



By Robin Robinson

Patient Journeys AND STORYTELLING

Real life patient stories started seeping into the pharma lexicon well over a decade ago, on both a commercial and research level. The industry began turning to end users to discover how to create better drug delivery processes, clinical trial protocols, and marketing efforts, as well as to accurately understand the realities of the patient journey. Today, companies such as Merck, Boehringer Ingelheim, Amgen, Horizon, and Sunovion are using the patient perspective relative to marketing efforts and clinical trials.

Patient network companies such as WEGO Health and Inspire also foresaw the power in sharing patient stories and the positive impact they could make on healthcare delivery. Each created vast patient communities that leverage the patient experience to help others cope with chronic, life-threatening, or rare conditions, and help pharma companies have regulatory-safe access to real-life patients. The stories shared by patients not only support fellow patients but also provide the industry with a window into the complexities of the patient journey.

“Pharmaceutical companies can — and do — use patient stories every day,” says Jack Barrette, CEO, WEGO Health.

Mr. Barrette says patient opinion leaders (POLs) provide some of the most impactful stories because they have already built trust through relationships with the broader patient community.

“A POL’s earned credibility takes away any hint of the message being from a paid spokesperson, even though patient leaders are often compensated for their time, and should be,” Mr. Barrette says.

(Editor’s note: to read more about patient opinion leaders, turn to Patient Voices.)

Storytelling provides the industry with a look inside the complexities of patients and their journeys.



Patient stories are a powerful way to educate physicians as well.

“A big opportunity for patient stories is in educating physicians; CME outfitters have built CME programs around patient leader stories, and physicians are responding really well to them,” Mr. Barrette says.

Just last fall, Merck launched TV spots for Keytruda that featured the first real-life patient to appear in one of its ads. And although Amgen uses actors to represent some of its

patients in its Enbrel TV commercials — except for Phil Mickelson — the campaigns were developed based on insights learned from real patients. And this spring, Boehringer Ingelheim launched a new patient website, morethanscleroderma.com, to supplement its More Than Scleroderma: The Inside Story campaign. The global initiative highlights the importance of understanding the inside story of each individual living with scleroderma, according to the company. Two

other companies, Horizon and Sunovion, have developed opportunities for patients to share their stories and connect with others who are going through similar experiences. In turn, the companies get to truly understand what it means to be a patient, so that they can accurately tailor marketing messages and educational opportunities.

“We work closely with our advocacy partners to address multiple patient community concerns, including the need to create platforms to share patient experiences, because we know that authentic stories inspire and connect people in the most powerful, memorable, and transformative ways,” says Maureen Sheltry, senior director, marketing and lead of Vision 2020 Patient Dimension, Sunovion Pharmaceuticals.

“Customized to reach unique audiences and address distinct community needs, many of our campaigns, including COPD Together and Talk About It! for epilepsy, were created to share individual and family experiences.”

Many of Sunovion’s initiatives including COPD Together and Talk About It for Epilepsy! address distinct community needs. Recently, Sunovion collaborated with five advocacy partners on Beyond Silence, a Be Vocal: Speak up for Mental Health documentary, which is an example of authentic storytelling.

“The documentary features the stories of three very different people who share one com-



Patients' Voices: The Journey



HOWARD CHANG

Psoriasis Foundation Volunteer
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The patient story authentically and deeply touches other patients, many of whom might otherwise feel isolated. People with skin conditions in my community face the temptation to hide. They can hide their skin under clothes, hide their fatigue behind weary faces, and hide their disappointment in a telling half-smile. The lack of connection with others intensifies that feeling of being the only one in the world with a condition.

I started my psoriasis column on Everyday Health more than 10 years ago. I ended my first entry with the hope that it could be a tool to contribute in a small way to the need to connect and communicate about that part of our lives that so often stays under wraps: psoriasis. The overwhelming response over the years is one of gratitude for sharing a deeply personal story with them.

That authenticity and connection extends beyond effectively bringing fellow patients out from isolation. Real-life stories communicate in a way that allows the hearer to engage their own unique circumstances with another's story. Hearing experiences from fellow patients about healthcare providers, insurance representatives, or therapies and medications open up possibilities and new ideas for me and my decision-making.

Furthermore, patient storytelling impacts caregivers and providers by giving them a glimpse into the patient's experience. No one can completely walk in another's shoes, but the ability to empathize with others starts with listening to their stories. If patients don't tell those stories, they miss out on the opportunity to inform others how it is to walk in their shoes.



