

The 10-Step Guide To Growing Your Home Health Agency



Ten impactful moves to make now to get organized, focused, and primed for growth.

Presented by

ALORA
Home Health Software



Actionable thought leadership from
seasoned experts in home health.

The 10-Step Guide to Growing Your Home Health Agency

Ten Impactful Moves to Make Now

Are you looking to grow your home health agency? This can be the year to build that census you want.

Maybe you have no idea where to begin. Or perhaps you have too many ideas to decide on which move to make first. No need for guesswork. In this guide, we will lay it all out for you.

Here are ten impactful moves to make *now*, to get organized, focused, and primed for growth.

1. Check Out the Competition
2. Know Your Retention Plan
3. Change the Way You're Recruiting
4. Take an Objective Look at Your Agency
5. Strengthen Partnerships
6. Leverage Your Data
7. Evaluate Your Social Media Strategy
8. Capitalize on Digital Technologies
9. Own Your Online Reviews
10. Clarify (and Communicate) Your Vision

Check Out the Competition

One impactful step to grow your business now is to check out the competition. Your home health agency must be the number one go-to choice

for referral sources if you want to expand this year.

The process of identifying similar businesses or services in your market is called competitive analysis. It is an important part of the growth plan because it gives helpful insight about how others see you. Potential referral sources and customers will compare your agency to the competition. Will you be the top choice?



To make this important move, first figure out who the competition is. If unsure, then ask around or look online. Determine who your top three competitors are. Think about other companies in your area offering the same services. You might want to think about agencies that are the same size or have a similar census.

Next, think about what your home health agency offers that others do not. Could you provide a specialized surgical rehabilitation program that no one in the area has? What about attracting more specialized nurses or therapists through incentives or better pay? Your growth plan could start with a good look at the competition and some ideas on how to be better.

Know Your Retention Plan

When it comes to beating the competition, human resources is a great place to start.

TIP: Staff retention should be an integral part of the plan for growth this year.

Think about these statistics on healthcare workers, and their implications.

- By 2025 there will be a shortage of nearly one-half million home health aides.¹
- As of February 2021, registered nursing was the fourth-most in-demand job.²
- A recent study predicted that over one million RNs will retire from the workforce between now and 2030.³

It's time to answer questions such as how you will retain your hard-working, well-trained staff. And, how you can compete against big businesses, like hospital networks, that can afford to offer more for home health clinicians.

These are difficult challenges to consider. And the bottom line is, you can't grow without staff.

One key will be to retain the staff you already have. Plan for how to accomplish this. Get creative and think outside of the box. Creating a culture that makes staff feel valued, offering continuing education and opportunities to upskill, and promoting from within are a few ways to gain loyalty. Invest in your team

in big ways to make sure they stick around.

Change the Way You're Recruiting

Hand-in-hand with retention, recruiting is another critical area to consider when planning for growth. Home health clinicians are often overworked and understaffed. Harvard Business Review found that health care employees are among the largest groups of workers quitting their jobs because of extreme work demands and burnout.⁴



The next step that will impact your growth is to change the way you're recruiting. You must build a smarter recruiting strategy.

First, change up that generic ad on Indeed. Your job board posting must stand out. Give real-world context to your ad. Consider telling potential applicants exactly what types of patients they will see, what technologies they'll use, and why your staff loves your company. Qualified clinicians with the right skill sets don't want to waste their time. They want an idea up front of whether the job position is a good fit for them. Agencies will get more activity from a quality post with a detailed description. And the responses will be more of what they're looking for.

People love a story because they can connect with it. Consider sharing real-life stories from staff that joined your agency and thrived in the job flexibility, company culture, or work-life balance.

Secondly, if you are not working with a healthcare recruiter, it is time to think about going that route. Healthcare recruiters are laser-focused on finding the right nurse, therapist, or aide for you. Typically, they can devote time to finding and screening candidates that your managers can't. In today's labor shortage, it's wise to use all the tools at your disposal. Using a recruiter for your next hire is a move that could impact your agency.

Take an Objective Look at Your Agency

Another big impact move for owners looking to grow their home health business is an objective look at their agency.

