

Social for HCPs: Is now the time?

The increasing use of social media to reach consumers in the healthcare arena raises questions: Is it time to leverage it for HCPs, and if so, what are the most viable platforms for pharma-HCP communications?



Martha Walz

*Senior content strategist,
Ogilvy CommonHealth*

More than half of the physicians who use the Internet for professional purposes use professional social-media channels, proving that they find relevance in social media to educate and manage themselves. By seeding messaging on the social networks where physicians go for professional information, pharma can reach an already-qualified engaged audience. At the same time, over a third of physicians use consumer social networks for professional purposes, so leveraging these channels—in the appropriate ways at the appropriate times—can also boost engagement. Oncologists, for example, are active on Twitter, and hashtag campaigns around ASCO have proved successful. But a social campaign without proper planning can fall apart. Be sure that social fits into the overall brand strategy before implementing it.



Raffi Siyahian

*EVP and principal,
Scout*

Workload demands combined with HIPAA laws placed burdens on doctors' adoption and use of social media. But HCPs are increasingly using LinkedIn, Twitter, Doximity and others. Still, just because HCPs are embracing social media doesn't mean the pharma industry can simply connect with them there. FDA requirements create a challenge because of the limited real estate provided by most social-media platforms. Social media is a powerful forum, but considering the aforementioned challenges, it seems to lend itself best to disease-state conversations or to drive physicians to destinations via unbranded messaging. If brand-specific messaging is required, we seem to be limited to one-way communications. Hopefully, two-way brand dialogue will become viable in the next few years.



Theodore Search

*CEO,
Skipta*

HCPs are busier than ever, making it challenging for them to collaborate with colleagues and keep current on the latest information relevant to their field. Social tools and technology can mitigate the pressure created by time constraints and yield convenient access to both colleagues and information. The most effective social platforms deliver trusted insights and enable clinical collaboration efficiently. Specifically, social communities with curated content, organized per specialty or disease state, offer the most compelling outlet for a busy HCP, allowing targeted clinical conversations and content. Increased access to vibrant content and thus an improved ability to learn, collaborate and provide care arise from increased membership, advanced technologies powering social platforms and the general proliferation of mobile.



Ben Putman

*SVP, innovation,
JUICE Pharma Worldwide*

Social media are not places for a one-way push of promotional messages. Rather, they provide ideal opportunities for education and support. Multiple viable platforms—including networks created specifically for HCPs—now share unbranded disease and scientific information. Facebook, Twitter and blogs are viable networks for professional advocates. YouTube is the place for HCPs to learn a brand's scientific and human stories. Now is the time for social for HCPs. The audience is there and interested in what pharmaceutical companies have to say. We have the experience to engage with these platforms in an effective manner.

Got a forum question or comment?

E-mail kevin.mccaffrey@haymarketmedia.com or marc.iskowitz@haymarketmedia.com

“Pharma has the experience to engage with social media in an effective manner—the audience is there and interested