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Patient opinion leaders are essential not only to the patient ecosystem, but the healthcare ecosystem as a whole. POLs represent the collective voice of their communities and are well equipped to share that insight with pharma, insurance, and digital health companies.

The communication loop comes full circle as POLs then share their experiences working with pharma back with their engaged communities, helping to foster a greater understanding of up and coming treatment options and resources available to the broader patient population.



Authentic stories inspire and connect people in the most powerful, memorable and transformative ways.

MAUREEN SHELTRY
Sunovion

mon experience: their lives were transformed by speaking up for mental health," Ms. Sheltry says. "These individuals invited us into their most private lives, and it is because of their willingness to open up about their struggles, celebrations, triumphs, and setbacks that this film has forged a connection with audiences nationwide."

Not only do patient stories help form a connection with external audiences, but they also serve as motivation for Sunovion employees. The real life stories reinforce why the company's employees come to work every day. "We believe it is essential that patient perspectives are included in all of our company-wide meetings and we encourage employees to engage with our advocacy partners directly through community-based events," Ms. Sheltry says.

According to Matt Flesch, executive director, product communications at Horizon Pharma, the more patient stories employees listen to, the better they get to know and understand patients.

"Listening to as many stories as we can helps us understand the various obstacles in the way of patients and their families so we can better meet their needs where appropriate," Mr. Flesch says. "Patient stories build trust and reputation because these communities see that we do much more than sponsor meetings and events — we show up and participate."

To meet patients and build relationships, Horizon employees attend local events and national conferences relating to the rare disease communities being addressed by its research efforts. Horizon also invites patients and their



It is critical to allow people to share their stories in a way that they feel totally comfortable, rather than trying to manipulate their experiences into something they are not.

KAREN GAUDETTE BREWER
Remedy Health Media

families to come to Horizon offices or to a work group setting off site. "Through these meetings, we hear many different stories and learn that no two stories are exactly alike, so there is no one-size-fits-all way to address their needs," Mr. Flesch says. "While there are certainly commonalities — diagnosis is a frequent challenge, as is finding specialists who understand an ultra-rare disease — there are so many unique aspects of each person's journey."

Horizon hosts several social media platforms for patients to share their stories, such as UCD in Common, CGD Connections, Cystinosis United, and RAREis. "It's incredible to see what happens when patients share their stories," Mr. Flesch says. "The stories inspire, educate, and, ultimately, get people more informed and engaged."

Patient stories also bring value by incorporating the voice of the patient in every step of the product lifecycle.

According Neil Weisman, executive VP, patient recruitment and general manager, Continuum Clinical, pharma companies can and should use patient stories to improve their commitment to patient-centricity, moving beyond the use of patient-first mentalities as

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Stories motivate and inspire, and they influence decisions: clinical, regulatory, and funding. You really can't overstate the power of a story to make change.

MATT FLESCH
Horizon Pharma

aspirational goals, and truly incorporating the voice of the patient in every step of the product lifecycle.

Collecting patient stories through advocacy group relationships and social listening will help ensure research and marketing messages are culturally competent, resonant, and eventually build the resources necessary to help empower patients to talk to their doctors about available treatment options, he says.

"The sooner patients and their stories are involved in the product development process, the more they will trust pharma to prioritize better health outcomes over profits," Mr. Weisman says. "None of us can know the implications of living with a condition or the impacts of therapies on treating it unless it is part of our own reality. Patient storytelling is the most effective way to help us understand the physical and emotional consequences of disease. Patient perspectives ground us and should remind those of us in industry why we do what we do and help us refocus on what is most important to the success of a compound — healthier lives for us all."

Patient stories are solid tools for patient education, and for helping patients not feel alone in their healthcare journey. By putting a human face on the condition and establishing a true-to-life context around the decisions to be made, brands can provide invaluable support to patients, family caregivers, and providers.

"Patient stories can add authenticity and



A big opportunity for patient stories is in educating physicians; physicians are responding well to CME programs built around patient leader stories.

JACK BARRETTE
WEGO Health



Patient stories and journey maps are extremely helpful tools for demonstrating the patient experience and for generating insight about the consumer that will make a difference for the brand.

