includes general health screening, fertility medicine specialization that includes fertility screening package, IVF package and Anti-Mullerian Hormone screening promotion. Other women specializations that the hospital has is obstetrics and gynaecology. Currently, the hospital is also offering 30% off hospital charges for their normal and caesarean delivery packages.

For children, this hospital is coming off strong because it is one of the few private hospitals that is able to have its own Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). In order for a private hospital to have a NICU, there must be at least one resident doctor who specializes in neonatology available at the hospital. SMCV also has specialist doctors that are specialized in general paediatrics medical specialty and more comprehensive sub-specialties such as paediatric gastroenterology, paediatric ophthalmology and strabismus surgery, paediatrics surgery and many more. With this new hospital pumping out a lot of new packages and promotional initiatives, this case study will be conducted in order to know what are the exact promotional initiatives, packages or campaign that have been rolled out by the management team to attract

more patients to come to the hospital, the packages or initiatives with the highest impact on patient acquisition, as well as the brand awareness that the hospital managed to get from it.

1.3 Theory Guiding The Case Study:

With the packages and medical specialization offered by this hospital, a mass communication theory that can be related with SMCV's overall approach towards having its brand awareness and attract more patient acquisition to the hospital is the Social Marketing Theory. This theory was first introduced by Philip Kotler, who is also known as the father of marketing. In general, Social Marketing Theory is used mostly in businesses that utilize its digital arm and this digitalization is used to promote a certain information or awareness. (Nanda, 2013). When it comes to this, it can be seen that almost all businesses out there have proceeded in utilizing digital marketing as one of its prominent promotional tools to introduce its company or brand, especially when social media has integrated in becoming a major part of our everyday life as we use social media for multiple purposes such as to gain information, to connect with people around us or around the globe and to get entertained.

In this Social Marketing Theory, there are four important components that Philip Kotler has put emphasis on when it comes to spreading useful information that can help in affecting consumer's possibility to buy a certain product and continue engaging with a certain business. These four components include *product, price, place and promotion* (Lacoma, 2021). For the first component which is product, the product that will be promoted through social marketing can be of either tangible or intangible product which means that a business can use social media marketing to raise awareness about an issue or to directly promote a product. Next, price as the second component also means that it does not necessarily have to be of monetary value but more on influencing the customers through the value that can be offered to them. Thirdly, place refers to the exact location that the customers or consumers can get the products or services physically. Lastly, promotion refers to the type of approach that businesses can use for its marketing purpose. Some examples include creating an awareness campaign, public service announcements or interesting services and packages that can differentiate the particular brand from the others.

The idea of this theory also concerns on creating audience awareness whenever a company urges the intention of promoting new fresh ideas that have never been introduced before. From there, companies will divert their strategy into using multiple platforms in the internet and social media platforms to do promotional campaigns such as what SMCV has done for the past two years.

2.0 ISSUES RELATED

In every business, surely there would be some issues or challenges that an organization would face in order to learn and prosper more in the future. For Sunway Medical Centre Velocity, I have identified four types of issues that this hospital is facing and this includes fear of COVID19 keeping other potential patients away from the hospital, promotional packages are cheaper or on-par with other outside clinics but not much people are aware of these packages due to its 'private hospital' name, promotional materials can be seen as majorly Chinese-focused only and lastly, having to compete with other older and well-established hospitals in the area Kuala Lumpur.

For the first issue which is **fear of COVID-19 keeping other potential patients away from the hospital**, this issue can be described as the biggest challenge for SMCV as the hospital was opened a few months before the COVID-19 outbreak started. While the hospital was pumping out a lot of promotions and packages at a special price, even utilizing its social media platforms to the fullest, the fear of being exposed to COVID-19 has limited the public to come to the hospital as they would prefer to stay home. Especially with the promotions being health screening and diagnostic tests, not as many people would voluntarily come for health screening at the hospital if they were not in a rush or needed a situation for an immediate treatment. Not only the healthcare sector such as the newly opened SMCV was affected with less patient acquisition during the early days of when the pandemic started, other sectors were also affected with the same fate.

According to a study entitled *"Effects of COVID-19 on business and research"* by (Res, 2020), the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak has forced many businesses to close and many business sectors to stop operating with the fear of losing more and more profits. While businesses with years and years of operation have also faced various challenges, new businesses definitely had to come out with initiatives to sustain for a longer period of time. Fear of contracting the Coronavirus has undeniably become one of the most prominent causes as to why people are not going out as much and they are preferring to not shop unnecessarily.

Thus, this has also affected new businesses to create their own brand awareness during this unprecedented time. With this issue in mind, many new businesses have opted to utilize social media as a media to educate, promote and create the confidence among its audience with the aim to gain more profits and awareness for its own brand. A research by (Mason, 2021) has

also stated that there is a growing need of social media marketing for businesses during this pandemic as customers are utilizing this platform to gain information and confidence before making a product purchase.

The second issue is **promotional packages are cheaper or on-par with other outside clinics but not many people are aware of these packages due to its 'private hospital' name.** With its branding name under Sunway Group and Sunway Medical Centre, most of the public people out there would think that the packages offered at this new hospital is not really affordable because of its huge branding. In fact, the current promotion of a health screening package at SMCV is actually affordable and offers almost the same range as what a normal private clinic out there would offer. With this issue, SMCV has to think of a way to position and highlight themselves as another completely new hospital under the Sunway Group, and not as the second version of Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City. But it will also require a lot of promotion initiatives on their social media and even the internet search engine to create as much awareness and attract more potential patients to come to the hospital.

