



Freshpaint

AMSIVE

The Evolving State of Healthcare Performance Marketing:

Why Last Year's Media
Plan Could Be Your
Biggest Risk



Table of Contents

→	04	Why Last Year's Media Plan Won't Work This Year
→	05	Targeting in the New Era: From Guesswork to Precision
→	06	The New Media Mix
→	08	AI: Cutting Through the Hype
→	08	Building a Privacy-First Foundation
→	09	Your Next Media Plan Shouldn't Look Like the Last One



Laurin Bobo

Sr. Director, Digital Media
Amsive

"Perfect conversion tracking
isn't the goal anymore—
confident decision-making is."



Introduction

For years, healthcare marketers could stick to the same media plan and expect similar results. That's no longer the case. Performance expectations are climbing. Privacy rules are tightening. Budgets are shrinking. And the channels you've relied on for years? They're changing so fast that what works today might be impossible (or outright illegal) six months from now.



Craig Blake

Healthcare Practice Leader
Amsive



Laurin Bobo

Sr. Director, Digital Media
Amsive

Craig Blake and Laurin Bobo from the performance marketing agency, [Amsive](#), see this daily. They work with organizations that spend hundreds of thousands on media, helping them adapt to a reality where audiences move quickly, platforms provide fewer answers, and the old playbook no longer delivers.

"Please do not keep doing the same media plan that you've been doing forever," stresses Laurin Bobo, Sr. Director of Digital Media at Amsive. She and Craig Blake, Amsive's Healthcare Practice Lead, work with providers and payers as they navigate this new reality, where yesterday's tactics no longer meet today's demands. This ebook distills those front-line insights into a clear, no-nonsense roadmap for what's next. We'll show you how to:

- Rethink targeting without relying on the precision tools you've lost.
- Measure performance when perfect conversion tracking is gone.
- Diversify your media mix to follow your audience—not your comfort zone.
- Use AI without falling for the hype.



Why Last Year's Media Plan Won't Work This Year

Not long ago, building a healthcare media plan was a predictable exercise. If you were in urgent care, you would have run these channels. If you were in Medicare AEP, you ran those. Strategies stayed largely the same year over year, and results were steady enough to justify the rinse-and-repeat approach.

That stability is gone. Consumers are migrating from one platform to another at record speed, first Meta to TikTok, now TikTok to Reddit, Discord, and other niche communities. Platforms themselves are stripping out targeting options and changing algorithms without warning. Meanwhile, privacy regulations are tightening, limiting how precisely you can reach the patients you want.



The result? Even if your campaigns still look “fine” on paper, **sticking to last year's plan is quietly eroding your reach and ROI.** The channels keep moving, whether you do or not. And in this environment, even small delays in adapting can put you behind the curve.



Targeting in the New Era: From Guesswork to Precision

The days of **pinpoint targeting** on platforms like Meta are over for healthcare. Age, location, and condition-based segments that once seemed basic are now off-limits or heavily restricted. For healthcare marketers, that means the audience strategy you relied on needs a rethink.



Laurin Bobo sees CRM overlays as a “golden ticket” in this new reality. By sending patient data into a governance tool where identifiers are stripped, you can model your next-best prospects while keeping retention and acquisition efforts in the same conversation. **“Layering that modeled data with behavioral and contextual signals lets you reach relevant audiences without ever passing PHI to a platform,”** she notes. How far you go depends on your organization’s risk tolerance – a decision your compliance team needs to make.

Laurin Bobo

Sr. Director, Digital Media
Amsive

Even if you reach the right audience, measuring whether it worked is a different challenge. Laurin puts it bluntly: “Perfect conversion tracking isn’t the goal anymore—confident decision-making is.” That means watching for micro-actions that signal intent, like “get directions” clicks or form starts, and using them as proxies. As Craig Blake notes, every small signal is a chance to learn and adapt.

Closing the loop is still possible, without creeping people out. CRM matchbacks can connect ad exposure to real patient visits without pushing conversions back into a platform. Lift studies, whether brand or conversion-focused, can prove the value of upper-funnel channels and justify the spend. Together, these methods keep your strategy compliant while still showing the ROI you need to defend your budget.



The New Media Mix

If there's one place where healthcare marketers can win big right now, it's in rethinking where their dollars go. For years, media planning followed a formula, and the results were predictable enough to repeat year after year. That stability is gone.

The End of Cookie-Cutter Media Plans

Past playbooks assumed patient behavior was stable, but that's no longer true. Consumer migration between platforms has become constant: Meta to TikTok, TikTok to Reddit and Discord, and beyond. Each shift changes not just where your audience is, but how they consume information and make care decisions.

The result? Those "tried-and-true" channel lineups are now a liability. Sticking to them means paying for impressions in places your audience has already left behind.

Top-of-Funnel Is Back

The past decade of performance marketing pushed many healthcare marketers to focus heavily on bottom-of-funnel channels, like search ads. But Craig and Laurin are seeing a resurgence in upper-funnel investments, especially in channels like connected TV (CTV) and programmatic audio.

And they're working.

Laurin notes that exposure to a CTV ad can make someone three to five times more likely to convert after a search. The impact isn't just theoretical. It's measurable, and that's the kind of proof that can move budget conversations with your board or leadership team.

Take St. Elizabeth Healthcare as an example. The Cincinnati-based provider saw a **92% increase in search conversions** after launching a full-funnel marketing program. At the top of the funnel, they used CTV and Display to build awareness with a broad audience. In the middle, they leaned on social media and YouTube to educate and drive engagement. And at the bottom, they deployed paid search to capture intent and convert demand.