TIP: Take a step back. Consider facts, not feelings.

What are the company's strengths, and where are the weaknesses? Are there departments, key stakeholders, or processes that need attention before the agency can scale effectively? An objective look at the agency will give valuable insight.

Start with a pen and paper or digital notepad and draw two columns. Brainstorm some of the positives and negatives of your agency as it is today. Then let this list guide the decisions over the next six to twelve months.

Strengthen Current Partnerships

The next big move to accelerate growth this year is to strengthen current partnerships. The relationships you have now with your employees, your providers, and the community are valuable. Let them know that their contributions to the agency's success are important. Spend some time, energy, and resources this year to foster the connections you already have in place.



Take some time to think about referral sources, business partnerships, and team members who helped your agency's growth in the past. Call on them again to make your next push for growth this year.

Beware of neglecting those who have gotten you to this point. Never let the excitement of growing and making new partners overshadow the team that built the foundation.

Leverage Your Data

This next move will not require much of an investment, but it can contribute to growth in a big way. Right now, you should be leveraging your agency's data to inform growth strategies.

Every agency is unique. And that's why agency leaders need the current

numbers and reports to grow and improve.

Think of all the valuable information that is already at your fingertips. OASIS reports tell owners what kinds of patients they are serving. Marketing reports show where patients are coming from. The data that home health agencies already collect provides a wealth of business intelligence.

Use the information to formulate the next campaign. In fact, sales teams can look at the current census and providers to gain a sense of the potential market. Then they can drill down to look for new opportunities. Leveraging your data is key. And your current reports can help you optimize growth this year.

Examine Your Social Media Strategy

This next move is more of a requirement than a suggestion. Now is the time to examine your social media strategy. Are you using the agency's social media presence to gain customers and expand the brand? If not, you should be.



One of the great things about social media is that it's free to access. Today, it is safe to say that almost everyone you know has a social media account. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter give businesses access to a

broad audience with relatively little cost and effort. Depending on an agency's marketing budget, they can manage social accounts internally or outsource tasks. Either route is fine, as long as an agency does not neglect this powerful tool for growth.

Here are a few ways that social media platforms can spark growth for a home health agency:

- Posting blogs helps families with questions about home health
- Activity in local Facebook groups attracts nurses and aides looking for work
- Updates about events announce an agency's presence in the community

Another social media strategy that agencies can't afford to disregard is Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Companies putting content on the web must make sure that it is visible. It does no good to post if no one sees it!

Spend time and energy learning how to optimize what you put out to get the most return on your investment.

Double Down on Digital Technologies

While foundational platforms like good [home health software](#) are critical to establish the baseline, if expansive activities like planning for social media platforms excites you, then you are on the right path to grow this year. That's because the healthcare industry has digitized in an unprecedented way since

the pandemic. The American Hospital Association suggests a shift from "doing digital" to "being digital".⁵ A sure way to make a big impact for growth this year is to double down on digital technologies.

For instance, digital services for your website can grow your census by getting leads. Think about this. Seniors and caregivers are getting more proactive about their care. Perhaps someone hears about home health and has questions so they're searching online after work, *when the office is closed*. But a chatbot on the website engages them and captures the contact information for a quick introductory call!

Moreover, online technologies help with recruiting and retention. Communication platforms are facilitating virtual interviews and remote work. Both contribute to work-life balance and are very attractive in today's competitive labor market.



Another digital technology emerging in home care is telehealth. Medicare doesn't pay for virtual visits provided by home health agencies, but that doesn't mean telehealth is useless. Video streaming and conferencing services keep patients engaged. And they are attractive to doctors who can count on

you to care for their patients. Evidence is showing telemedicine can improve:

- care outcomes
- patient engagement, and
- physician satisfaction

If you're not already, it's time to jump on the digital transformation bandwagon. This year, think of how you can get ahead of the competition by using healthcare technologies to your advantage.

Own Your Online Reviews

These days, patients and caregivers expect more from home health agencies. They are looking for quality care and great customer service. The best way to let potential customers know about your agency is to have positive reviews from current patients and staff.

Online reviews are today's digital currency. Take, for example, Yelp. It is a multi-billion-dollar empire *built* on consumer reviews.