To quote a previous study, a research by (Ashraf et al, 2017) entitled "*Impact on Branding on Consumer Buying Behavior: An Evidence of Footwear Industry,*" a good brand image can increase the chances for a potential customer to make a purchase decision and create a sense of brand loyalty among the customers when the quality is up to their expectations. However, with this good brand image comes a downside as well. For a business with a lot of subbusiness units, the public people would generalize the branding as a whole and not really pay attention to the individual sub-business unit, which makes it a challenge for new business to create its individual brand awareness and gain more customers from it.

With that in mind, it is also challenging for **SMCV as a new hospital in the area of Cheras, Kuala Lumpur to compete with other older and well-established hospitals in the area.** This includes Gleneagles Hospital, KPJ Hospital Ampang Puteri, Pantai Hospital Cheras, Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur, and other hospitals in the same area. To overcome this issue, SMCV has to always think ahead and become more proactive in attracting the public to come to the hospital. Surely it would be hard to attract some people who have already established a customer loyalty relationship with the other hospitals, however with creativity and the best possible package or promotion to offer, SMCV would be able to do that. The only way for SMCV to come out with interesting packages is by doing continuous market research to know what their direct competitors are doing and by coming up with a fresh, eye-catching campaign with special price offer or promotion.

Lastly, from my observation, there is one aspect from the promotional activities that have become an issue to Sunway Medical Centre Velocity. This actually stemmed from how their **promotional materials can be seen as majorly Chinese-focused only**. This would of course attract and retain their Chinese customer market which is Sunway Group's largest customer market segment until today. However, other customer market segments such as the Malay, Indian and international customers market segments would not be that attracted to these promotional materials or initiatives. This actually includes the Corporate Communication initiatives that the hospital has done. The hospital has conducted a lot more broadcast publicity like radio and television interviews fully in Mandarin compared to the Malay and English languages. Thus, it has become a bit challenging for the hospital when they are trying to expand and focus more on attracting Malay potential patients for the hospital. An example of past research study that is related with this issue is a research by (Pogacar, 2018) on "*The Influence of Marketing Language on Consumer Perceptions and Choice*," in order to increase brand awareness, marketers need to also put a focus on language. By using more than one language for promotion purpose, a brand can reach to wider audience which can help to generate more profit for the company. Language also plays a huge part in influencing consumers' buying decision as the right language can offer the best understanding to the public people.

All in all, there should be a balance between the needs of creating adequate brand awareness and the way a company should ensure a continued success in acquiring more customers and retaining them as their customers for the long run. For Sunway Medical Centre Velocity, the theory of Social Marketing is mostly being applied in their campaigns, advertising and also promotional purposes as it is believed that the hospital's productivity and the customer's acquisition will result in a positive trend and improve the prominence of the hospital's name among the public. However, they should always be ahead of their game to stand strong as a new individual hospital under Sunway Group and not just another Sunway Medical Centre (Sunway City) which has already had 20 years of footing in the healthcare sector in Malaysia.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To identify the promotional initiatives, package or campaign that SMCV has done to increase its number of patient acquisition to the hospital.
- 2) To determine the type of promotional initiatives, package or campaign that has the highest impact and patient acquisition to the hospital.

- 3) To study the type of brand awareness that Sunway Medical Centre Velocity has gained from these promotional initiatives, package or campaign.

4.0 DISCUSSION

For this case study, have conducted a discussion with a few fellow colleagues of mine from the Business Development and Corporate Communications Department at Sunway Medical Centre Velocity to gain their insights of what have been done by the team to increase the brand awareness of this 2-year-old hospital. The Business Development and Corporate Communications Department or BDCC team is a comprehensive team with a total of 9 senior executives and managers who are in charge of the planning and execution of the overall marketing and relationship management initiatives for the hospital. This includes campaign planning, event planning, new package development and revision, market research, healthcare network, collaborations, identification of potential clients among others initiatives that can help Sunway Medical Centre to build a more prominent name and gain a higher number of patient census.

The discussions that have been casually conducted with the BDCC team members consisted of the input that can help to answer the three objectives of this case study which is *to identify the promotional initiatives, package or campaign that SMCV has done to increase its number of patient acquisition to the hospital (RO1)*, *to determine the type of promotional package or campaign that has the highest impact and patient acquisition to the hospital (RO2)* and *to study the type of brand awareness that Sunway Medical Centre Velocity has gained from these promotional initiatives, package or campaign (RO3)*. The findings that can be found from these few discussions can be explained as below:

4.1 Promotional initiatives, packages or campaigns:

The promotional initiatives, packages development or campaigns execution for Sunway Medical Centre Velocity were quite similar for its first and second year of operating. This is because the first few years are important for the hospital to create its own brand awareness and visibility among the public people, especially as a second hospital after Sunway Medical Centre that has already had 20 years of footing in the healthcare industry. During the first year, the Business Development and Corporate Communication (BDCC) team at SMCV put a focus on promoting SMCV's resident doctors while the visiting doctors were promoted for the second year. Resident doctors are the doctors who have a permanent 9:00 am to 5:00 pm clinic hours from Monday to Saturday and visiting doctors are the group of doctors who will have an

allocated clinic hour for specific days every week at the hospital. The BDCC team has also been analyzing SMCV's doctors' specialties and come out with initiatives to promote the medical procedures and specialties that SMCV is strong with such as Emergency Care, Cardiology and Women and Children services.

