Medical Education Academy (Med Ed) is a prominent, privately owned health care education institution that provides degree programs in nursing, medical technology, and health care administration in the United States. The company has built a positive reputation in the traditional on-campus education market for quality skills at an affordable price. Because of this institutional strategy, Med Ed has adopted the motto, "Quality skills with minimum bills."

Now, however, to keep Med Ed’s motto and institutional operating model intact, President Will Learner, M.D., is planning to strengthen his academy’s health care education leadership while also reducing rising administrative expenses by acquiring an online health care education provider named Cyber-Health College (CHC). Cyber-Health College is a fully certified online health care education provider with a strong reputation among prospective students for relatively inexpensive, timely, and skill-intensive program completion. President Learner believes that Cyber-Health’s online programs will fit well with Med Ed’s institutional strategy because both educational providers emphasize quality skills and affordable prices.

You have been named to Med Ed’s newly formed digital learning initiative team (D-LIT). President Learner is relying on your e-business expertise to analyze Cyber-Health’s e-business and e-marketing fundamentals as well as to propose digital marketing strategy guidelines that will optimize Cyber-Health’s contribution to Med Ed’s strong reputation in the traditional health care education market.

Cyber-Health College was a pioneer in the online health care education market in the 1990s. Its founder and CEO, Lucy Vision, Ph.D., avoided the pitfalls of other dot-coms by building credibility with educational accreditation boards and developing intelligent agent software applications as a method of guiding student instruction without human faculty. Cyber-Health patented its med-teach agent technology using female voices and an embedded nurturing interface to gain student trust and build strong learning bonds. The educational press regularly commended Cyber-Health for designing a high-tech/high-touch instructional interface. Because of the strong, skill-intensive course learning and user-friendly, agent-driven interactive online instruction, Cyber-Health effectively positioned its medical education programs as "health care learning for the digital future." However, this praise and online health care education success also drew its fair share of detractors. Faculty unions at medical programs and even other non-agent-driven online health care education programs criticized Cyber-Health for dehumanizing health care knowledge and medical education delivery.

The focus of your contribution to the newly formed D-LIT will be to highlight the potential of Cyber-Health’s e-business approach to complement Med Ed’s traditional health care education marketing strategy. Med Ed’s traditional marketing strategy relies on physical brick-and-mortar facilities, hard copy books and course resources, and human faculty instructors. In this traditional on-campus model, students attend physical classroom facilities for health care education, and traditional advertising media or promotional events are used to raise enrollment. By contrast, Cyber-Health’s online e-business education approach uses digital networks as the primary vehicle for delivering health care learning to students. By accessing the Cyber-Health Web site and med-teach agent, students directly engage in autonomous, self-guided medical education coursework without going to a physical classroom facility and without human instructors. The med-teach agents employ artificial intelligence to progressively learn each student’s health care instructional needs and improve the student’s performance through skill-intensive virtual course project scenarios covering every aspect of traditional medical education. President Learner is keenly interested in your assessment of this futuristic online e-business model for delivering health care educational programs.