

# mHealth's Moment

Pharma has been successful reaching physicians on mobile. What will it take for industry to engage consumers? **Marc Iskowitz** reports

## Segmenting the mHealth patient

Geoff McCleary, VP strategy, imc<sup>2</sup> Health & Wellness, recommends segmenting patients through four contextual lenses:

**Waiting Room** captive audience seeking information on potential disease states

**Pharmacy Bound** new Rx in hand, seeks information on drug or condition

**Active Sufferer** regardless of treatment status, seeks tips and tools to help cope with their disease, symptoms or side effects

**Wellness Seeker** those interested in content and experiences around healthy living

When it comes to mHealth, pharmaceutical companies have “BTDT” (been there, done that) with the physician audience but are stuck in “NMJC” (nothing much, just chillin’) mode when it comes to patients. That seems to be the perception, anyway, that industry has been able to engage HCPs on mobile but not patients, despite the fact that patients are beginning to get more involved in the mobile health arena.

It’s not for a lack of trying. Many brands have experimented with medication and adherence compliance mobile apps, but agencies say the key to greater consumer engagement requires more than just medication reminders.

Bill Drummy, CEO of Heartbeat Digital, says “the potential for healthcare consumers lies in much more intelligent and accurate disease management, less memory-exhausting work for caregivers, and dramatically improved outcomes in traumatic situations. Think of it: You’re knocked unconscious in a car crash, but the EMT is able to access your medical history through a secure mobile app. It just might save your life.”

Brendan Gallagher, VP/GD emerging technology and channels, Digitas Health, builds on this thought. “Pharma has the opportunity to be more relevant at some of the most crucial moments in a patient’s life—the point of diagnosis and the treatment decision,” Gallagher says. “Being relevant and useful requires a deep understanding of the user at those moments and designing your mobile content to match those unmet needs. For chronic conditions, there are multiple opportunities for using mobile to connect people, track progress or help with adherence.”

Sure, consumers or caregivers might use an adherence tool, but it has to be designed with the patient in mind. “Unfortunately we see a fair amount of apps that are really promotional only in nature, as opposed to functional,” observes Larry Mickelberg, chief digital officer, Euro RSCG Life Worldwide. “To me, mobile marketing is really where form meets function. That’s what makes it so important to this industry and to our clients.”

Conditions have never been better for pharma to grow its support. Last year, more than 20 million US consumers used a mobile device to access health information, Manhattan Research reported. Searching for health information was the most common mHealth activity, although there was use and interest in mobile health-related coupons and prescription drug reminders and management tools.

Of the 5,805 health, medical and fitness apps in Apple’s AppStore, 73% are intended for consumers or patients, according to MobiHealthNews’ “The

World of Health and Medical Apps 2010” report (see page 10 for more). However, less than half (42%) owned smartphones in 2009, according to ChangeWave Research, and that presents a barrier to consumers adopting these tools to the same extent as professionals.

There’s hope of this changing. “If you just go to any airport, you see loads of smart phone devices out there,” observes Sandeep Shah, CEO, Skyscape. Shah sees the opportunity to “cross-promote” compliance apps to both audiences. “But, one thing in this industry is that unless a physician writes the prescription, you don’t get started.”

—Marc Iskowitz

