

Bridge Worldwide White Paper Series



Emerging Media in Healthcare Marketing

There are a significant number of emerging media areas that will affect healthcare and pharmaceutical marketing campaigns in the future. Some will have an enormous positive impact on current marketing practices, while others will have devastating negative consequences on these same practices. The good news is that there are alternatives to the way many current campaigns are conducted that leverage the best in consumer understanding, interactive technologies, and solid marketing strategy (all while staying within DDMAC rules).

One overarching trend that will affect which areas develop and which fail for healthcare and pharmaceutical marketing campaigns is the increased control consumers have over the media they consume. We call this “The Selfish Consumer.”

A brief summary of this concept: TiVo, iPod, and blogging have something more in common than the right technology at the right time. They provide the same old media in new and interesting ways. This not only changes consumer behaviors, but forever shifts consumer attitudes. Greedy for content and equipped with almost magical abilities to control media delivery, we have armed a very intelligent consumer. Combine all of that power with a healthy dose of anonymity, and the id of our new media consumer surfaces and screams, “Gimme!”

Companies and programs that can successfully understand and leverage this fundamental change will be the most likely to connect with customers and have their messages heard. This change in consumer behavior affects the type of media areas that will likely emerge as the best way to conduct pharmaceutical campaigns. Below are the media areas and technologies we see emerging that will drastically change the way pharmaceutical products are marketed.

We have summarized the evolving trends in this table. Following the table is a lengthier description of each trend.

Emerging Media Trend	Brief Description
Medical Social Networking	Beyond Facebook and MySpace, patients are now connecting with one another online and taking each other's advice, sometimes over their physician's advice.
Live and (Almost) in Person	YouTube is fine for delivering content, but it is instantly outdated. Consumers want to use video to interact with a real person to get the freshest information all from the comfort of their homes. This includes their doctors.
Secure Communications	People will begin to trust more of their confidential information online, but will expect that it be protected through constantly secure channels.
Micro-targeting	Targeting consumers has evolved dramatically in the past 10 years to the point where it is possible to find and communicate with a small group of brand supporters in a highly cost effective manner.

Instant, Dynamic Content	Online content must now immediately change based on user inputs. Providing the same content for everyone regardless of what they do on your site is a losing proposition.
Mobile Grows Up	Typically seen as a marketing platform that could only reach teenagers, older users are beginning to adopt some of the same habits as younger consumers, opening up a range of new promotional options.
Managing and Leading Word of Mouth	Tracking down everything that someone says about your brand was impossible without Internet-based technologies. Now brands are expected to track, and where appropriate, join in the conversations that people are having about them.
Print Goes Interactive	Print isn't dead, but it needs to leverage interactive technologies to stay relevant and match consumer behaviors.

Medical Social Networking

Look no further than sites such as Patients Like Me to see what valuable social networking is becoming. Far more medically relevant and serious in tone than distant cousins such as Facebook and MySpace, sites such as these allow patients to communicate instantly with one another. Rather than comparing favorite movies as they do on other social networking sites, these patients are comparing the effectiveness of their medications and their doctor's advice. The wisdom of the group leads to powerful recommendations that have instant credibility with many patients. These social networks effectively operate as real-time clinical trials where new products are tested and reported on by real people each day, and aggregated results are available anytime to anyone interested.

Companies that find ways to participate in these conversations or use insights learned from simply observing these groups will have a distinct advantage over other companies that use traditional market research techniques.

Live and (Almost) in Person

While the Internet has far fresher content than any print media, it still suffers from the same fundamental problem. As soon as content is placed online, it is outdated. There is always something newer and fresher available, and that's what consumers will search for. The challenge for brands that create content is how they can possibly continue to create fresh content that is up-to-date and relevant. Live video, made possible by the fact that the large majority of Americans now have broadband Internet access, enables conversations to happen in real-time across the country and around the world. A second opinion with a renowned specialist could be just a click away.

Using live video as a promotional tool could allow consumers access to the information they need to make the right treatment decisions. In addition, in that moment where a patient decides

whether or not to take his or her medication, a live person encouraging continued treatment is far more powerful than the printed brochure buried under a bunch of other mail.

Secure Communications

Despite widely publicized security breaches, most personal data is securely held by many companies around the world. Increasingly, consumers are becoming more comfortable in supplying sensitive information as their understanding of privacy rules and security technology increases. However, they expect that the security of their data and privacy are key priorities. Getting a consumer to interact with a brand for the first time takes a big investment and losing it because of a security issue (or perceived security issue) is unacceptable.