TIP: People want to see business reviews. Your online reviews matter.

If you haven't been "owning" your online reviews, here's what to do NOW.

1. Claim your business on Google and Yelp. Ensure your information is complete and accurate to boost your website's SEO.
2. Then cover the secondary sites. Lead generation websites like Care.com, Caring.com, Place for Mom, Senior Advisor, and Aging Care should have an accurate

listing for your business. Make sure they show locations and what services you offer.

3. Use real photos, not stock photos. Show who you are. Authenticity stands out.
4. After you set up accounts, make sure someone monitors them. The Sales and Marketing Team would be great at this.

Once the sites are set up, spread the word! Feature quick links to the online reviews on your website. Use the links in email signatures. Let everyone know you're online and ask for reviews. When you hear about success, invite the patient, family, or employee to give a public review online. Let them know that their feedback helps others find you. Finally, use online reviews (both positive and negative) internally for performance improvement.

Clarify and Communicate Your Vision

If you're ready for explosive growth this year, there's one last impactful move to make. To expand your business, you must have a solid team behind you.

TIP: When it comes to your home health agency, you can't grow it alone.

It would be impossible to execute these moves without time, energy, and ideas from others who are invested like you are. So, if you don't have a team behind you already, how do you get one?



Clarify and communicate your vision. When your team catches the dream, it will be easier to move forward because everyone will be rowing in the same direction.

Define your goals and share them with your team. Talk specifically about why you want this to be **your** [team's] year. Maybe it is because you want to care for *more* of the vulnerable patients who need help. Perhaps it provides the best home healthcare in the city. Get clear on the "why" behind the goal. And then convey that message to everyone in the organization.

Put positive energy behind it, and your vision will be contagious.

Summary

So, there you have it: the ten most impactful moves to make now. You have your work cut out for you.

Implementing some or all of these steps now will move you in the right direction for major growth this year. So, get your team together and start dreaming about where you will be this time next year. What are you waiting for? Get moving!

References:

1. Parija Kavilanz, CNN Business Blog, "The US cant' keep up with demand for health aides, nurses and doctors" <https://money.cnn.com/2018/05/04/news/economy/health-care-workers-shortage/index.html>
2. Greg Lewis, LinkedIn Talent Blog, "The Most In-Demand Jobs Right Now," December 9, 2021: <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/trends-and-research/2020/most-in-demand-jobs>
3. David Auerbach et al., "Will the RN Workforce Weather the Retirement of the Baby Boomers?" *Medical Care*, Oct. 2015: https://journals.lww.com/lww-medicalcare/Abstract/2015/10000/Will_the_RN_Workforce_Weather_the_Retirement_of.3.aspx
4. Ian Cook, "Who is Driving the Great Resignation?" Harvard Business Review, September 15, 2021: <https://hbr.org/2021/09/who-is-driving-the-great-resignation>
5. Cynthia Perazzo, The American Hospital Association Healthcare Innovation Blog, "4 Big Moves to Drive Digital Transformation at Your Health System," October 14, 2021: <https://www.aha.org/news/healthcareinnovation-thursday-blog/2021-10-14-4-big-moves-drive-digital-transformation-your>

About Alora Home Health Software

Founded in 2005, Alora Home Health Software is an award-winning software solution optimized for home health and home care agencies. Built with a pure focus on ease-of-use, Alora is a powerfully simple, all-in-one platform praised by home health staff, and with solutions that allow agencies to easily manage every aspect of their business, from clinical to financial to operations. The cloud-based platform works on all devices, and features like paperless workflow and eFax let you manage your agency from anywhere. In addition to Medicare and Medicaid, Alora comes with the ability to bill all payers, allowing you to service more patients and foster growth. The solution facilitates Medicare compliance ongoing, keeping you ever prepared for a survey. Everything from scheduling to documentation to billing and even ETV is built in. Both skilled and non-skilled home care are easy to manage from a single login. And it's complimented by top-rated customer support where calls are answered live by experts. When running your agency becomes simpler, there's no limit to what your agency can accomplish with Alora.

Learn more at www.alorahealth.com.