HOSPITAL
Assuta
RAISING HEALTH STANDARDS

Assuta's management have successfully branded the hospital as a leader in medicine

The chain of hospitals and medical institutes, Assuta, is currently owned by Maccabi Health Care Services but the brand began as a cooperative of doctors from Germany, who arrived during the Fifth Aliya and in 1935 decided to establish a private hospital called "Assuta". The hospital was managed as a partnership of 30 founding doctors who invested about 40,000 IL in the venture. When the hospital opened, it sparked a revolution in the medical system since it allowed patients, as far back as about 80 years ago, to choose their own doctors.

In 1979, Clal acquired the hospital and operated it for 15 years.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Maccabi Health Care Services realized that if it wanted to become a significant player in the healthcare market, it had to establish its own hospitalization system. Instead of starting from scratch, Maccabi decided to purchase the "Ramat Marpe" hospital and in 1995, it also purchased the "Assuta" hospital from Clal.

The Marketing Challenges

In the years following the acquisition, both Ramat Marpe and Assuta hospitals operated under two different brands. Consumer studies revealed that although the Assuta brand was far stronger than the Ramat Marpe brand and enjoyed greater aid awareness, its unaided awareness was extremely low and was not found at the Top of Mind among consumers considering in what hospital they wanted to undergo surgery.

Another challenge which the management faced was the perception of Assuta as a first-class medical service provider in Israel, which provided public medicine that does not require payment. In addition, Assuta had to position itself as the best service provider, offering state of the art technology.

As a result, company management came to several major understandings:

1. There is need to merge both brands under the Assuta name.
2. In order to be perceived by the public as a real, serious hospital, the merged brand must stop operating a large number of small, decentralized and outdated medical facilities, and begin managing a smaller number of medical centers that are larger, newer and more advanced.
3. Assuta has to broaden its public service options by winning the tender to operate the Ashdod public hospital and by massive development of public services.
4. Time and money resources should be invested in management and improving the level of service.
5. It is necessary to promote acquiring and integrating of innovative technologies in medical services.

On the way to achieving these challenges, the need arose to cope with the lack of public awareness of the fact that anyone who has supplementary insurance or private health insurance can benefit from private medical services in Assuta. The lack of awareness has frequently caused patients to seek treatment with public health services despite having insurance that allowed them to receive the same services in Assuta.

The Marketing Solutions

At the start of the years 2000, the company initiated a process of converging and managing the Ramat Marpe and Assuta brands begins simultaneously to the acquisitions and expansion of existing facilities. This move allowed the company to place all operations under broader operating licenses of hospitals and de facto establish a chain of hospitals.

In order to maintain the Assuta brand status during the transition period and in order to avoid creating an excessively strong identity with Maccabi (in order to position Assuta as a private hospital chain and not as an HMO hospital), the decision was made that medical facilities operating in Maccabi facilities would be branded as Ramat Marpe while any new or renewed external facility would be branded Assuta. In a controlled process

that was implemented over several years", Assuta became positioned as a chain of new, modern hospitals, while Ramat Marpe branches were slowly closed until the brand was completely eliminated. By 2004, the Assuta hospital operated under the slogan "The largest private hospital in Israel" but this message was not appropriate as a slogan for a hospital chain. As a result, as part of the merger and renewal process, the company launched the slogan "The private way to quality medicine".

The new slogan did not generate the success hoped for since the message was too complicated and ahead of its time, creating a situation in which the product truth that stood behind it was not sufficiently strong.

In the ensuing years (2005-2007), Assuta expanded its coverage in Israel by building new facilities that complied with the licenses it acquired or possessed and thus new facilities were built in Haifa, Beer Sheba, a center of institutes in Tel-Aviv and the facility in Rishon le Zion was renovated. All were later branded as Assuta.

In 2009, the company's flagship facility was opened – Assuta Hospital in Ramat Hahayal in Tel-Aviv. This was no ordinary launch but one that included a powerful declaration of intentions since the company invested one billion shekels to build a large, state-of-the-art hospital both in terms of medicine and of technology. The hospital building includes ten floors, 16 operating rooms, 230 inpatient beds, 13 ICU beds, 2 monitoring laboratories, one of the largest imaging institutes in Israel and an oncology institute. The new hospital has significantly contributed to positioning Assuta as a hospital in which patients can (and should) undergo any medical procedure, from the easiest and through to brain surgery

and open heart surgery.

Assuta has also successfully leveraged the attack on it regarding the establishment of a new hospital from the managers of the public hospitals in the Tel-Aviv region, who complained that the opening of Assuta has caused a brain drain from their hospitals to Assuta, and that they suffered from lack of hospitalization space whereas in Assuta, every patient had a private room. The attacks have probably only reinforced Assuta's position as a hospital that provides state-of-the-art medical services by top doctors and at the highest standards – both in terms of medical care and in terms of service and hospitalization. With the launch of Assuta in Ramat Hahayal came the launch of a campaign managed under the positioning "Assuta. Raising Health Standards". The marketing-advertising concept was designed to describe the current situation in which all services that are essentially privileges in other hospitals (private rooms, selection of doctors, short lines, and available cutting-edge technology) are provided at Assuta as standard. Television ads were filmed in the hospital itself in order to introduce the modernization and the technologies, and the messages that were broadcast in them emphasized two issues: the fact that Assuta performs both simple medical procedures and complicated surgeries, and that private medical service can be obtained by anyone with supplementary health insurance or private health insurance (i.e. anyone who has supplementary insurance is entitled to standard of health). The language of 'standard' has not remained only a marketing-advertising slogan. The value of 'standard' has now been assimilated in all medical, caregiving and administrative operations in Assuta, in a desire to

each time reestablish the standard of medicine being practiced in Israel.

Assuta has established a service division and it sets obligatory standards of service, with the emphasis on granting a different health experience, which is becoming a role model in the entire health system. Among the services are providing transportation for the patients, follow up and monitoring of discharged patients, an Acute Diagnostic Unit, a convalescence center, SLA (Service Level Agreement) activity in all services and lately also a school for professionalism.

Assuta has also introduced the hospital to advanced technologies, including an Oncology institute with the most advanced equipment in Israel, surgical robotics, digital imaging equipment etc.

1935
Assuta Hospital founded on Jabotinsky Street in Tel-Aviv.

1979
Assuta is acquired by Clal.

1994
Assuta is acquired by Maccabi Health Care Services.

2005
The brand expands its coverage across the country.

2009
Assuta Hospital opens in Ramat Hahayal.

2010
Winning a tender to establish a public hospital in Ashdod.

2014
Establishing a school for professionalism.

2017
Opening of the Ashdod public hospital.