During the early days of the Movement Control Order (MCO) and with the COVID-19 pandemic not showing any sign of slowing down nor stopping, it has surely affected the public people to not come to the hospital as they were afraid that they might contract the Coronavirus. Especially for people who might think that their condition does not need immediate treatment or if they choose to endure their pain, they would choose to prolong from seeking treatment at the hospital. Thus, this issue has been the main focus for SMCV to solve in order to attract more potential patients to the hospital from the year 2020. With this issue in hand, **SMCV has introduced their virtual clinic or teleconsultation service which enables the patients to consult with a medical officer or a specialist doctor from the comfort of being at home.**



Figure 1: SMCV's Teleconsultation Service Poster

According to Ivan How, who is in charge of all things related to Digital Marketing for SMCV, teleconsultation enables patients who are restricted by the Movement Control Order to seek consultation via online calls with their preferred medical officer or specialist doctors. This teleconsultation is recommended for pre-surgeries consultation, second opinions, endoscopies consultations, report follow-up among others. This teleconsultation has helped

to reduce the time a patient needs to come to the hospital and put their mind at ease. Post consultation medication can also be arranged to be delivered to the patient's home and the payments are done fully via online transaction. Until today, teleconsultation remains a very useful method for patients who prefer the convenience of consulting from their own comfort of home and for them to be at ease of mind with the fact that they will only be needed to come to the hospital when they are needed to, such as when they need to undergo a medical checkup or a procedure.

Next, Ungku Hanim who is the Marketing and Communications Executive for SMCV has explained that while it is indeed true that fear of contracting the Coronavirus has more or less hindered potential patients to come to a high-risk place such as the hospital itself, the BDCC team at **SMCV has produced a video series campaign on Facebook called as “SMCV COVID-19 Initiatives” and “Your Daily Dose.”** Through this video series, the team has produced a video on *“10 Things We Do for Your Safety”* which explains the precaution steps that all the staff have to go through to ensure the safety of all the patients coming to the hospital, and to ease their worries such as daily health declaration for staff and consultants, frequent sanitization for all the lifts and common areas at the hospital, mandatory masking for all front liners, visiting hours and visitors restrictions, all COVID-19 screenings to be conducted outside of the hospital premise and others. These videos actually act as a reassurance for the public people that it is actually safe for them to come to the hospital to get their treatment done.

