

AT YOUR SERVICE

Pharma is moving toward a broader treatment paradigm based on providing additional services for patients. **Boris Kushkuley** describes what the Pill+ model looks like, and how multichannel marketing can facilitate it

What people think of as the traditional life of an advertising professional is often a romanticized vision—the 1960’s ad man in a smoke-filled conference room holding a glass of scotch and coming up with the next big idea to sell cigarettes.

But this myth is no longer the way our industry works. Traditional “hard-sell” advertising is dead. Customers are evolving, technology changes how we interact with brands, businesses and each other, and, if we want to survive, marketers must also evolve. While the technological landscape has changed dramatically, consumers have evolved even faster. They are savvy to marketing tactics and have access to information that 10 years ago we couldn’t even dream of.

The old approach relied on reach and frequency to get a mes-

sage across, but in a world where we have access to virtually any information instantly, it comes down to relevancy. The only way to reach your customers is to connect and engage with them personally, and seamlessly fit in their life along their individual journey.

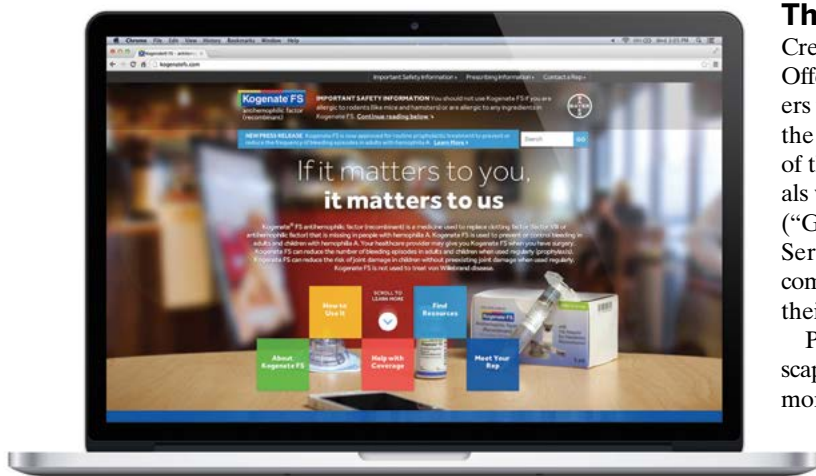
While pharma has taken some time to come around to this concept, we are beginning to find a more holistic approach to marketing. The emergence of the customer-centric service-oriented model, some call it the “pill-plus model,” has enabled the pharma industry to engage with customers on a completely new level. By doing the “right” thing and providing true value, businesses will find they can establish long-lasting relationships and earn customers’ loyalty. But, to fully understand this, you have to start at the source.

The engaged customer

Creating engaged customers should be the goal of every business. Offering value leads to trust-based relationships, and inspires customers to be brand advocates. To get there, pharma is starting to realize the days of just selling medications are over. An unintended result of the Affordable Care Act is the surge in the number of individuals who are engaged in their healthcare. A recent Accenture study (“Great Expectations: Why Pharma Companies Can’t Ignore Patient Services,” May 2014) notes that 76% of patients expect pharma companies to provide information and services to help them manage their health. That’s a massive opportunity, and we can be part of it.

Pharma has been a bit slow to keep pace with the changing landscape. “Consumer revolution” is here. But as consumers are becoming more vested in their health, more educated, they are more open to having a true dialogue with other healthcare stakeholders.

In that study, 74% of patients said they wanted to begin receiving product information when they start taking a medication. Patients are open to receiving information from providers



Above and facing page: a cross-platform effort for Kogenate

and brands; we just need to be more strategic with how we deliver it.

As pharma begins to embrace concepts such as customer centrality, value beyond the pill, and engaged patients, companies are approaching marketing differently. Mike Kideckel, associate director of hematology marketing on the Kogenate team at Bayer Pharmaceuticals, can relate to this change. “The vast majority of our efforts revolve around support and education regarding managing diseases such as hemophilia. These conditions create lifelong challenges and what we offer goes much further than simply the product.”

By creating value-based programs that support the consumer, you are able to connect with the consumer and create a true partnership. So, what does this look like in action?

Pill+ in action

Many people have illnesses that become a large part of their everyday life—often for their entire life. Treating a disease is more than taking a pill. Patient education, a healthy lifestyle and broader behavior modification are typically needed for positive outcomes.

