

The industry continues to grapple with unclear social media regulations and finding ways to make mobile marketing a viable option. Five key players offer their thoughts on the future

# Seeing



**Wendy Blackburn**  
EVP, Intouch  
Solutions

I believe pharma is beginning to see value in investing in digital initiatives outside the staple product.com websites. Product.coms are still important, but brands need to be in other places online too—places where their customers already are. That could mean YouTube, search, partnerships or video ads. Providing shareable, portable content will help achieve this goal as well. I think they'll pull back from flashier tactics that just don't achieve results.

The public is definitely catching up. According to comScore, domestic mobile web usage doubled January 2008-January 2009. By year-end 2010, eMarketer predicts an estimated 296.8 million mobile phone subscribers in the US, reaching 95.4% of the population. Certainly not every consumer carries a smartphone, and not everyone uses their phones the same way. But pharma should take heed of how mobile is changing the way both professionals and consumers engage.

True, it is unfortunately an awful lot of hype to live up to. I think it's possible, if regulations will allow it, that social media has the potential to be a new paradigm. The key will be to both provide value to customers AND prove ROI to upper management.



**Craig DeLarge**  
Assoc. director,  
healthcare profes-  
sional relationship  
marketing,  
Novo Nordisk

I believe we will see a surge in interactive channels that reach HCPs as a reaction to declining access by reps led by tele- & web-conference selling & mobile followed by increases in staples like e-detailing, email and search. The trick will be doing this relevantly so we do not lose access via these channels. These increases will be accompanied by decreases in print advertising, mail and personal selling as witnessed by the layoffs of this past year.

This is not so much about catch-up as about evolution. We have been using mobile for a decade with Epocrates and Skyscape but must evolve to channels like iPhone Apps and eMRs. We must move beyond promotional messaging and algorithms, to tools that better enable medical practice and patient compliance. Pharma will need to partner with payers in this channel to a greater degree than ever before as payers will be a key owner of this channel in their environments.

Yes, but in ways not hyped, and not immediately or without time trial and error. It will become our human face, our customer service & education channel, and much like search, our passive ubiquitous medium for intercepting those customers that need us but who may not yet know that they do.

**Where will we see a surge in pharma interactive spend this year? Where might pharmas pull back?**

**Mobile marketing has arrived as a channel for reaching medical professionals, as a vast majority of them now carry mobile devices. When will the public catch up?**

**Say FDA clarifies the ground rules on social media, will social media ever live up to the hype as a new paradigm in pharma promotion?**

# the Impact



**Matt McNally**  
Senior vice president, media,  
Digitas Health

Our clients are decreasing sales forces and leveraging digital for non-personal promotion. We have seen amazing results in leveraging smart, educational and forward-thinking e-details, e-sampling and precision targeting against called-on and non-called-on physicians. On the consumer side, pharma is beginning to leverage digital to build brand awareness. We are working with clients to develop customized branded videos more so than simply re-purposing the :60 spot.

It is not a question of catching up, it is more a question of agencies and marketers understanding the best way to leverage mobile. To date, most consumer efforts have been around push-in-your-face messaging on the mobile platform. Instead, it's important to think about why a consumer uses a cell phone. We have been leveraging mobile to extend the value of offline assets, offering consumers immediate access to info via smart code calls-to-action in print and in office.

Social media is not a channel for promotion—it is a huge conversation, one that is irreplaceable as a source of customer insights that can make the difference between success and failure in marketing and customer care. The insights gained by listening to customers can help marketers develop digital earned media strategies (analogous to offline PR strategies) that identify key influential voices and help shape content of true value to participants as a means of increasing the pharma company's trust and credibility.



**Larry Mickelberg**  
Chief digital officer, Euro RSCG  
Life Worldwide

We expect mobile, social and video to see the greatest uptick in terms of attention and spend on the part of marketers. This tracks with the way pharma audiences are using digital channels. In fact, these gains will come primarily at the expense of traditional channels such as direct mail, print and TV as digital offers similar reach, better targeting and far greater efficiency. We do expect to see slightly less focus on digital display advertising and paid search in the coming year.

Technologies and peer support might finally point the way toward a more connected or participatory health experience between patients and their doctors. For example, the consumer health startup Keas offers various personalized-care plans for users that aim to take their personal health information and help them make healthier decisions. Information exchange between doctors and their device-wielding patients could drive consumer adoption of mobile as a serious channel.

We are fascinated with the idea of the dialogue—a conversation that consumers have with each other, with HCPs and with brands. These interactions happen almost exclusively in social channels. In some research we conducted of over 500 online healthcare consumers, nearly two-thirds reported that social media greatly aided the quality of their interactions with their healthcare providers. Data like this suggests that social media will be one of the big stories in health marketing—bigger perhaps than the advent of DTC.



**Jonathan Richman**  
Dir., strategic planning, Bridge  
Worldwide

I'm not sure that you'll see a "surge" anywhere. The budgets that I've seen (across every industry) are fairly static. Within that, interactive budgets are also pretty stable. If there is going to be a shuffle within interactive budgets, I think there will be more spending on creating more rich media for both product websites and to syndicate to third parties. I also think you'll see paid search marketing make a bit of a comeback.

The public as a whole seems behind on the adoption curve mainly for socio-economic reasons. Physicians are a pretty affluent group, so they can afford whatever device and plan they want. When you compare consumers with similar demographics to physicians, you'll see the adoption is about the same. So, it's not a technology barrier, but a cost barrier. Having said that, I think both groups will increase their use of mobile as a platform for getting health information in real time.

I don't see social media as a new promotional platform for pharma. It could be used to better understand which drugs work for which patients, detect safety issues, improve compliance and many others, but it will never be the pure promotional channel that, say, TV has become. Pharma will be better off if it stops thinking about social media as a promotional channel and more of a customer service and research opportunity.