ANNA MCCLAFFERTY
Health Union

humanity to a complex situation," says Aaron Sklar, VP, brand experience, Giant Creative Strategy. "In addition to feeling fear and being overwhelmed when receiving a diagnosis, patients can be frustrated about having to master the necessary amount of information. Hearing from others who have gone through similar journeys is a very human way to understand the nuances of a diagnosis. These stories also serve to help frame and articulate questions patients wouldn't have known to ask."

Anyone who has ever heard a good story can understand why storytelling is so effective in the healthcare space. Not only is it the most engaging and memorable way to make a point, but in a sea of fine print side effects, dense medical lingo, and inane TV spots, patient stories can grab and hold attention, Mr. Barrette says. True stories also bring authenticity, which is very important to patients.

"We have asked our members what makes a good story, and they invariably tell us it's



genuineness," he says. "A mobile phone video of a real patient beats an HD-quality actor portrayal any day; just as consumers have been trained to spot fake reviews on Yelp, they know a real patient when they see one."

Mr. Sklar agrees, noting that valuable messaging about health outcomes can be overshadowed by suspicion of corporate profit motives. Patient stories amplify the human experience and communicate a brand's impact in a way that establishes the tone of an organization as one that cares about the people it serves.

"One of the most challenging aspects of using patient stories is overcoming the perception that a pharma brand has cherry-picked only the most favorable representations of patient experiences," he says. "The audience is hungry for authenticity. The ideal collection of stories is representative of the whole experience — the good, the bad, and the ugly."

According to Anna McClafferty, senior VP, insights, Health Union, companies that truly understand their patients can discern a number of key factors, including whether a product or service meets important unmet needs, if shifts in patient mindset need to happen to support behavior change, if there are



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AARON SKLAR
Giant Creative

circumstances that need to exist for the patient to take action, and if there are information and interventions that must exist to support activating the patient.

“For any pharma company, the goal of understanding healthcare consumers intimately, including their experiences, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and actual behaviors, should be to meet patients where they are,” she says. “This intimate understanding enables a company to build trust, gain traction, stay in tune, and engage with a stakeholder or customer. If companies take that understanding and apply it to everything they do, they can’t go wrong.”

Being genuine and real is imperative in messaging, as often is seen in creative testing with people who have chronic conditions, many of whom are older, may be on disability, or constantly face stressful challenges. If patients are shown an ad featuring a beautiful person in an immaculate high-end kitchen, they think, ‘I don’t know who that person is; that doesn’t reflect my experience,’” Ms. McClafferty says. “In this scenario, patients instantaneously recognize that a brand doesn’t know them, and nuances often matter as much as the obvious unmet needs. A deep understanding of and respect for the beliefs, emotions, and experiences of patients helps marketers hit their mark.”

Horizon’s Mr. Flesch says his company has witnessed countless instances of patient storytelling fostering awareness and discussion that led to a more engaged and knowledgeable patient or caregiver. For example, Horizon created a video featuring one family’s story of their daughter’s urea cycle disorder — a rare and very challenging disease — and posted it to its UCD in Common Facebook page.

The video shows the family’s journey from the chaos of life-threatening symptoms, to finally achieving a correct diagnosis, to finding expert specialists. The video also showed the family’s experience meeting others with rare diseases at a national rare disease conference. The Facebook comments on this video showed an elevated understanding within the commu-



Using both quantitative and qualitative surveys, as well as interviews and focus groups, can be very effective in mapping the patient journey.

RICHARD TSAI
Inspire

nity on the value of being engaged, attending conferences, and continual learning.

“While it’s great to have studies to explain the burden and science of a disease, stories communicate so much more,” Mr. Flesch says. “Stories motivate and inspire, and they influence decisions. They influence clinical trials, they influence the regulatory process, and they influence the allocation of funds for research and support. The power of a story to make change can’t be overstated.”

The Power of a Good Story

Stories are powerful because our brains are hardwired to process information in story format — be it cultural norms, elder wisdom, or learnings gleaned from past experiences, says Jen Briselli, managing director of experience strategy and design, Mad*Pow.

“Storytelling even predates writing as a form of communication, and anthropologists and neuroscientists alike have agreed that stories represent the most powerful way to communicate human experiences,” she says. “Modern experience strategy tools such as pa-



Patient stories are one of the most impactful ways to deliver a message because they help patients realize they are not alone.

