

Hey, Pharma!

THE SOCIAL TRAIN HAS LEFT!

GET ON THE BUS!

Pharma! Time to stop waiting for the long-anticipated social media guidance from the FDA and procrastinating on developing a social brand footprint. Social media is now part of the cost of entry in connecting with your customers. Consumers expect — and are accustomed to — brands being present on the major social platforms and look to those channels for customer service (for example, Facebook now posts average response times on pages).

Social media has infiltrated every corner online, and if you're not there, you're going to be missed. Still need convincing?

Search Is Social

According to Pew research, 72% of consumers seek healthcare information online. Eight in 10 of those people start with a search engine. Social is included on search engine results pages of the big three search engines: Google, Yahoo, and Bing.

Here's a quick timeline on how social has infiltrated search engines led by Google.

- ▶ 10/09 — Google Labs rolls out a search pilot to include Twitter results
- ▶ 2011 and 2012 — Twitter results appear intermittently on search engine results pages (SERPs)
- ▶ 2013 — Social profile links included on Knowledge Graph results for brands
- ▶ 5/2015 — Twitter and Google enter into a partnership. Twitter results are regularly integrated on SERPs

Bing is in on the social action as well. The company is uniquely positioned to show Facebook content due to their agreement with Facebook as part of Microsoft's investment in the social media giant.

Additionally, search results are personalized based on consumer profiles created by the search engines. They account for current behavior, context, and historical activity (search, browsing history, social activity, etc.) of each user. Social content is served based on these exact factors.

Since search is the first touchpoint for the majority of consumers looking for healthcare information, shouldn't you be there too?

If you're not on social, it's possible you won't be found through search.

Social Influences Behavior

Approximately 57% of consumers are influenced by online reviews and social mentions, according to a 2015 Enplug survey conducted by YouGov. Links and reviews shared on social media are more relevant to consumers delivered from their network — from people they know personally or those who are credible sources in their eyes.

This is especially evident when consumers are looking for information about something as important as their health or that of someone they love. Consumers are sharing experiences, talking about brands that have and have not worked for them. Negative experiences are usually the ones that get shared the most, along with misinformation.

These discussions about your brand are happening on social whether you are there or not. Having an online social presence can increase your brand's credibility and allow you to respond to these conversations. By having a seat at the social table, you have an opportunity to correct misinformation and change misperceptions that consumers have about your brand. Your brand, in turn, becomes an influencer.

It's time for you to expand your presence to social media and provide the service your customers expect.

Looking to the Future

Getting started in social takes some research. Start by listening to and understand-

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ing who your audience is, and what they are talking about. Identify their needs, pain points, attitudes, and who the influencers are before entering the social sphere. Develop an engagement plan with SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound) goals: what are you trying to achieve with your social presence? Choose the most appropriate social channels to achieve your SMART goals. You don't have to be on them all. Educate and partner with your medical and legal teams to plan your social activities. Develop your response plan to prepare for interacting with your audience.

Get social.

Join the conversation.

Be found.

Social is here to stay. 

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