Brands that can facilitate this secure communication among consumers and their peers or between physicians and patients will be seen as providing a much needed value-added service, and also a platform for brand promotion.

Micro-targeting

Digital technologies have made it possible to both find and communicate effectively with small groups of people that share common characteristics. In the medical field, this is especially useful. Being able to find the group of people, for example, that you know is most likely to benefit from your product according to clinical trials could be difficult using traditional means. However, through a number of digital marketing techniques, including search optimization and data mining, it is possible to locate even a very small number of people.

Even more valuable, online, interactive content can be quickly and inexpensively individualized for these groups. Using traditional methods, such as print, for this task would not be cost effective, as creating a special brochure, for example, that targets 500 people wouldn't show much return. By avoiding printing and some design costs (while cutting production time), creating small batches of material for these micro-segments of customers can be profitable.

Instant, Dynamic Content

The typical website visit is measured in seconds. This is mainly because consumers typically don't immediately find what they hoped to find and head off to one of the other thousands of possible sites they hope will have the information they need. Also, some consumers simply leave a site in the middle of their research because they feel the content isn't relevant or meaningful enough to them personally. Interactive technologies can change both of these behaviors.

It is possible to create a website that instantly responds to user feedback, creating a real-time, customized experience that appears to users to be created exclusively for them. For example, a user who comes to your site about lung cancer via a search term such as "advanced lung cancer" probably doesn't care about lung cancer risk factors. Your site needs to change and adjust when this user arrives to focus on advanced lung cancer. As the user clicks through to other information, or answers carefully placed information-gathering questions, the site continues to adjust, with previously read content being substituted with new information, allowing the consumer to find a continuous stream of highly relevant information all without ever leaving your site.

Mobile Grows Up

Typically, almost stereotypically, seen as the domain of teenagers, mobile technology (that is, everything but the phone part) is beginning to find a place in the lives of more mature mobile phone users as well. While you shouldn't expect to see grandmothers sending 150 text messages a day to their friends any time soon, there are other ways that mobile marketing will have a place for these users.

Because nearly everyone carries a mobile phone now, finding a way to reach these people on their phones in a meaningful way should be a major priority for pharmaceutical marketing programs. Here are a few ways that you can better leverage this emerging technology:

- Allow users to update their weight or food choices via their mobile phone to the disease management program you sponsor.
- Placement of SMS short codes (the five-digit numbers that are becoming more and more popular) to receive more brand information. Consider this in addition to the ubiquitous disclaimer "See our ad in...;" instead of placing the information in a magazine the patient is likely never to see, allow the patient to get the information immediately on his or her phone.
- QR (Quick Response) codes... Read more about this in the Print Goes Interactive section.

Managing and Leading Word of Mouth

B.T. Barnum is famous for, among other things, saying, "All publicity is good publicity." Clearly, Mr. Barnum didn't work for a pharmaceutical company. Battered in the press and unfairly reviled by much of the public, the pharmaceutical industry finds itself on par with tobacco companies for consumer trust and confidence. In addition, rumor and half-truths spread quickly and live forever online. A comment that a patient makes in an online forum that inaccurately characterizes your product could find its way onto thousands of potential patients' screens in minutes.

Companies must begin to carefully monitor the conversations about their brands in real-time. A quarterly (or less frequent) report isn't enough, as the damage will have been done. Instead, digital technologies allow for simple tracking of product messages and allow companies either to get involved in the conversation (to correct inaccurate information) or to release opposing content on their own to counter unfair or unreasonable claims. Digital technologies allow this content to be created and released within hours instead of months.

Print Goes Interactive

While it may sound like an oxymoron, print can be interactive. With a great deal of pharmaceutical marketing campaign executions tied to print either as ads or as educational materials, the elimination of this medium seems unlikely in the near term. However, it is possible to ensure that even print has some interactive features. This is done by embedding print with sources for additional information.

In the simplest iteration, this means adding a URL to print pieces. This URL should point to a location that is related to the specific print piece and not a generic landing or home page. The information found at the URL should be related and provide additional information beyond the print piece.

The addition of SMS short codes could allow consumers to get additional information (such as a streaming video) immediately on their mobile phone. A further advance includes adding QR (Quick Response) codes that allow the embedding of a variety of information into a print piece. Similar to bar codes, these QR codes can be read by mobile phones and immediately translated. The information embedded in the code could include a Web address or text message. Users reading the code using software on their mobile phone might have their Web browser immediately take them to a webpage containing important safety information or patient success stories. With this technology enhancement, even print can become an interactive medium.

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