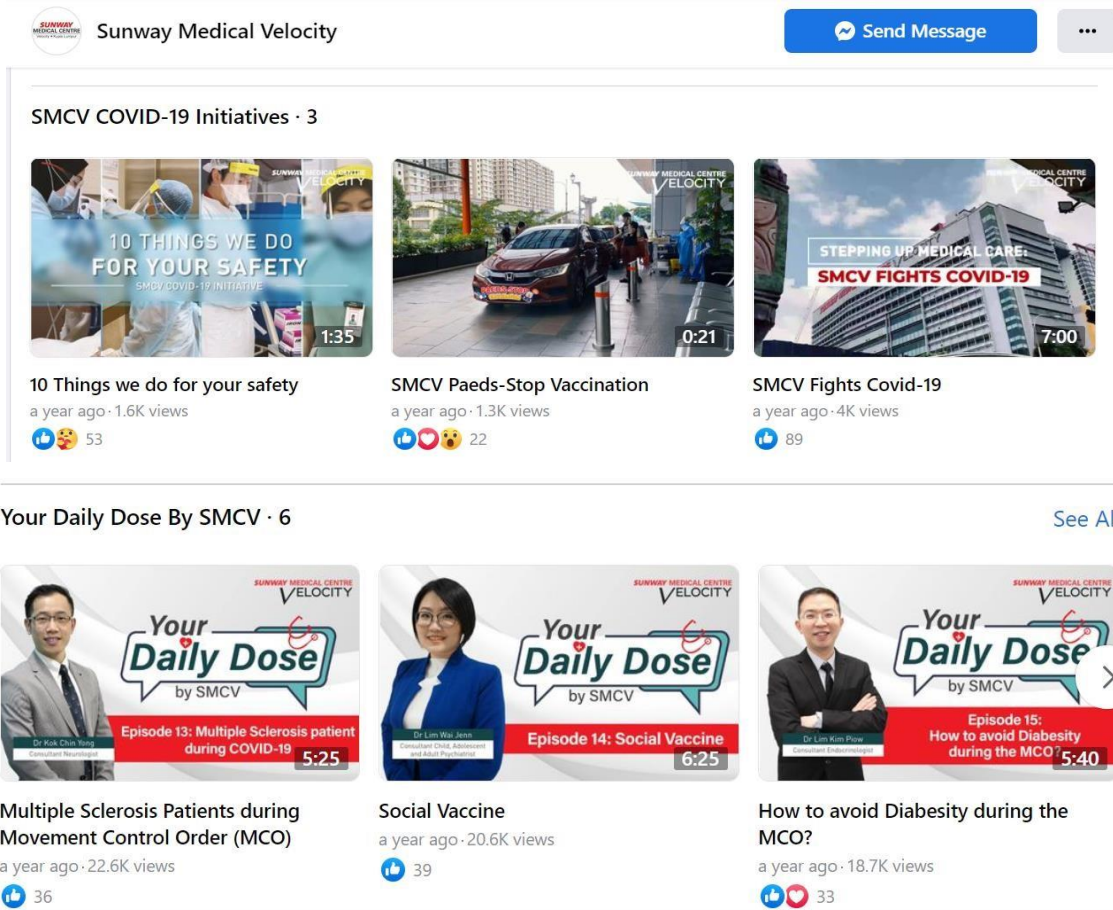


Figure 2 and Figure 3: SMCV’s Facebook Video Series

The team has also produced other videos such as “*SMCV Fights COVID-19*” which is a video explaining all the things related to COVID-19 testing and treatment that was explained by the hospital’s medical director, Dr Wee Tong Ming and “*What You Should Know About COVID-19 Testing?*” For the 17-part “Your Daily Dose” Facebook series, the team has produced various content on the common medical conditions that people might mistake as COVID-19 or how to handle a specific medical condition during the movement control order. Some of the topics include differentiating allergic rhinitis from COVID-19, pneumonia in children during COVID19, social vaccine, multiple Sclerosis patients during MCO, how to avoid diabetes (diabetes and obesity) during MCO, and home physio during MCO. These Facebook video series have garnered more than 32 thousand followers total, and have definitely helped to promote and attract more patients to come to the hospital by ensuring the convenience and safety of the patient.

Ungku Hanim added that although it was difficult to conduct physical events due to the Movement Control Order restriction and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that have to be followed to ensure the safety of everyone, **the team has opted to conduct virtual antenatal classes as a way to engage with the current pregnant patients and to gain interest of new potential patients.** Through these 37 virtual antenatal classes (webinars) which will usually be cross posted on the hospital's Facebook, the current antenatal patients can learn about a certain pregnancy or childbirth topic that is shared by the Obstetrics and Gynaecology (O&G) consultants. These antenatal classes do not only act as a way to engage with the current patient, but it can attract potential patients through the way the doctors are sharing their input and experience because patients will usually seek for a doctor that they will feel the most comfortable with when it comes to childbirth and antenatal care.

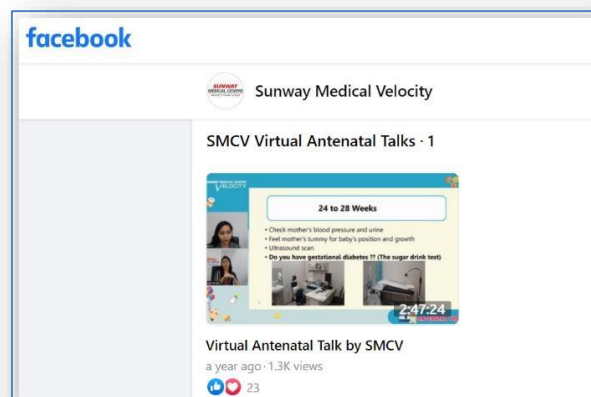


Figure 4: An example of SMCV's Virtual Antenatal Talk

Furthermore, during the early implementation of the Movement Control Order in March 2020, **SMCV has become the first private healthcare hospital to introduce affordable COVID19 Drive Thru Test Service on 30th March 2020**, two weeks after the implementation of the first Movement Control Order in Malaysia. This is actually a new initiative that SMCV has tapped on apart from the normal COVID-19 test and corporate screening test which requires the patient to come to the hospital to have their on-site screening. With the price of RM 360, SMCV offers Real-time reverse transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (rt-PCR) which is a laboratory tested method for rapidly detecting the presence of the COVID-19 virus in the body. This promotional initiative has gathered a good response from the public as they can get themselves tested in such a quick and convenient way without having to worry that they might spread the virus to other people. This initiative has also helped in making the public to become aware of Sunway Medical Centre Velocity's existence as the 20-year-old Sunway Medical Centre was not offering the drive thru test at that time.



Figure 5 and 6: SMCV's COVID-19 Drive Thru Test Poster and Announcement Post

Apart from that, Ivan How also explained that the fear among patients of coming to the hospital was very real as there were a lot of uncertainties due to COVID-19. There were a few initiatives that were implemented during the height of the pandemic that are still being run currently, mainly due to the good response and for ensuring the much needed convenience for SMCV patients. According to Ivan, **Sunway Medical Centre Velocity is the first private healthcare to promote and implement the “Paeds-Stop Vaccination” or drive thru vaccination for toddlers and children.** This initiative has remained popular since it was first implemented and needless to say, the parents enjoyed this value-added service as it brought them the convenience of having their children vaccinated by SMCV's medical staff from the comfort of their car. The Paeds-Stop Vaccination initiative is still being run until today. With this initiative, SMCV helps to ensure the parents to not miss their children's vaccination appointments as the appointment will be a quick and paperless procedure that can be done in less than 20 minutes. This Paeds-Stop Vaccination initiative includes a basic check-up and injection from a Paediatrics specialist and the parents can perform their payment and receive the necessary medications from their car.

