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RAMENDRA SINGH, PRABHAT KUMAR DWIVEDI, MENAKA RAO  
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## LIFETRON HOSPITAL : IN SEARCH OF THE RIGHT SERVICE MARKETING STRATEGY

June 17, 2016 - Walking briskly to the Lifetron Hospital in the wee hours of a cloudy morning Mr. Ganesh Sahay, co-founder of the hospital located in Kanpur, India, learnt of the tragic death of a patient. His wife and partner Dr. Nidhi Bhatnagar, a senior Gynecologist and Managing Director of the hospital looked devastated. She had spent the entire night struggling to save the woman patient, who had been referred to Lifetron from another hospital in a critical condition. The loss of life was no small defeat to deal with even for a doctor. What saddened both of them was that the patient had died due to mishandling by her referring hospital and worse she seemed to have been financially exploited also. "Why do patients not come directly to Lifetron hospital?" was the thought that ran through both of their minds? It had good infrastructure, the best of doctors, affordability and accessibility, a hospital that offered services on par with international standards. The hospital was established primarily to provide affordable healthcare to the bottom of pyramid patients. So why was Lifetron missing in serving the under-served poor customers in Kanpur?

It was the 'why' that made Ganesh thinking. Why did the hospital not get patients from its prime target segment while competitors were comparatively better off? Why only critical

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*Ramendra Singh, P K Dwivedi and Menaka Rao of the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta developed this case study as the basis for class discussion. The case was prepared solely to provide material for class discussion. The authors do not intend to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a managerial situation.*

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patients were referred to Lifetron? After spending several hours pondering, Ganesh and Nidhi decided that the best way to get the answers would be to conduct a survey to understand the problem at grassroots level. The results of the survey was insightful, and yet stunning. The survey revealed two alternative strategies. One strategy was the tried and tested one, currently practiced by others, successful in achieving short term goals, seemed promising, and acceptable. But to the other promoter this strategy seemed myopic, transient, unethical, and incompatible to the hospital's vision and mission. Now, the question before them was how to resolve the dilemma, and which of the strategy would be the best for Lifetron.

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