JOSEPH PEREKUPKA
Brainsway

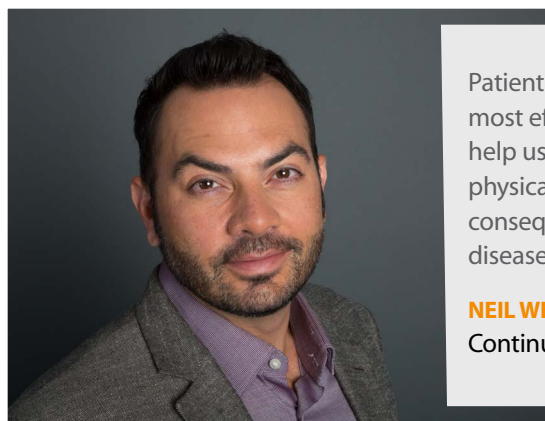
tient journey maps and storyboard narratives simply leverage the evolutionary foundations of our own cognitive and behavioral strengths to build common understanding and envision shared futures.”



For example, in the field of major depressive disorder (MDD), which affects nearly 16 million American adults annually, medications do not always adequately relieve suffering. One alternative option for those with treatment-resistant MDD is called transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), a non-invasive, FDA-approved therapy. TMS works by stimulating brain areas using electromagnetic coils placed against the surface of the scalp that produce brief but powerful pulses of electromagnetic current, says Joseph Perekupka, VP of North American sales operations, Brainsway.

“Despite the fact that it has been proven safe and effective, TMS is widely misconceived,” he says. “Patients unfamiliar with the treatment find it intimidating and scary. Sharing testimonials from those patients who have experienced dramatic improvements after using TMS treatment makes remission through TMS therapy feel less intimidating for those who are wary. These stories are one of the most impactful ways to deliver a message because they can help patients realize they are not alone. Physicians are very respected, but they cannot relate to the patient’s struggle.”

Another example, involving oncology pa-



Patient storytelling is the most effective way to help us understand the physical and emotional consequences of disease.

NEIL WEISMAN
Continuum Clinical



Mapping patient experiences is the single most powerful method for shifting a traditionally product-centered organization toward a more customer-centered stance.

JEN BRISELLI
Mad*Pow

tients, is offered by Alex Seleny, senior director of portals and patient services, McKesson Specialty Health.

“Surviving cancer is about more than the medication a patient takes,” he says. “It’s about the treatment journey and providing information and guidance that the patient needs to understand what it means to live with cancer. Breast cancer organizations have done a tremendous job of providing education and creating support groups that allow patients to share their experiences and learn more about solving their cancer-related problems.”

Mr. Seleny also points out it is even more difficult for patients with rare forms of cancer or orphan diseases to connect and find others with a common situation. In these cases, patient stories are critical for education and to make sure that patients do not feel alone. Studies show that for patients who feel supported, ER visits decrease, depression decreases, and survival increases, compared with people who are not getting that same support, he says.

Lara DeSanto, Remedy Health Media’s Live Bold, Live Now writer, says that it’s critical to allow room for people to share their story in a way that they feel totally comfortable with, rather than trying to manipulate their experience into something it’s not.

Creating the Journey

Patient journeys have evolved over the years and now typically include patient-centric details related to the emotional journey of receiving a diagnosis, the challenges associated with unsuccessful treatments, and the reality of hardships related to transportation, time lost from work, and family implications, says Tara Herington, VP, Cardinal Health Sonexus Access and Patient Support.

“The more patients and care partners are included in creating patient journeys, the

more impactful the mapping becomes,” she says. She cautions that although it may be tempting to create simplified patient journeys that show one pathway, the reality is that each patient has a unique journey. Effective journey maps show this complexity with dead-ends, diverging paths, and decision points.

More than anything, mapping the patient journey through effective storytelling helps illustrate the realities of life with a health condition. Ms. McClafferty at Health Union says solid journey mapping helps guide the best way to engage with certain patients and she has seen the results of how mapping can turn a campaign around.

“For the people on marketing teams and in creative agencies who are tasked with developing approaches to engage and communicate with consumers, patient stories serve as a way to walk a mile in someone else’s shoes,” she says. “I’ve seen the difference patient stories can make in the before-and-after products from creative agencies.”

