Sentiment Mining

Social media monitoring offers more than just a snapshot of what patients are saying about your products. With the proper analysis, it can help get your launch back on track. Ernst & Young's **Ric Cavieres** and **Karntipa Pisalyaput** explain using a fictitious brand, Hilodax

The following fictitious product launch scenario portrays real-world challenges faced by many biopharma companies:

It is February 6, 2015, one day before the launch of Zilogen's new diabetes product Hilodax.

Hilodax has been more than 10 years in the making, including research, development, clinical trials and a year of launch planning, and at a cost of more than $3 billion. Zilogen has great confidence that Hilodax will drive $1.6 billion in sales in the US during its first year. These expectations are based on clinical trials that show its efficacy for moderating type 2 diabetes is 14% better than rival treatments currently in the market. Wall Street and investors have taken note, and Zilogen's shares have increased 22% in the run up to Hilodax's launch.

The launch

On February 11, 2015—day five of the launch—real-time analysis shows that Hilodax's sales are 27% below expectations, and its market share is 24% less than pre-launch targets. But how does Zilogen know this when there is a six-week lag in the first sales data, and order data only shows what is in the extended supply chain—until at least 70% reorders—that is typically five to seven weeks out?

The answer is social media analytics (SMA). Zilogen has developed an SMA capability that enables real-time understanding of consumer sentiment—both before and after product launch—and has correlated these insights with market trends, utilizing analytical modeling, to be used as a predictor and lead indicator of sales. Its SMA insights identified three key reasons for the initial product launch underperformance:

■ **Perceived negative side effects:** The SMA con-

sumer sentiment analysis shows that Hilodax has an unfavorable side effect score when compared to its main branded rivals, and these ratings are hurting its adoption. This is being driven by inaccurate postings on a small number of key consumer health websites.

■ **Pricing:** The consumers' (potential patients) sentiment score for pricing is unfavorable and shows that in 12 key cities—including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Dallas—the patient out-of-pocket co-pay is higher than its key competitor brand, due to aggressive competitor co-pay discounting cards and coupon campaigns in the run up to Hilodax's launch.

■ **Swap-outs due to stock-outs:** Consumers who would have become Hilodax patients are flooding opinion boards in Dallas and Houston complaining that their new prescriptions of Hilodax are being swapped out for a competitor brand because Hilodax is out of stock at their pharmacies.

The turnaround

Through its real-time consumer-patient SMA insights, Zilogen was quickly able to turn around Hilodax's sales and market share performance by immediately mobilizing in the following areas:

■ **Accurate digital content on efficacy:** Zilogen's Medical Affairs team was mobilized to counter inaccurate blogging and comments about the drug's negative side effects on key patient health websites. Zilogen posted proven clinical trials efficacy results, showing that Hilodax is actually 14% more effective than the current treatments and does not have many of the side effects that have been blogged about.

■ **Patient co-pay optimization:** Zilogen quickly established the optimum patient out-of-pocket co-pay for the 12 cities that matched the discount of the competing brand and equalized this through targeted co-pay discount cards and vouchers.

■ **Supply to Dallas and Houston:** The demand in these two markets was underestimated, and this was compounded by the fact that a main Zilogen wholesale distributor had to return 65% of the product due to inadequate storage conditions during a Texas heat wave. Zilogen quickly ensured Hilodax was supplied to pharmacies and hospitals, through alternative distribution channels, to meet patient demand.

By week six, the SMA lead indicators, as well as the first sales data, showed that the performance of Hilodax was now slightly exceeding sales and market share targets. This turnaround was in large part thanks to the day-five intervention triggered by real-time SMA that brought consumers and real-time sentiments into the equation.

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The path ahead

Product launch optimization requires the harmonization of many other business functions—such as the sales force, marketing campaigns and patient market access—pre- and post-launch. However, not having SMA leaves a huge chasm in the launch strategy.

Biopharmaceuticals is the only industry that has essentially built a wall around social media, creating a barrier to understanding consumers and potential patients. This has been driven by a lack of clear FDA and European Union guidance on reporting adverse events, but this cost is far outweighed by the benefits of driving and sustaining product launches and providing transparency with consumers and patients.

The lack of SMA becomes more glaring when one considers that industry benchmarks show 85% of a
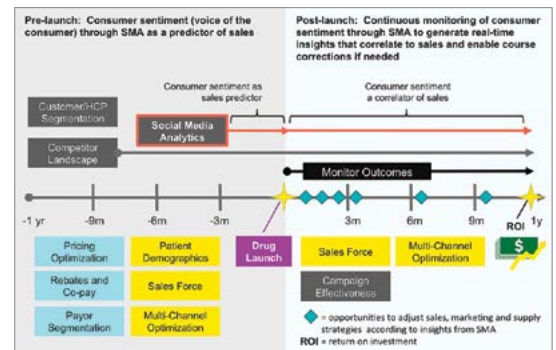
SMA can generate useful insights at all points along the trajectory of a new product's launch

new product's trajectory is determined within the first three to six months after launch. Without SMA, Zilogen would have only realized that there was an issue with the Hilodax launch after six to eight weeks with little ability to turn its trajectory around.

Biopharma companies that have not adopted SMA must define a cohesive SMA strategy and develop new business capabilities and insights. This will enable them to optimize product launches, as well as maximize their existing product portfolios, through predictive and real-time consumer sentiment analysis, listening to and shaping patient opinions. Inaction will provide early adopters with a clear competitive advantage and one that will be hard to reverse. ■

Ric Cavieres is a principal and the commercial leader for Ernst & Young LLP's Advisory Life Sciences practice. Karntipa Pisalyaput is a manager in Ernst & Young LLP's Advisory Life Sciences practice. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of EY LLP.