

Authenticity, Clarity, Empathy

An Interview with Loreen Babcock,
Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer, Montefiore Medical Center

EDITORS' NOTE Loreen Babcock founded two marketing agencies before joining Montefiore, Idevoita in 2012, and LLKFB/Unit7 in 1996. She sold LLKFB/Unit7 to Omnicom in 2000 and served as its Chairman and CEO of LLKFB/Unit7 from 2003 through 2012. Prior to founding LLKFB/Unit7, Babcock held senior leadership roles for advertising agencies including Ogilvy, Saatchi & Saatchi and Lowe.



Loreen Babcock

INSTITUTION BRIEF Montefiore Medicine (montefiore.org) is a leading academic medical organization comprised of Montefiore Health System and Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Together they are pioneering patient-centered research and providing exceptional personalized care with over six million patient interactions a year in communities across the Bronx, Westchester and the Hudson Valley.

Montefiore Health System is comprised of 15 member hospitals, including the Children's Hospital at Montefiore, Burke Rehabilitation Hospital, White Plains Hospital and more than 200 outpatient ambulatory care sites that provide coordinated, comprehensive care to patients and their families. Albert Einstein College of Medicine, home to nearly 1,000 students in its M.D., Ph.D., and combined M.D./Ph.D. programs, is one of the nation's preeminent centers for research, medical education and clinical investigation.

How do you define the Montefiore difference and how do you convey that difference through your branding?

At Montefiore-Einstein, there are three key areas we focus on. The first would be authenticity. The second would be clarity, and the third would be empathy.

Regarding authenticity, our mission is to heal, to teach, to discover, and to enhance the health of the people in the communities we serve. On clarity, our goal is to tell the Montefiore-Einstein

story through the eyes of our patients, to share the fullness of their experience. We also focus on the person, not the condition that brought them to us. This broadens and deepens the connection and engagement we have with our audience. We help our audience and get to know them as people first, not just patients. They have lives that have been interrupted and our goal is to help them move past what brought them to us and to regain their full life.

On empathy, we build our marketing on the concerns of the people in the communities we serve. It is the fundamental element of the compassion that starts with Montefiore-Einstein's leadership and threads through the millions of decisions made every day to keep us true to our mission. By listening closely to our communities, we learn about the health concerns people have and the help they're looking for. It is our

honor to serve them, and we work extremely hard to make sure that we are addressing and mitigating those concerns.

Will you discuss Montefiore's approach to branding?

We are always seeking to elevate the recognition of Montefiore-Einstein as a premier academic medical center. To do this, it's imperative that we continue to ask ourselves, what sets us apart from other healthcare institutions in the region? We look for ways to tell our unique story that are built on bona fide claims and highlight the remarkable work we do in every community we serve. Patients and their families are the heroes in our narratives and this creates relatability for people from all walks of life.

We like to tell stories of triumph over adversity. A few examples of this would be Nicole and Christian, who had twins born cranially conjoined, their brains intertwined. We surgically separated them, and they beat the odds. Eric's pitching arm was going to bench him and he's back in the game. Jack had a tumor eating away at the bone in his leg and he's now playing hockey for New York University. Elena's heart was failing her with little time to live, and she's now living a full life and able to take care of an extended family all of whom rely on her. Our message provides the ability for people to relate to the people we heal and highlights that Montefiore-Einstein is a destination that could do the same for them.

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How do you engage Montefiore's workforce in these branding campaigns?

We engage several people in the stories that we tell and their authenticity comes through every time. There is a tremendous amount of pride when we're promoting our people's work. Our institution is full of humble people who do extraordinary things every single day. It is always a pleasure for me to witness the pride they feel when they see their work promoted to the market. I'm honored to be able to tell the stories of how Montefiore-Einstein staff are improving and even saving lives.

Are Montefiore's campaigns consistent in all markets or are they tailored to the individual locations?

We listen to the various communities and what the needs are in those communities. We will tailor the message to specific concerns we learn are on people's minds in those specific geographies.

For example, if we're entering a geography with new specialty services, we will tailor our message based on what we know about the needs for specialty care.

In addition to this, we often tell the stories of people overcoming odds and those stories resonate in any community, whether it's Westchester or the Bronx.

We really work hard on defining what our key messages are and how those messages resonate with people.

What are the key platforms that Montefiore is using to tell its story?

That's a great question. We bring in a lot of data and the media works together. We utilize TV, radio, print, OOH, social and display in addition to community activation initiatives. Our experience is that an integrated approach with a wide variety of media works well together. It is important to reach our audience and to connect and engage with audiences to ensure they feel heard.

How critical are metrics to track the impact of Montefiore's branding efforts?

Metrics can be challenging, but when we combine the performance data we receive from media which includes click rates, website traffic and timing, as well as geo/demo insights, we're able to gather a significant amount of information that helps inform our strategic approach. The goal is to learn the most we can so that we support and enhance our audience by designing efforts around them. We combine this data with qualitative research that helps us with the overarching insight for marketing and campaign efforts. That becomes very powerful for us to make sure that we are meeting the demands of the people who need to hear about our state-of-the-art services as well as assure we are optimizing our marketing investments.

It's an important combination because data without insight is simply not as strong in helping to make informed marketing decisions.

How critical has it been to have such deep engagement from the C-Suite and management team in Montefiore's branding efforts?

That is another great question. I actually address this in a talk that I give. It is critically important that the leader have a clear vision of how to promote the excellence of this institution and our leader, Dr. Philip O. Ozuah, President and CEO of Montefiore Medicine, sets the bar for this. He has an incredible vision and wants to be able to tell our stories in a way that will resonate with people and be distinctive, with real impact on people's lives.

Are you able to take moments to celebrate the impact of Montefiore's campaigns or are you always thinking about what's next?

We celebrate the work, but more importantly how the patient's authenticity, and how their lives come through in the stories that we tell. I would say that we rejoice in what we've done for these patients and love how we're able to bring that to life through our marketing efforts.

Are you still amazed at the impact this institution makes each day?

It never gets old. I am amazed on a daily basis. With every conversation I have with our scientists, our clinicians, our nurses and other healthcare professionals, it is extraordinary to see what we are doing for people. Between the research, the clinical care, our early adoption of technology, and how we're advancing treatments, I am so fortunate to be a part of an institution like Montefiore-Einstein. ●

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