Initially, she says, an agency comes up with an idea for the creative campaign, based on brand strategy and marketing objectives. But after the team has been exposed to patient stories and shown visuals about what the experience of a condition really means to people, the revisions are transformative. “Patient stories and journey maps are extremely helpful tools for demonstrating the patient experience and for generating insight about the consumer that will make a difference for a brand,” Ms. McClafferty says.

Karen Gaudette Brewer, HealthCentral executive editor, Remedy Health Media, offers an example of how mapping a patient’s journey provides multiple touchpoints to connect with the desired audience. Live Bold, Live Now is a Remedy-wide initiative consisting of a multi-media experience with engaging content and tools designed to influence treatment

decisions and inspire patients to take action to live their best life. Tracy Martin is a rheumatoid arthritis Live Bold, Live Now hero who recently set a record for endurance kayaking on the waters of the Great Lakes. “We mapped her journey back to childhood, watching her grandmother grapple with RA and how it was treated in that era, to current day, where granddaughter Tracy is able to crush a world record due to the dramatic strides made with treatments for this formerly crippling disease,” Ms. Brewer says. “All of those elements allow us and pharma brands to share a story like this in a multitude of conversations — during grandparents’ day, the Olympics, disability rights advocacy days, and conversations about public funding for medical research.”

According to Richard Tsai, VP of marketing and communications at Inspire, using both quantitative and qualitative surveys, as well as interviews and focus groups can be very effective in mapping the patient journey. Unobtrusive observation of the targeted patient population — a social listening process where one can anonymously and longitudinally follow through the various troughs and crest of their experience and potentially explore their interaction with other stakeholders along the journey — is also extremely valuable. ^{PV}



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By Robin Robinson

Mapping the PATIENT JOURNEY

Patient journey maps help organizations understand the customers' experience at every point and provide a holistic and graphical overview of the various touch points a person has throughout his or her experience as a patient.

Capturing the varying perspectives of all relevant stakeholders, journey mapping offers a multidisciplinary framework for streamlining and improving processes. By plotting the flow across touch points and information systems, journey mapping helps identify interoperability gaps and optimization opportunities. The process map must always depict the total number of steps taken, as well as the total number of people involved, the total time taken to perform the process step, and all documents used.

Understanding the process from the patient perspective is essential if patient-focused service improvements are to be made.

Mapping a patient journey should inform the entire communications vision for a product, from clinical trial enrollment to bringing a product to market, says Neil Weisman, executive VP, patient recruitment and general manager, Continuum Clinical.

At Continuum Clinical, our advocacy relations team works to uncover and better understand the many nuances involved in living with a health condition. "Oftentimes these stories are difficult to hear — patients are in pain, sometimes feel defeated or have lost hope," Mr. Weisman says. "Sometimes the

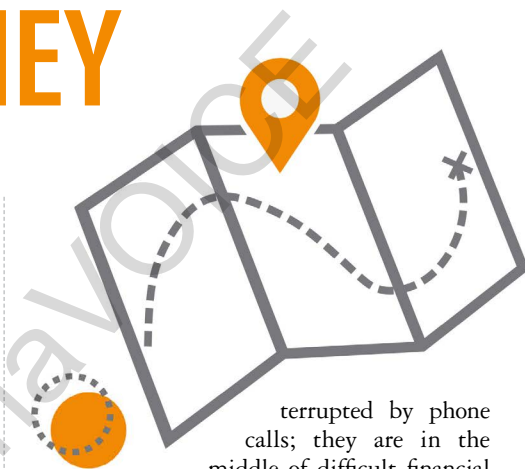
Patient stories can be used to enlighten all stakeholders about what patients experience, but they also need to be combined with patient journey mapping in order to provide a clear picture of the patient journey.

stories are uplifting — patients have found a support system that lifts them up or are learning about potential new therapies that could change their lives or the lives of a loved one. In both cases, the story is powerful. Patient stories elicit empathy in ways simple statistics or demographic reports cannot. They also provide a face to a condition whose impact is more than scientific."

Patients often feel misunderstood and misrepresented in protocols, study designs, and marketing messages, so ensuring they are able to give feedback to key decision makers will ensure the trials designed meet both the sponsor's measures for success as well as the patient's success.

"By engaging patients sooner — even as early as when a compound has entered the pipeline — companies demonstrate a real and genuine commitment," Mr. Weisman says.

