



WORKPLACE ACCESSORIES

VividBoard Fills a Communication Gap in The Healthcare Industry, Prepares for Relaunch

VIVIDBOARD, FOUNDED IN 2002 AND NOW OWNED BY GMI COMPANIES, BASED IN LEBANON, OHIO, IS TAKING THE LEAD ON THIS TREND. IT DESIGNS CUSTOM WHITEBOARDS FOR HOSPITAL AND OUTPATIENT SETTINGS, ENHANCING THE WAY PROVIDERS INTERACT WITH AND TREAT THEIR PATIENTS.

by Emily Clingman

For decades, hundreds of studies have found hospital environments are strongly linked to patient satisfaction, stress, health outcomes and overall quality of care. The design of the patient room is one indicator in how favorably patients rate their overall satisfaction with a hospital. While there are many factors to consider when designing a patient room, one element is emerging as a vital tool in improving the patient experience — the whiteboard.

VividBoard, founded in 2002 and now owned by GMi Companies, based in Lebanon, Ohio, is taking the lead on this trend. It designs custom whiteboards for hospital and outpatient settings, enhancing the way providers interact with and treat their patients. The company originally created custom promotional whiteboards for the food and beverage industry. But, around 2007, when the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey was developed, VividBoard saw an opportunity.

“With the advent of HCAHPS, a really big hole was uncovered,” said Susan Claus, GMI senior marketing manager. “There was a disconnect between caregiver, nurse, doctor and patient communication. And, all hospitals were very engaged with how to improve the HCAHPS scores, because that affects their Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements. They were looking for a way to improve communication with patients and family.”

Already being the experts in communication boards — which have been installed in restaurants, education and athletic spaces and corporate settings — VividBoard saw its customizable whiteboard as a natural segue into the health care industry, which needed a communication problem solved.



“Think about it from a patient’s perspective,” Claus said. “If a doctor or nurse comes in and speaks in medical language, the patient doesn’t understand it, which can lead to higher anxiety, which can lead to more complications with their care, and they may wind up staying longer as a result.”

Whiteboards help patients better understand their care. They are also helpful to those coming and going from a patient’s room, like family members and loved ones. If they missed a visit from the doctor, or if they are staying with the patient for a while, visitors can get caught up by viewing the whiteboard.

And not just a plain white board, Claus said, but a custom board that helps health care professionals inform patients in a consistent way, every time.



“We’ve worked hospitals all over the country since 2007, so we know what should go on the board and what kind of language to use,” Claus said. “We work hand-in-hand with our clients to take their ideas and put it into a format that works.”

If there’s too much information, the hospital staff may find it time-consuming to fill out and not use the board, but there has to be enough information to be helpful to the patient, so VividBoard works with each client to create a board everyone will use.

Claus also noted the whiteboard in a patient room is a patient communication tool, not a nurse-doctor tool (though custom whiteboards for staff areas are also available). For instance, common and helpful fields might include the room number, day and date, the patient’s name and names of



attending staff, next medication dosage time, pain rating, plan for the day, restrictions, discharge information, questions from patient or family, etcetera.

“If you can see on the board when your next pain med time is, you don’t have to call in the nurse to ask,” Claus said. “It helps the patient become involved with their own care.”

Studies have shown whiteboards also are an effective tool for increasing patient satisfaction.

“It’s one of the easiest and most effective ways to improve HCAHPS scores,” she said. “It’s a very low investment compared to everything else hospitals are doing, yet it’s so vitally important.”

VividBoards have a lot of advantages over similar products on the market, according to Claus. They carry a lifetime service warranty and won’t stain or fade. VividBoards write and clean easily. The surface is patented with a special formulation that prevents ghosting.

“I mean, we know that’s what a whiteboard is supposed to do, but ours will actually be clean and look great,” Claus said.



VividBoard's dry-erase surfaces include glass and non-magnetic and magnetic steel, along with a wide array of framing choices. Every board is guaranteed for life. They can be customized to include a hospital's logo, thereby promoting the brand, identity and culture of the health care provider. Including brand elements on the boards also remind patients where they are.

The boards are manufactured in all standard sizes up to 4 feet by 8 feet. A typical pane in a hospital room is around 18 inches by 24 inches — or 2 feet by 3 feet. Not only do whiteboards need to be thoughtfully customized, but Claus said building designers need to dedicate intentional space for them in patient rooms, because the demand for them is increasing.

VividBoard is preparing for a rebrand launch before the end of the year. The company will be moving on from its original and iconic logo with limes — a nod to the beverage industry which launched VividBoard into existence — and debuting a brand which represents VividBoard's shift toward the health care industry. The company has quadrupled its business since establishing and has installed boards in more than 400 health care facilities across the country.

"And there are new buildings going up every day," Claus said. "It's a big market and the dealers who aren't talking about it (VividBoard), they are missing out." **BoF**