

It's looking like 2010 will be the year of breakthrough mobile marketing to healthcare professionals, with adoption rates sky-high and soaring.

Almost two-thirds of US physicians currently own smartphones, according to Manhattan Research, which projects the number to increase to 81% by 2012, and medical apps are the third-fastest growing category for Apple, which saw a 133% jump in downloads last April. Two-thirds of physicians use mobile devices to look up medical information between patient visits, and a third during consultations, according to Manhattan Research. Virtually all physicians (92%) use the internet to gather medical info in a clinical setting, according to Google.

A recent Manhattan Research white paper found that the average physician now spends a full work day each week online for professional reasons—that's up from just two-and-a-half hours in 2002—and that doctors are now using mobile devices to access clinical resources at multiple points throughout their day. As a group, the firm found, doctors have adapted to the internet faster than consumers.

Michael Konowicz, EVP of integrated strategy and account management at Communications Media Inc. (CMI), says the media planner is seeing rapid uptake in physician use of smartphones.

"As such, we have made sure to include mobile into the media mix in our plans," says Konowicz.

Intriguingly, mobile messaging doesn't seem to detract from the impact of other media, he adds.

"While healthcare professionals are consuming more messages through mobile, especially through smartphones, they are not doing so at the expense of other channels," says Konowicz. "Because of that, we remain channel neutral with our planning approach and continue to see success from a mix of online and offline channels."

As the technology evolves, online and offline channels are becoming easier to bridge, says Konowicz.



"Because HCPs are armed with their smartphones, they're interacting with offline marketing messages online"

*Michael Konowicz,
CMI*

"The other trend we see is true integration between channels for healthcare professionals from a consumption point of view," he says. "Because HCPs are armed with their smartphones, they're interacting with offline marketing messages online. For example, they're scanning in 2D barcodes from convention floor programs, journal ads and in-office marketing materials to have engaging experiences on the phone or on their computer. We're also experimenting with things like augmented reality to bring holographic experiences to life through traditional print vehicles by way of their camera-equipped phones or webcam-equipped computers. As a result, mobile and digital is breathing new life into older media and creating integrated, engaging experiences that transcend channels."

Medscape launched a mobile app, Medscape Mobile, in July, and it's become the top free medical app.

MDs are social animals

Medscape, whose Physician Connect online medical community boasts 125,000 physician members, is seeing "an interesting mix of clinical and non-clinical discussions covering everything from treating patient conditions, like heart disease and eczema, to issues like healthcare reform and practice management," says Steve Zatz, MD, EVP at WebMD. "We have found that it is very advantageous to combine physician content such as news, journal articles and reference information with a physician community that can discuss, critique and expand on the information. The result is a uniquely engaging and effective environment for physicians to learn and stay current in their specialties."

The company expects to see new opportunities in online medical education as FDA-mandated Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies programs go into effect for many drugs.

Sermo, the physician online community that now

Mobile on th

Doctors increasing screen time

Percentage of physicians who:

67% Feel positively toward e-promotion (including virtual details, video details and virtual events)

73% Prefer viewing e-details to live details

69% Participate in electronic promotional activities after hours or in evenings

51% Prefer virtual details to all other forms of e-promotion

Average time spent by a physician on a single e-promotion activity in 2008: **18 minutes**

Company physicians ranked best for e-promotion activities: **Merck**

Source: SDI's ePromotion Annual Study 2008, which included responses from around 1,000 physicians across 14 specialties

boasts 115,000 verified physician members and 160 pharma company clients, is seeing clients get comfortable with the medium and graduate from dabbling to full engagement with its physicians.

"We're seeing a tipping point," says Sermo CEO Dr. Daniel Palestrant. "A lot of physicians came to Sermo because of the healthcare reform debate or the other hot topic, practice management trends. Once they're here there's a lot of interest in the clinical side. Among our clients, there's a move away from doing pilots and innovation tests and we're seeing more and more actual campaigns being launched on Sermo, and we've created a pretty sophisticated closed loop where we can go from surveys into our panels—private discussions with physicians."

Medscape and Sermo face increasing competition from companies offering more bespoke and private panels. "There's a tension between public and private [physician] communities," says Fard Johnmar, founder and president of consultancy Enspektos (formerly Envision Solutions). "People are wondering where the traditional private community fits in, and some companies are going with those because they want more control over the process, while others are looking for deeper engagement via Sermo."

Detail-oriented

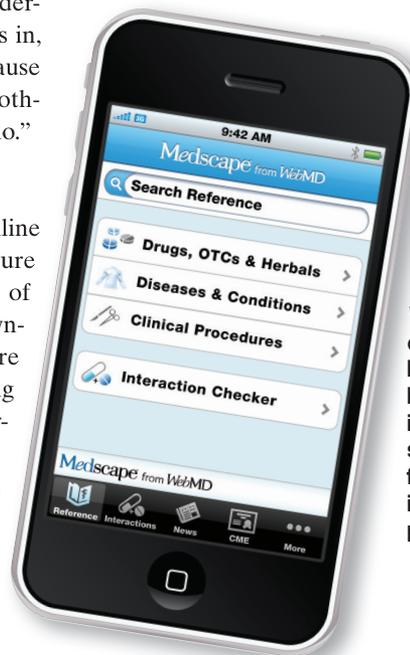
E-detailing remains the bread-and-butter of online marketing to healthcare professionals, and is sure to increase in importance as the recent wave of mega-mergers and subsequent sales force downsizings shakes out and physicians grow ever more difficult to detail in-person. "Physicians are saying they prefer e-detailing because it provides information when they want it," says Johnmar.

According to SDI's most recent ePromotion Annual Study, nearly three-quarters (73%) of physicians consider electronic promotion—including e-details, online seminars, opinion lead-

er events, web conferences and group discussions—to be equal or superior to face-to-face promotion.

"Every year we have conducted this survey, we have seen acceptance toward e-promotion among physicians increase," said SDI's Jason Fox.

Pfizer increased its spending on online professional promotion by 93% in 2009, according to SDI data, indicating the scale of the shift away from live reps. Pfizer was the second biggest spender on e-marketing to healthcare professionals, putting \$27 million into its e-marketing efforts through the first 11 months of the year, and the brands it backed in e-promotion—led by Aricept, Celebrex and Zyvox—bore a different profile than its spending in other media. "In e-promotion, you have extreme control over the message," noted SDI's Melissa Leonhauser, director of strategic marketing. "You're not putting it in a sales rep's hands to discuss. It's the exact message you want to come across." And that, in these litigious times, can be a real boon to brands. ■



WebMD's medical education division, Medscape unveiled Medscape Mobile in July. The app has since become the top free medical app for iPhones and smartphones

e Move

Mobile marketing to healthcare professionals is set to explode, while physician online communities mature, finds **Matthew Arnold**