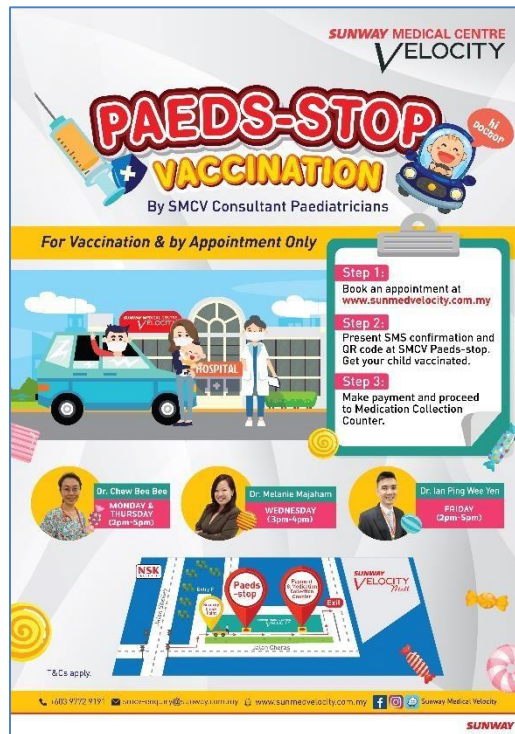


Figure 7: SMCV's Paeds-Stop Vaccination Poster

When it comes to the Business Development team, according to Vivian Lim Char Sin who is a Group Business Development Executive with an experience of working both at Sunway Medical Centre (SMC) and Sunway Medical Centre Velocity (SMCV), she explained that Sunway Medical Centre in Sunway City is a well-known and reputable hospital not only in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, but in other states and countries especially for its health tourism purpose. The demographic and customer segments also vary in Petaling Jaya area as well as Cheras area, and this includes the need to consider the factors such as age population and spending power. There is also some package alignment between SMC and SMCV that were initiated from Sunway Healthcare Group. However, SMCV developed more packages as it is still a new hospital in Cheras area with the aim to increase the hospital awareness and visibility in Kuala Lumpur and nearby locations.

For Sunway Medical Centre Velocity, the team usually takes the demographics and price factors into consideration whenever they want to create a new package to promote. This is because the demographics in Cheras and Kuala Lumpur area are very price sensitive. Thus, the team will conduct various market research to ensure that the new package that will be introduced is competitive as compared to other nearby hospitals. Vivian also explained that since SMCV is still a relatively new hospital, screening packages such as **health screening packages are one of the most prominent packages that the hospital offers as it can**

serve as the first customer engagement with SMCV. From this health screening package, patients will potentially be recommended to a consultant that can help to treat their condition (if required). The team has also partnered up with a few local and international banks to give promotions for these health screening packages to have discounted prices if the patients pay with the specific bank's debit or credit cards.

With the fact that health screening packages are important as it can as the first cause of customer engagement with the hospital, **SMCV has launched their E-Commerce platform where they have made their health screening packages available to be bought in a convenient manner.** SMCV is proud to announce that they are among the first tertiary private healthcare hospitals that offers patients the convenience of purchasing health screening packages, anywhere, anytime and then redeem it at a preferred time of their own. With this initiative, they have totally changed the experience journey of someone coming for health screening. This is because patient can straight away browse and buy their desired health screening packages without having to call or come to the hospital just to get information.

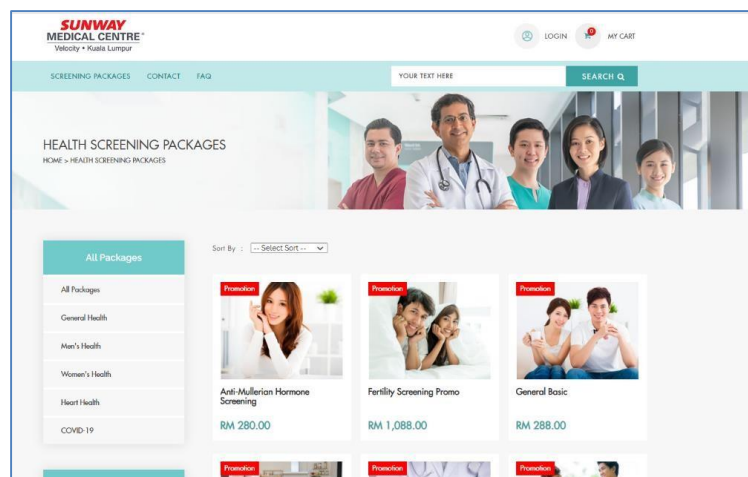


Figure 8: SMCV's E-Commerce Platform that sells health screening packages

According to Ivan How, SMCV always knew that they wanted to explore the E-Commerce platform. The pandemic and the frequent Movement Control Order restrictions at that time has accelerated this idea to the BDCC team. Thus, they worked on the concept where SMCV will allow the E-Commerce platform users to purchase their packages first, and then have their screening tests later before a dedicated redemption period. The SMCV's E-Commerce platform was launched on 1st July 2021 and it has never looked back ever since. The platform proved a popular option for SMCV's target audience where they sell the idea of convenience to their potential patients and they are able to choose the package that is most suitable with their needs.

