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## GE healthymagination “Year of Better Health for More People” Campaign

**Category:** Strategic Communications/Public Relations

**Client:** General Electric (GE)’s healthymagination Initiative

### Overview

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American lifestyles and view of health has unravelled to become a burden on society’s healthcare system in the United States. The healthcare system costs the United States more than \$2 trillion, making up 1/6 of the economy. Since 1980, obesity rates for adults have doubled and rates for children have tripled, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Today, an entire generation of children is more likely to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease, including high cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, and abnormal glucose tolerance – preventable health problems only adults once worried over.

But simple changes can save money and lives: 70 percent of cancer, 71 percent of cardiovascular disease and 92 percent of adult-onset diabetes can be avoided if people change their behaviour. **The CDC found medical expenditures for obese workers, depending on severity of obesity and sex, are between 29 percent –117 percent greater than expenditures for workers with normal weight and Health Affairs has cited that about half of the bankruptcy filings in the United States are due to medical expenses.**

The call from Washington, D.C. for healthcare reform blanketed news coverage across the country, with focus on the political tug-of-war between Republicans and Democrats. The truth is: Starting with consumers, lives and money can be saved by realizing the impact of prevention. As a part of GE’s healthymagination initiative, the “**Year of Better Health for More People**” campaign targeted consumers directly, working to empower them as decision-makers in their own health, spark the conversation on what it means to live a healthy lifestyle, and address the disconnect between what consumers **know** to be healthy and the **actions** they take.

### Research/Planning

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In partnership with Cleveland Clinic and Ochsner Health System, GE enlisted Edelman’s research unit, StrategyOne, to conduct a national survey examining how Americans perceive their personal health and wellness, as well as the state of the doctor-patient relationship. StrategyOne conducted two studies:

- A telephone study with a sample of **2,004 Americans**, aged 18 years and older, in addition to interviewing 125 people in each Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, Houston, and San Francisco.
- An online study among **1,000 Healthcare Professionals**, including 800 physicians, nurses, pharmacists and dieticians, in addition to interviewing an oversample of 200 physicians.

The survey found a stark disconnect between how patients and doctors view America’s health: While the overwhelming majority of Americans (95 percent) **know** that regular physician checkups are important to living healthy, 70 percent have, at some point, taken **actions to avoid** the one person who could partner in helping them live healthier – their healthcare provider.

Americans understand the importance of having accurate health information, but don’t always know their information. The vast majority (92 percent), for example, believe knowing their cholesterol levels are important to living a healthy life, but less than half (36 percent) know their current cholesterol levels.

When asked their personal health numbers:

- Only 24 percent know their body mass index (BMI)
- Just 29 percent know their blood glucose level
- Only one third (33 percent) know their daily caloric intake

The study showed Americans knew what to do but were failing to take action. Based on this research, GE organized a campaign to raise awareness on key health disconnects that prevent healthy living and ensure economic frailty, with the goal of informing and inspiring action in this “Year of Better Health.”

**Objective 1:** **Raise awareness of the disconnect between doctors and patients and the need to partner for better health.**

- Generate awareness among consumers that a healthy life is not only the absence of disease and a reactive approach (visiting the doctor only when sick), but also a proactive lifestyle (working with doctors as partners in better health).

**Objective 2:** **Engage and challenge Americans to take action towards better health, everyday through traditional and new media placements, with advertising campaign accompaniment.**

- Secure 100 million impressions and more than 500 broadcast placements for the campaign launch.

**Objective 3:** **Offer tools and resources: Drive Americans to healthymagination’s website, the free Morsel mobile application and the online Better Health Conversation to act on better health.**

- Attract 300 fans to the healthymagination Facebook page.
- Drive consumers to complete 50,000 daily Morsels within two months of launch.

## Strategy

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The Better Health Study revealed that while Americans understand taking specific actions is important to living a healthy lifestyle, only about one third give themselves an “A” on daily activities necessary for good health (getting regular exercise, etc.).