As Stephanie Downing, St. Elizabeth's Manager of Digital Communications, explains: "All of these aspects work together to drive people through the funnel. At the top of the funnel, we're inspiring demand, and at the bottom, we're capturing that demand. The goal is **you want data to help you pull all those strings.**"

Stephanie Downing

Manager of Digital Communications,
St. Elizabeth Healthcare



The takeaway? Upper-funnel isn't just "brand spend" anymore. When tied to a **full-funnel strategy**, it amplifies bottom-of-funnel results and makes the whole system perform better.

All Ages, All Channels

One of the biggest mistakes marketers make is assuming certain platforms "aren't for" older patients. Craig points out that this year was the first when direct mail wasn't the primary response driver—online was. "Sixty-five-year-olds are on the internet, streaming content, scrolling social feeds, and even listening to podcasts," he notes. Limiting your channel mix based on outdated demographic assumptions means missing a massive—and growing—audience segment.

Test or Fall Behind

Laurin is clear on this point: The fastest way to stagnate is to avoid testing. Audiences are moving constantly, and if you're not exploring where they're headed next, you'll only catch them after they've moved on again. Today's migration pattern—Meta to TikTok to Reddit—is just one example. There will be others.

Allocating a dedicated testing budget is no longer a nice-to-have. It's a must-have. Whether it's experimenting with emerging social platforms, new programmatic formats, or interactive ad experiences, ongoing experimentation keeps your media plan from calcifying. Even small tests can reveal high-performing channels you'd never find by sticking to the same mix.

The bottom line: In the current landscape, your media mix isn't set-and-forget; it's constantly evolving. And the organizations willing to adapt first will be the ones setting the new playbook, not chasing it.



AI: Cutting Through the Hype

AI isn't here to replace healthcare marketers, and if anyone tells you otherwise, Laurin has a term for it: "AI washing." She's seen vendors promise fully automated media buying, only for the "AI" to boil down to broad match campaigns and generic targeting. **Automation without strategy isn't innovation, it's just lazy marketing at scale.**

That doesn't mean AI has no role. Used well, it's an assistant that can surface insights faster, spot patterns in performance data, and help optimize campaigns. But it can't replace the strategic judgment needed to navigate compliance, patient privacy, and nuanced audience targeting.

Laurin notes that Google's AI Overviews (summaries that appear above paid and organic results) are **cutting click volume by as much as 30%**. Fewer clicks mean higher costs for the traffic that's left, and a harder climb for marketers trying to justify search budgets. That's why **Answer Engine Optimization** (AEO) is on the rise:



AEO: Optimizing to show up in AI-generated answers, not just traditional search results.

Reddit, surprisingly, has become a key player here. AI summaries often pull from Reddit threads, making your brand's presence (or absence) on the platform more influential than ever. Ignore it, and you might miss your chance to shape the answers patients see before they ever land on your site.

Building a Privacy-First Foundation

Marketing platforms' built-in tracking tools weren't designed for healthcare. Google, Meta, and others are happy to collect every data point they can (often including PHI) without the safeguards your compliance team needs. As Laurin puts it, with those default setups, you're "letting ad platforms eat from the all-you-can-eat data buffet."

Platforms like Freshpoint flip that dynamic.



Freshpaint's Healthcare Privacy Platform empowers healthcare organizations to use the industry's best marketing tools to **unlock high-performance marketing** while staying compliant with a growing list of privacy regulations, including HIPAA. It replaces risky tracking technologies from Google and Meta with a governance layer that lets you decide what data is shared, when, and how. In other words, you control the data flow back to ad platforms, not the other way around.

Implementing a platform like Freshpaint isn't just about risk avoidance. It's about reclaiming the performance signals you need without trading away patient trust.

Your Next Media Plan Shouldn't Look Like the Last One

Agility, not repetition, is what wins in today's healthcare marketing environment.

Craig Blake and Laurin Bobo's advice is clear:

Reevaluate your targeting. Your audience isn't where it used to be.

Rethink how you measure ROI. Perfect tracking is gone, but confident decision-making isn't.

Diversify your media mix. Stop relying on a single channel or platform.

Test relentlessly. Dedicate budget to finding what's next before your competitors do.

In healthcare marketing, the biggest risk isn't trying something new. It's standing still.

Want proof that privacy can drive results? Watch how Priority Health worked with Freshpaint + Amsive to cut campaign costs, reach at-risk members, and boost retention—all while staying compliant.

How Compliance Fuels High Performance Healthcare Marketing [↗](#)



About Freshpaint

Freshpaint's Healthcare Privacy Platform helps healthcare organizations unlock the full value of their marketing stack without sacrificing privacy. By replacing non-compliant tracking tools, Freshpaint enables marketers to accurately measure performance, improve acquisition, and growth—all while staying compliant with HIPAA and other regulations. Better insights. Smarter campaigns. Privacy-first by design.

To learn more, visit Freshpaint.io.

About Amsive

Amsive is a data-led performance marketing agency that enhances ROI through innovative customer acquisition, engagement, and communications solutions.

A full-service partner with both digital and direct-native expertise, Amsive designs audience, creative, and channel strategies that amplify growth using in-house campaign and production capabilities for seamless execution.

At the core of Amsive's success is Audience Science®, our unique approach to audience building and analysis, channel activation, testing, and measurement. We navigate today's marketing complexity to develop optimal audiences and surpass performance objectives, always focusing on your next best customer.

Amsive provides a complete suite of strategic marketing solutions, including direct mail, digital media, SEO, social media, creative and content, data intelligence, advanced analytics, and more.

To learn more, visit Amsive.com.