SMCV's E-commerce is set up in a way that it is easy for users to use and understand which helps in conversion to sales. Keeping the purchase process as simple as possible automatically reduces the barrier for the public people to purchase these health screening packages. The type of packages available for purchase are generally health screening packages which are the packages where a patient does not require any prior consultation with a doctor.

Lastly, **Women and Children has remained as one of the key medical specialties that SMCV is continuously promoting.** Antenatal check-up and delivery package promotion has been one of SMCV's key promotions. This means that the BDCC team along with the hospital management will come up with a revamped and better delivery package each year. Women and Children has become one of the main specialties that SMCV has been promoting since it started operating in September 2019, and delivery package has been a priority because through this package, the hospital can ensure a continuous engagement by the mothers to bring their babies to get regular check-up and vaccination at the hospital. The hospital is also focusing on promoting its Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and Paediatrics consultants by making them participate in the hospital's press release, virtual antenatal talks, talk shows, radio shows and others.



Figure 9: SMCV's Delivery Posters over the years

The hospital is also well equipped with doctors with specialty and sub-specialties for children's health such as Maternal and Fetal Medicine, Neonatology (a specific medical specialty in treating newborn babies), general Paediatrics, Paediatric Gastroenterology, Paediatric

Ophthalmology and Strabismus Surgery, Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgery, Paediatric Respiratory Medicine and general Paediatric Surgery.



Figure 10: A picture of SMCV's Women & Children Specialists

Apart from that, the hospital also has fertility medicine specialists that can help couples who would like to conceive naturally or through In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF), and also gynaecology specialists that can help patients to treat their gynaecological medical conditions. With that being said, it can be seen that Women and Children is one of SMCV's strongest medical highlight. Thus, various promotion and awareness has been conducted to introduce SMCV's and their doctor's to attract more patients to come to the hospital.

4.2 Promotional initiatives, packages or campaign with the highest impact:

From the discussion as mentioned above, Ungku Hanim shared that SMCV's **teleconsultation service** has the impact in making the hospital acquire more in-patient and out-patients. This is because the service ensures the comfort of patients to have consultation sessions with their designated specialist doctors without having to fear too much about contracting the Coronavirus as the time that they would need to be physically available at the hospital premise would be greatly reduced. This teleconsultation service has become even more convenient for the patients and remains as one of the most favourable services provided by the hospital as the patients' medications can also be arranged to be delivered directly to their doorstep after the teleconsultation session ends.

With the good response that the hospital has gained after this teleconsultation service was launched on 24th April 2020, the service has extended from a teleconsultation with either a medical doctor or specialist doctor to a more comprehensive teleconsultation for specific medical attention which includes pain medicine, dermatology, neurosurgery, urology, cardiology, clinical oncology, gastroenterology and hepatology, and many more. In fact, the response for this service has made it to become a continuous service until today.

Apart from the teleconsultation service, the **Drive thru COVID-19 testing service** has helped SMCV to acquire a higher census of outpatients due to how it offers both convenience and an upgraded safety measure where the symptomatic patients do not have to leave their car while getting themselves tested. Furthermore, the process for this service is not tedious as the patient only needs to book their COVID-19 drive thru testing appointment via WhatsApp for their desired time and within the allocated time frame, and just present their appointment verification before getting tested. Especially since SMCV has become the first private healthcare to introduce this affordable drive thru testing, it does not only help the hospital to gain more patients, but it also helps in creating more awareness about the existence of another Sunway hospital that is located in Kuala Lumpur, which makes the hospital to become more accessible for the vast public.

Another promotion with the highest impact in increasing the number of patient acquisition for the hospital is SMCV's **Delivery Package** promotion. Ever since the hospital started its operation in September 2019, the BDCC and hospital management team has promoted their delivery package with an affordable and competitive price as compared to other hospitals in the Kuala Lumpur area. With this affordable package, the team has utilized its social media platforms to promote this package through free and paid advertisements to increase the ad's visibility towards the public. The hospital has also given a 30% discount off hospital charges for its normal and caesarean surgery delivery packages, which made the package to become even more popular among its current and potential patients. The BDCC team has also reached out to personally communicate with the community leaders around Cheras and Kuala Lumpur area to help inform about the existence of this hospital and also to promote their delivery package to the nearby communities.

While the hospital has only had its footing for 2 years, the delivery package offered by Sunway Medical Centre Velocity has become a popular option among young couples to have their first newborn babies here. With the discounted price and other perks that the parents can enjoy such as discounted price for vaccination if their babies sign-up for the SMCV's Kid's Club Card, Paeds-Stop Vaccination initiative and complimentary maternity gift upon discharge, this promotion has given such a good impact to the hospital and has witnessed the birth of 1997 babies throughout last year, an amount which can be considered amazing for a new hospital as it also set the highest record in comparison with the number of babies delivered at Sunway Medical Centre for the last ten years.

Thus, with this achievement, SMCV has come out with a better revamped Delivery Package for normal and caesarean delivery in 2022. This year, SMCV still retains the 30% discount off

hospital charges for both types of delivery package with an additional of 10% discount for all types of immunization for all babies born at SMCV regardless of which year the baby was born in, free one-time postnatal home visit provided by Sunway Home Healthcare and free exclusive maternity gift. This new and comprehensive package was implemented following the prior packages' success in gaining more patients.

