



The Advantages of
High Touch vs.
High Tech *Self-Care and*
Wellness Information

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by Don R. Powell, Ph.D.
President and CEO, American Institute for Preventive Medicine

Organizations have been successful at reducing health care costs by helping their employees/members become wiser health care consumers and live a healthier lifestyle. One effective way to accomplish this is by providing a medical self-care program. It teaches employees to make better decisions about what medical symptoms require professional assistance and those that

can be treated at home using self-care. This is in light of the fact that approximately 25% of all doctor visits and 55% of all emergency room visits are deemed to be unnecessary.

A number of organizations, particularly those that provide Consumer Driven Health Care (CDHC), are putting self-care and wellness information solely online

as a way to reduce costs. They rationalize that everybody uses the internet and it is a low cost way to reach employees/members. Unfortunately, this view has many flaws. Not only will the organization reach less than a quarter of its people, but it will not save any money.



Organizations should provide a self-care and wellness guide to each employee/member in print, online, and as an app. This is the best way for a company to reach the majority of its employees/members and to reduce health care costs. The facts below reinforce this.

1. There have been scores of studies on printed self-care and wellness guides that have documented lower health care costs due to reductions in physician and E.R. visits. The average Return on Investment is 3:1. (See below.) There are no studies that have shown any financial benefit from solely providing online or mobile self-care and wellness information.

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2. Only 38% of the total U.S. population looked online while only 25% used an app for health information in the past year. Only 27% used their insurers website. The most commonly searched topics were specific diseases, treatments, and doctors. It was not for what to do for acute care health symptoms, which is what a medical self-care book addresses.

Source: *Pew Research Centers Internet and American Life Project*, 2017

3. Everyday health problems like sore throats, ear aches, and fever are not commonly searched for online. The 10 most commonly online searched conditions are:

1. Shingles
2. Gallbladder
3. Gout
4. Hemorrhoids
5. Lupus
6. Skin Problems
7. Allergies
8. Heart Disease
9. Diabetes
10. Sleep Disorders

Source: *WebMD*, 2016

4. 26% of online health seekers say they have been asked to pay for something they wanted to see online, with only 2% saying they did so.

Source: *Pew Research Centers Internet and American Life Project*, 2017

5. When U.S. adults are asked to say who they went to for advice when they had a serious health issue, either offline or online, the results are below. The vast majority of these health care conversations take place offline:

- 70% got information from a doctor or health care professional.
- 60% got information from friends and family.
- 24% got information from others who had the same health condition.

Source: *Pew Research Centers Internet and American Life Project*, 2017





6. When looking at who's more likely to go online, its:

- Women over men.
- Younger people over adults
- Those who live in households with \$75,000 of income
- Those with college degrees or higher

Those in the general population who do not meet these criteria are not likely to use the internet.

Source: Pew Research Centers Internet and American Life Project, 2017

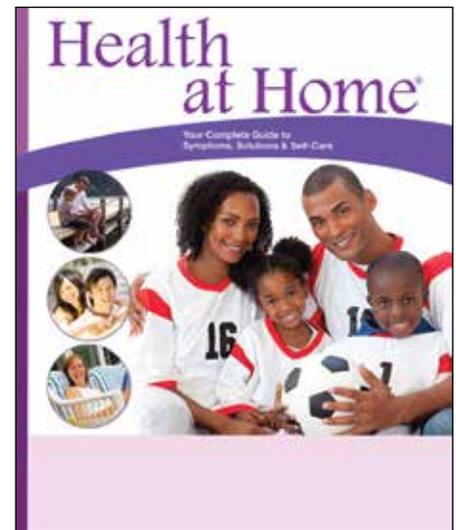
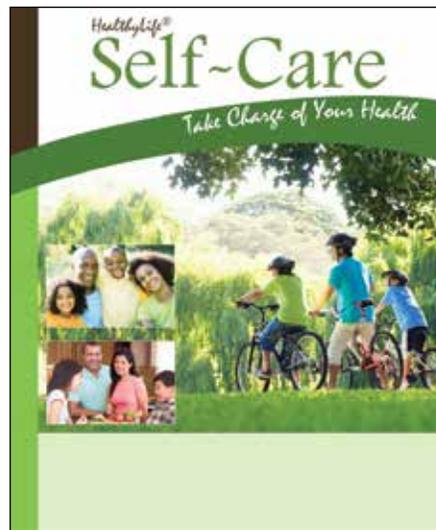
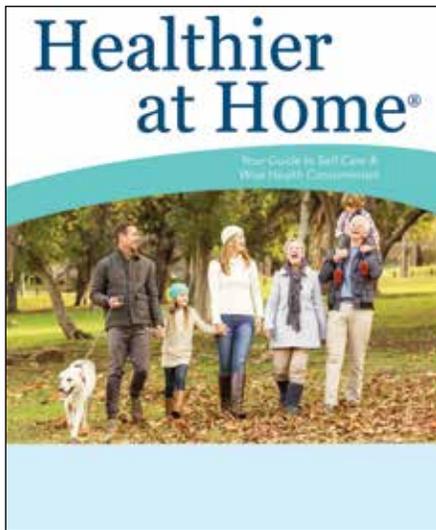


7. Thirty-three percent of consumers were found to be more interested in receiving health information from printed publications.

Source: Center for Studying Health System Change, Tracking Survey Report No. 20, August 2008

8. The information in a self-care and wellness guide is concise and easily accessible. In an emergency, you don't want to spend time going online. Also, some people have trouble using their computers or have slow service and find the process to be very time consuming. A self-care and wellness book allows information to be accessed from any room in the home, not just the computer room. In addition, when using a self-care book, employees/members don't have to compete with other family members for internet access.

9. Having a self-care book around the house can also save a life. Jay Parsons felt unusual back pain after laying flooring in the garage. For relief he took Advil and a hot bath. Unable to sleep that evening, Jay noticed pain in his left shoulder and elbow. He got up, sat in a recliner, and felt better while his wife, Marijo, sat nearby. On the coffee table was a copy of Healthier at Home® and Marijo decided to look through it. On page 387, she noticed her husband's symptoms matched those for a heart attack. Using the self-care/first aid section of the guide, she knew exactly what to do. "You'd better take an aspirin and we'll go to the emergency department," Marijo said. Jay had quadruple bypass surgery the following morning.



10. If an employee only has internet or intranet access at their worksite, they won't be able to access self-care and wellness information at home where they need it the most. Also, they will be using company time to surf the web for health information. A printed self-care and wellness guide gives them the opportunity to receive self-care instructions at home on their own time. Even if your employees have access to the internet at home and are knowledgeable about how to find information, they may not be the home's caregiver. Also, the family's caregiver may not be internet savvy.
11. Putting your organization's name and logo on a self-care and wellness guide indicates your sponsorship of the publication. Studies have shown that over 90% of employees think receiving a self-care guide is a valuable employee benefit. Providing online health information may not create the same positive feelings towards the organization.
12. On the web, there are usually many articles on a particular subject. Consumers need to do a good deal of searching to find the article that is most relevant for them. Users of a self-care publication do not have to scroll through scores of articles to find what they need.
13. By providing all employees/members with the same self-care and wellness guide, you know they are getting consistent recommendations about what to do for various symptoms. Consumers going to different websites may get conflicting or inaccurate information.
14. Most people still prefer the convenience of opening up a self-care and wellness publication and sitting down to read it. If books were no longer an important source of health information, Barnes and Noble and Amazon would not be as popular as they are.



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