

A SOCIAL REVOLUTION

▶ As pharmaceutical companies continue to dabble in social media, patients and consumers are not waiting, and are in fact, driving health-related conversations in a variety of ways and across a variety of media, most importantly digital.

A recent study found that one-quarter of the world's population uses social media. This means that 1,730,000,000 people are posting, pinning, tweeting, and Instagramming. According to Emarsys' Jacqueline Woerner, every 60 seconds 20,000 pictures are uploaded on Tumblr; 104,000 pictures are shared on Snapchat; 2,460,000 posts are sent on Facebook. So not only is there a greater di-

versity of social platforms, there are also more people using them, Ms. Woerner says.

"Naturally, this phenomenon has greatly affected business," she says. "Considering the sea of social networks and the millions of people using them, brands nowadays can't just hop on Facebook. They have to make informed decisions in which networks to invest their financial and personnel resources to achieve the

best results. Social media is no longer about following the masses, it's about following your target audience."

There are obvious differences between how retail marketers can capitalize on social com-



EXECUTIVE VIEWPOINTS



BEN CURRIE
VP, Digital Solutions
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SOCIAL STARTUP

Companies need to start with general lifestyle subject matter that is useful to their audience such as exercise routines or recipes. They get the opportunity to engage, listen, and learn about their audience's social media preferences and engagement style while refining their content workflow and approval process.

AUDIENCE PREFERENCES

By using data points from various patient sites and social media outlets companies can determine the channels are right for their audience. Then they should use the direct data gathered as part of their engagements to better understand their audience.



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EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES

Our industry is a scientific one, in which progress relies on learning from

previous results — "standing on the shoulders of giants," as the expression goes. But, for generations, proper pharma sales and marketing meant one thing, and we're doing very different things now. There are no peer-reviewed studies on the best technique. We have to learn how to approach patient engagement like explorers, not scientists. And we must prove the value of doing so.

Not all pharma companies are ready to embrace social engagement, due to corporate culture, the complexities of products with certain restrictions, or a social-averse legal team. But the simplest — and, I'd argue, most important — best practice in social is listening. Even if you're not yet ready to converse, discover what others are saying about your brands and your disease states — lurk and learn.

TRAIN, EDUCATE, AND ANALYZE

First, understand your universe of social outlets — the main sites, but also the new or niche sites — and which are most currently relevant to your audiences.

Then, companies need to invest in analytic tools, but also, even more importantly, in training. Educate a broad group from throughout the organization, removing data from its silo. Finally, use your findings not only to determine "what" and "who" — honing in on messaging and audience — but also "when" and "where" — timing and segmenting.



MALCOLM BOHM
President and CEO
Liquid Grids

PATIENT-ACTIVATION

To truly activate the patient base one-to-one patient engagement is not relevant. Turning strategic insights from social media dialogue into profitable actions by patients is what is required to deliver real returns.

Targeted, contextual advertising campaigns that appeal to more patients in a personalized way is the safest and most compliant mechanism to leverage social media. Social listening alone, no matter how simplistic or sophisticated, is not enough.



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GETTING DOWN TO SOCIAL TACTICS

There are a number of tactics that can be used to begin the exploration of the use of social media. The easiest is the creation and management of a Twitter handle. Not a brand handle, but one for the company. That

merce — a driving trend in 2015 — and how pharma companies can engage with the social movement, but the basics remain the same. All companies, even those in a highly regulated environment, must be aware of how, where, and what social media customers are using.

One way pharmaceutical companies can create an opportunity for themselves is through the growing mobile movement. Experts contend that mobile, more effectively than any other channel, lets brands create and take advantage of existing compelling micro moments at different stages of the purchase journey, be it through SMS, push notifications, or in-app product recommendations.

Considering a worldwide mobile penetration of 93% and 1.7 billion social media users, the time has come for companies to revolutionize their engagement strategies. **PV**

Twitter handle can be used by the company to provide information, news, and other resources that it wants to ensure are in the hands of the people it wishes to get to.

YouTube is also an easy tactic to begin working on. Most companies create a vast number of video assets, from MOAs to KOL videos to patient stories (approved). These can all be hosted on a YouTube channel. Google offers a “pharma compliant” YouTube setting that can be used for this.

Lastly, working with social media on a paid basis should be explored. There is tremendous opportunity to target people specifically on these platforms for both branded and unbranded campaigns.

THE PERSONAL CHALLENGE

The biggest issue with the use of social media data is any personally identifiable information (PII). The good news is that there are many things pharma can do with data for the creation of almost real-time trends. For example, the fine folks at <http://healthmap.org/en/> use Twitter data to predict outbreaks of a variety of diseases based on Twitter. While not completely clinical, these predictions provide another data point for analysis. The CDC takes weeks to report this kind of data today. Similarly, Facebook data can be used for trending commentary and conversation around disease states without obtaining PII.



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To schedule a demonstration, contact John Spingler at john@liquidgrids.com or 201-934-1656. For immediate gratification, visit our website at www.LiquidGrids.com.

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