



CASE STUDY

Heart Failure Simulator: The Heart FXPod

Background

An estimated five million Americans suffer from heart failure. It is the number one reason that people 65 and over are admitted to hospitals and is responsible for claiming the lives of 300,000 people each year in the US alone. As a progressive disease, heart failure is exceptionally difficult to diagnose and is therefore often overlooked in its premature stages. The Heart Failure Simulator answers the crying need to raise awareness of congestive heart failure and help healthcare professionals recognize and understand its symptoms.

*"The more that a doctor can **personalize and internalize the symptoms** and think about them, it can only be helpful and add to the empathy a physician can have for a patient,"* says Dr. Marrick Kukin, director of the Congestive Heart Failure Program at St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital in New York.

Studies commissioned by our client showed that their products have a specific advantage in treating the often under or misdiagnosed NYHA stage of Class II heart failure. The company needed to show cardiologists how debilitating early stage heart failure can be and, in turn, encourage them to become more empathetic to the situation.

Objectives

- To provide cardiologists with an experience of heart failure from the patient's point of view and prompt the response: *"I had no idea Class II heart failure was so bad."*
- To re-energize existing product offerings and gain a thought leadership role in the cardiology community.

Solution

The Heart FXPod was **conceived with input from both patients and doctors**. It is an award-winning first-person participatory story using acoustic, haptic, and visual sensory manipulations to move doctors beyond the sphere of the clinical and into the realm of the emotional. Results from pre- and post-experience surveys showed drastic changes in the perception of Class II heart failure, **causing physicians to indicate a greater intention to treat earlier and more aggressively**.

Doctors around the country lined up to experience the simulation in three formats:

- 1) a 5-pod **50-city traveling simulator** appearing at major medical centers allowing representatives up to **30 minutes face to face with cardiologists**, using the Heart Failure Simulator as a talking point;
- 2) a 2-pod, portable, "lobby-ready" configuration;
- 3) a high-visibility, **7-pod trade show booth**, reaching capacity **crowds of up to 700 people in one 10-hour day**.

The product exposure generated thousands of articles in local press and trade journals, a sampling of which can be found at the URL below or by searching *Heart Failure Simulator* on Google.com.