With this package, SMCV is aiming to have more babies delivered in 2022, as well as more continuous engagement for babies' regular check-up and vaccination, especially when the hospital will be launching their full spectrum of Women and Children Centre and services this year.

4.3 The type of brand awareness that SMCV has gained from all the promotions:

With all of the above mentioned promotional initiatives, packages and campaigns, it surely has impacted SMCV's brand awareness towards the public. Brand awareness in this context can be defined as a term in which a consumer or user would be able to recognize a company by its name or initiatives that have been done by the company. In simpler words, brand awareness means how familiar the public people are with a company and what kind of image they perceive about the company.

When it comes to Sunway Medical Centre Velocity, most patients and visitors would usually be interested in how the operation of the hospital runs smoothly with its concept of going paperless and utilizing full digitalization even for medical purposes such as taking blood pressure readings and medical records tracking. This means that the medical records and blood pressure reading can be stored in a system directly and the nurse in charge will not need to repeat the same thing again while setting up the patient's health log when a patient is transferred from, for example, emergency department to a ward. As explained by Ungku Hanim who has been working for the hospital since the first day, the public do know more about the existence of this two-year-old hospital with all the promotion initiatives and interesting packages that SMCV was the first one to introduce. Ungku Hanim describes the kind of brand awareness that Sunway Medical Centre Velocity has is **a new hospital with affordable charges and comprehensive facilities**. This is because all of the treatments available at this hospital are priced at an affordable pricing although the hospital is equipped with comprehensive facilities such as the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Catheterization lab (Cath lab) that can be used to carry out a more in-depth cardiology procedure such as visualization of the arteries of the heart, Angiogram, Angioplasty and more.

On the other hand, Ivan How who is a Senior Executive for Digital Marketing explains that the digitalization of SMCV's daily operation does not really reflect and effect on its brand awareness or visibility towards the public people as SMCV was envisioned to be a technologically advanced hospital in the terms of facilities and patient experience prior to before it was built. In fact, **SMCV is proud to say that with the convenience setups and initiatives that have been done, it has actually left a memorable impact on their patients** who are mostly tech-savvy and have no issues adapting to new techs. This can be seen from how they could achieve a higher number of patient acquisition after integrating digitalization in the hospital's daily operation and promotions. Moreover, with all of this digitalization which includes the introduction of their E-Commerce platform and Express Check-in service for follow-up patients. This allowed users to check-in their arrival without the need for physical registration at the counter and allow them to head directly to the doctor's clinic. This initiative not only reduces wait time but it also ensures reduced wastage in paper as the check-in process can be done entirely via mobile. Other digitalization has proved to offer convenience for the patients also includes electronic digital records and teleconsultation service.

The prominent brand awareness that SMCV has gained over the past two years is on its COVID-19 initiatives. Recognizing the needs for reliable information in the midst of public uncertainty during the pandemic, SMCV as a healthcare provider took on the responsibility to share accurate, educational and relevant information to the public, which led to their **winning of the Health Promotion Initiative of the Year at Healthcare Asia Awards 2021**. This includes sharing video series on what the public should know during the pandemic, educational press release and others.

Another prominent brand awareness that SMCV has gained over the past two years is definitely becoming **listed as the Top 3 Delivery Centre in Kuala Lumpur**. This can be seen from how SMCV has successfully witnessed an amazing amount of childbirth all along 2021, with a total of 1997 babies, breaking the past ten-year record of childbirth at Sunway Medical Centre Sunway City. With almost 2000 babies delivered last year, SMCV's Women and Children service has also expanded with the continuous patient engagement in which mummies are returning to the hospital to get their babies vaccinated and to get regular checkups done. With the implementation of the Paeds-Stop Vaccination initiative, more parents are interested to engage with this service as it offers safety and convenience for both the parents and babies. Thus, with this brand awareness that SMCV has gained, the hospital will be launching its full spectrum of the Women and Children service by launching its very own dedicated floor for Women and Children Centre this year which means there would be more clinics, more doctors and patient engagement initiatives.

All in all, although the hospital is relatively new and the brand awareness can still be considered as still very minimal, the hospital has managed to have its own footing that can differentiate itself from the already well-established and reputable Sunway Medical Centre in Sunway City. From the way the hospital is coming up with fresh design and artworks for their new package promotions to the way they introduced a few of their firsts in Malaysia initiatives, this just proved that Sunway Medical Centre Velocity is eager to create its own brand awareness and visibility by distinguishing their services from the hospitals. In the upcoming years, SMCV is visioned to become the preferred tertiary care hospital in Kuala Lumpur that is ready to give their best service for every phase of life.

5.0 SUGGESTION

Following the discussion above, it can be seen how Social Marketing Theory was depicted from the way Sunway Medical Centre Velocity has diverted their strategy into utilizing multiple mass media platforms to do their promotional initiatives or new package and campaign launch. Some of the main features in Social Marketing Theory also include creating audience awareness and targeting the right group of audience. From this, we can see how Sunway Medical Centre Velocity used their social media, website, E-Commerce platform and the traditional media such as newspaper to create awareness on their COVID-19 initiatives and promotion which includes drive thru testing service, educational press releases and Facebook video series on ensuring patient's safety at the hospital and what are needed to be known when it comes to some medical conditions during this pandemic.