This is where a broader treatment paradigm, the Pill+ model that is based on providing additional support, stands out. To create meaningful connections with customers, pharma companies need to provide relevant interactions that can impact the day-to-day lives of their customers.

Consider a diabetic patient who needs help managing diet, exercise—even foot care. By understanding these needs, pharma companies can develop meal-delivery services, subsidized by insurance companies, to help monitor diets as well as apps that track food intake, exercise and taking medication. Going further, data obtained can be used to personalize care for each patient.

A simpler method is acting as a liaison to connect patients with professionals, which Kideckel has experience with: “We have a lot of events and educational support that have nothing to do with our products. We bring in speakers, nurses, and other healthcare professionals who are experts in hemophilia.”

Most of the programs offered by the Kogenate team let the customer control their level of engagement. Whether it is the

Factor Matters communication program (which connects patients to personalized support to manage their hemophilia) or FactorTrack (an app designed to help track their infusions), the focus is on giving customers the services they need to manage their disease.

Understanding when to connect

There is a fine line between being helpful and being intrusive. Consumers are becoming more informed about making decisions regarding their health. Because of this, it's important to understand that initially they want access to credible but unbiased information.

At this point in their journey providing branded communication will make it easy to turn off your potential customers. Pharma needs to understand customer needs, where the gaps are, and then provide those tools and resources allowing interaction to be on their terms.

As consumers approach a treatment decision, they may be open to branded, product-specific communication. Though most patients

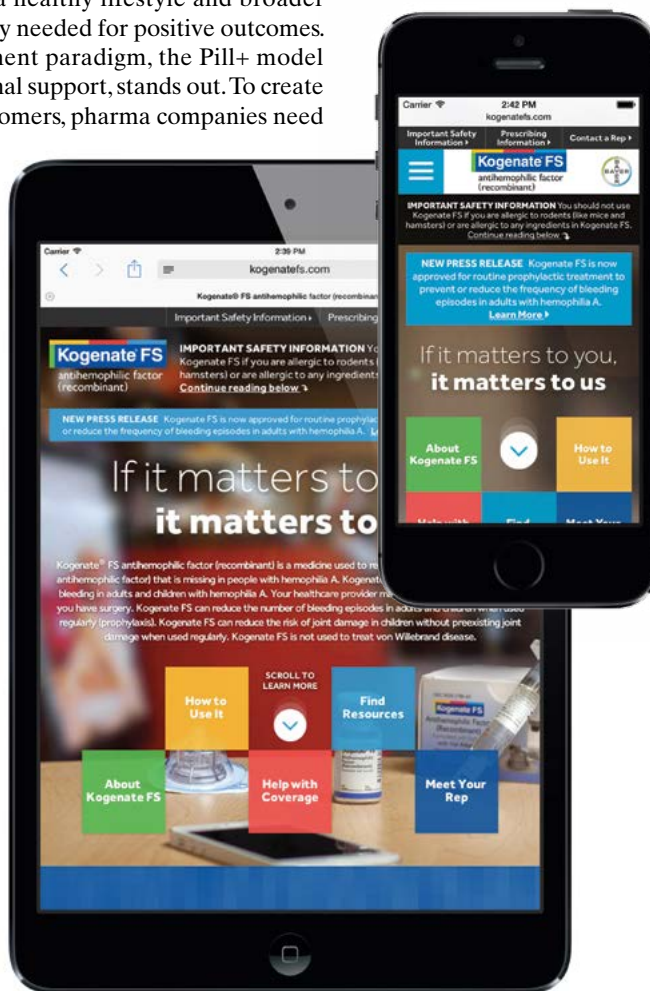
expect pharma companies to offer information to them, only 10% currently get these services from manufacturers or providers.

“Any time a customer sees communication from us, we want them to realize we are not simply trying to sell something. We want them to understand, ‘this is Bayer, they understand me, they are here to help,’” said Kideckel.

Creating trust

While one-size-fits-all unidirectional marketing was long our best option, it's time to move on. The new world requires us to better understand customers, weave a net of helpful touchpoints, adapt our services to customer needs, and establish a true partnership with them. By doing this we can create long-term relationships with patients and promote our brand. Each nudge towards healthier behavior or piece of educational material we deliver helps define our brand in their mind. By doing this we will win loyal customers, and build brand advocates a person at a time. ■

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SkillSets

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