It became clear that targeted outreach to key stakeholders and media would be critical to effectively breaking through the crowded health and wellness space to reach consumers directly. Leveraging a 360° communications approach to start a conversation about better health, share healthy ideas with others and enable consumers to live healthier lives, the team reached out to the following audiences:

- Consumers: **Health-minded individuals** who strive to make healthy decisions daily; **Consumers-at-large** who may not think about health and healthy behavior on a regular basis.
- **Mainstream media**: health reporters, business editors, editorial writers, and broadcast producers, as well as **new media including bloggers and tweeters**.

## Execution Synopsis

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- **Better Health Study**: Researched and identified disconnect between Americans and healthcare professionals on health and healthy living behaviors, as well as state of patient-doctor relationships.
- **National Media Outreach**: Targeted reporters/editors/producers for consumer-focused coverage by national outlets and each 10 priority local markets.
- **Celebrity Spokespersons**: Enlisted and provided media training with messages to former Olympic athlete Michelle Kwan, Cleveland Clinic’s Dr. Michael Roizen, GE healthymagination’s Mike Barber, and a broader group of Olympic athletes and physician partners
- **New York Media Tour**: Coordinated NYC media blitz for former Olympic athlete Michelle Kwan and Cleveland Clinic’s Dr. Michael Roizen, including in-studio interviews to NY-based broadcast outlets and executing a Satellite Media Tour (SMT).
- **VIP Media Luncheon**: Separate from the SMT, organized and hosted a media event with Michelle Kwan and Dr. Roizen for top editors from *U.S. News & World Report*, *Time*, *Newsweek* and AOL Health in a luncheon discussion.
- **Better Health Heroes**: Coordinated “Better Health Heroes” media event at the Vancouver Winter Games with prominent Olympic medalists Martin Brodeur, Scott Hamilton, Michelle Kwan and Angela Ruggiero. The Olympians skated alongside dozens of the Better Health Heroes – the medical staff and volunteers from the Vancouver Organizing Committee of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games who have dedicated themselves to keeping the athletes and fans healthy throughout these Games. The group skate was preceded by a discussion on the events and competition in Vancouver and on the importance of healthy living featuring the Olympians, VANOC Chief Medical Officer Dr. Jack Taunton and GE healthymagination Vice President, Mike Barber.
- **Huffington Post Op-Ed**: Drafted and delivered op-ed authored by GE CMO Beth Comstock, discussing need for better health to be integrated into the daily lives of consumers.
- **Press Materials Development**: Developed surrounding key findings from the GE Better Health Study, including: press release announcing the study and healthymagination initiative; study factsheet highlighting key findings; biographies for GE spokespeople, Olympic athletes and physician partners; asset sheets describing online components of the healthymagination initiative (Morsel, Better Health Conversation, etc.); and, a Q&A document.

## Results

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### **Objective 1: Raise awareness of the disconnect between doctors and patients and the need to partner for better health.**

- A blend of print, online, broadcast and blogger outreach, the healthymagination consumer launch garnered **more than 247 million total impressions**.
- Secured more than **1,300 broadcast placements (TV, radio, Web)**, including one-on-one interviews for Kwan and Roizen with *Access Hollywood*, *People.com*, *ABC News Now*, *NBC O&Os*, *U.S. News & World Report*.
- Secured **12 live radio segments** featuring Michelle Kwan and Dr. Roizen; top-tier markets included Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Chicago and Miami; all segments incorporated core GE messaging.

### **Objective 2: Engage and challenge Americans to take action towards better health, everyday**

- Hosted **14 key consumer and lifestyle editors from 12 outlets at NYC luncheon** on launch day with Michelle Kwan and Dr. Roizen, including one-on-one interviews and live blogging from the @GEHealthy twitter handle.
- Message pull through in media coverage showed **GE positioned as a credible healthy behavior advisor and thought leader**.
- **More than 50 media attended** the “Better Health Heroes” media event, yielding national coverage.

### **Objective 3: Offer tools and resources: Drive Americans to healthymagination’s website, the free Morsel mobile application and the online Better Health Conversation to act on better health.**

- Consumers completed **more than 100,000 daily morsels** within two months of launch.
- Drove **more than 580 consumers to become fans on Facebook** within a month of launch.