Social media was also majorly being used to promote other SMCV's promotional initiatives which includes teleconsultation service, delivery package and other on-going or new packages. The reason why social media was heavily used is because the target audience for these services and packages are people in their late 20s to 40s who are tech-savvy and have the purchase power to get these services either for themselves or for their family. After observing SMCV's social media platforms for the last four months of internship, it can be concluded that the BDCC team put an emphasis on their Facebook promotional posts as that specific social media platform has the highest number of followers and audience engagement from the targeted potential patients for the hospital. By putting an emphasis on Facebook, this includes having monthly planned posts for Facebook and paid advertisements.

One thing to highlight from this independent study is the importance of new businesses to come up with new promotions that are eye-catching to ensure the promotional packages will create first and continuous engagement with their targeted audience. As a second full-fledged hospital after Sunway Medical Centre that has already had a 20 year footing in the healthcare

industry, Sunway Medical Centre Velocity has taken the initiative to introduce some of the first-in-Malaysia packages to distinguish themselves from the former hospital. This also enabled SMCV to create their own brand awareness as no other hospital can provide the same services that they were the first one to introduce. With the amount of publicity gained, it helped to make the public know the existence of Sunway Medical Centre Velocity and how it is convenient to go to the hospital as it is located in Kuala Lumpur.

Next, to suggest a few options that can be done by SMCV in creating a better brand awareness for the upcoming years, I would suggest for the Corporate Communications team to develop marketing initiatives and collaterals that are not seen as too Chinese-focused only. The team can start using pictures that can show the race diversity in Malaysia and also provide these marketing initiatives and collateral in other language options as well. For example, SMCV is looking to penetrate more into the Malay market for 2022 and it is better for them to have all the posters and other collateral translated into the Malay language to make them feel more welcomed and to reduce the feeling of Sunway being a Chinese-dominated hospital only.

Apart from that, SMCV is always using *#SMCV* and *#SunmedVelocity* for all of their social media postings. By clicking on these hashtags, the public can be redirected to all of SMCV's posts on their Facebook and Instagram, which makes it easier for the public to know what services and new packages are available at the hospital. However, I would like to suggest for the hospital to start coming out with additional unique hashtags whenever they have a new package. For example, the usage of hashtags like *#GIRLPOWER* and *#BROvember* during special package promotions in October and November 2021 have helped to attract more patients to know more about these packages.

Lastly, visual communication is very important in healthcare. Like people always say, seeing is believing and by providing promotional posters with strong visuals and copywriting, this can help to create confidence among patients to buy the package for themselves or for their family members. This includes using appropriate pictures that best fit the aim of the package, an interesting header to gauge the public's interest to keep on reading and using layman terms to make the public really understand what the package and treatment offered are really about. From my observation, one of the most prominent visual communications that was created by SMCV is their *#BROvember* package promotional poster and it includes all of the above mentioned criteria. Sample pictures of the *#BROvember* posters are as below:



Figure 11: SMCV's #BROvember posters

6.0 CONCLUSION

To conclude this independent study, it can be said that while SMCV is still a new hospital that people often mistake as the one in Sunway City, SMCV has proved that with the sense of uniqueness and creativity, it can stand out more than SMC and other hospitals in the KL area. By saying the sense of uniqueness and creativity, this means that the Business Development and Corporate Communications team at SMCV has initiated some packages and services that have never been introduced by other hospitals before. They also practice the freedom to propose and produce marketing collateral that gives out fresher and younger feels. This includes having eye-catching headers and copywriting for promotional posters like the above #BROvember posters, without having to really conform with the strict corporate identity (CI) like what other older hospitals are still practicing until today. With this freedom, SMCV could use this opportunity to attract more potential patients, especially those in their 20s to 40s who mostly love unique and straight forward posters as they are the hospital's main target audience.

As a new hospital that started operating when the COVID-19 pandemic started, SMCV has shown that with the usage of social media and E-Commerce platform, it can attract and reach out to more patients to come to the hospital despite many people fearing to come to the hospital. With the right way of digitalization of all of their educational and promotional contents and also digitalization of their daily hospital operation, SMCV has been able to create a sense of confidence among their current and potential patients as the hospital is able to provide services that are relevant with the current time and able to provide services that are quick and

offers convenience for their patients such as drive thru vaccination for babies and toddlers, and also for the COVID-19 testing. With these services, it just proved that SMCV is ahead of their game by thinking outside of the box.

All in all, brand awareness is not just something that can be built in a short time but it takes years for a company to really be known. However, considering how Sunway Medical Centre Velocity is able to clinch several awards at the Healthcare Asia Awards 2021 namely Health Promotion Initiative of the Year – Malaysia, ICT Initiative of the Year – Malaysia and Smart hospital Initiative of the Year – Malaysia, and being known as the Top 3 Delivery Centre in Kuala Lumpur, it just depicts that SMCV is doing great despite the several Movement Control Orders and the pandemic that restricted the hospital's management team to do proper outdoor marketing promotion for the hospital. The management's transparency in gaining the public's interest and trust, as well as the BDCC team's efforts in creating packages that can pique the interest of potential patients not only in the Kuala Lumpur area or within Malaysia but from neighbouring countries such as Indonesia and Vietnam has made the hospital to have its name being known to the right target audience despite only being a 2-year-old hospital.

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