Patient journey mapping provides tremendous context for creating valuable messages, says Aaron Sklar, VP, brand experience, Giant Creative Strategy. Having a sense of where patients are physically and who they are with can be extremely informative in shaping the right message and tone. "Over the course of many research projects, I've seen time and again that patients do not receive our communication in a vacuum," he says. "They have children hanging on them; they are in-



interrupted by phone calls; they are in the middle of difficult financial decisions. Their patient journey is just one piece of their overall life journey. A thoughtful communication strategy identifies the moments that matter at distinct points in a journey and ensures the right message gets delivered at the right time."

Jen Briselli, managing director of experience strategy and design, Mad*Pow, says patient experience journey mapping is also a powerful instrument for mixing qualitative and quantitative data to contextualize relationships across the health ecosystem and providing an ideal patient experience vision for an organization to execute against. "Especially against the backdrop of the pharma industry's ongoing digital transformation, mapping patient stories can help organizations better understand the current patient experience, identify key opportunities to improve that experience, and empower providers and payers to ally with pharma companies to realize those opportunities in ways that are good for people and good for business," she says.

"Mapping patient experiences — by first understanding and then articulating their stories, the corresponding highlights and pain points, communication channels and backstage operational processes — is the single most powerful method for shifting a traditionally product-centered organization toward a more customer-centered stance," Ms. Briselli adds. "As pharma companies move closer to their customers and seek more direct interaction between brands and patients, patient experience journeys become a critical component of marketing and customer experience strategy."

The most effective way to map a patient journey, our experts say, is to understand that the journey is always multidimensional, not



Mapping a patient journey should inform the entire communications vision for a product, from clinical trial enrollment to bringing a product to market.

NEIL WEISMAN
Continuum Clinical



linear, and can provide pertinent information of when and how to reach consumers.

To map a patient journey most successfully, teams must align on the goals and expectations that a patient journey is meant to accomplish. There are many types of patient journeys, many ways to map those journeys, and many ways to share and leverage patient journeys once they're captured.

"It's simplistic to think of patient journey mapping as a gap analysis, but patient opinion leaders often see it that way," says Jack Barrette, CEO, WEGO Health. "When our patient opinion leader groups have laid out the journeys of people in their communities, they pinpoint the places where pharma can be a bridge for patients."

WEGO has learned that patient communities play a surprising "conversion" role in treatment decisions: they help patients to prepare and gain confidence to discuss a treatment with their doctor. Communities often answer questions for patients about filling a prescription or staying on treatment.

"When pharma companies understand the conversations at those points in the journey, they can design strategies to help," Mr. Barrette says.

Tara Herington, VP, Cardinal Health Sonexus Access and Patient Support, says what's not effective is to start with a prefab journey and find examples to populate it. She suggests asking patient leaders to tell stories about how people in their communities have experienced their journeys — ask them what's different between groups of people, what stops people, and who gets furthest fastest.

"It's incredibly rewarding and nuanced to hear a leader talk about the different personas in their followers, and in that organic conversation will emerge opportunities," she says. "Only then can you start mapping."

Richard Tsai, VP of marketing and communications at Inspire, also suggests conducting a patient experience and ethnographic study with the specific patient population of interest as well as with the various objects or people patients interact with along their journey.

"This can often be broken down into several stages from diagnosis, to denial/acceptance, to treatment decision, to coping with disease, and to managing a new quality of life, or toward the end of a life," he says. "This group needs to include providers, payers, doctors, social workers, and caregivers."

Inspire has observed that on the ethnography side, many patients begin to learn a new "medicalese" that they experience from other patients. For instance, members of the Inspire ovarian cancer support community refer to each other warmly as "teal sisters," as teal is the recognition color of that disease.



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JEN BRISELLI
Mad*Pow



We increasingly hear from people who want to share their stories through the platforms we've created, and this tells us we're getting it right.

MATT FLESCH
Horizon Pharma



Seeing a real patient thriving, and sharing all aspects of their journey, is the ultimate witness to the desired outcome.

**KAREN GAUDETTE
BREWER**
Remedy Health Media

"Building a deep understanding of patients' language will offer great insights to how they progress throughout their journey," Mr. Tsai adds.

Ms. Briselli says effective journey maps are built on primary research, often conducted via ethnographic methods like contextual inquiries, shadowing, and journal studies, and constructed in collaboration with internal stakeholders and subject matter experts who will be tasked with leveraging the insights of the process.

"In this way, we ensure the insights themselves are both valuable and actionable," Ms. Briselli says. "Empathy-based, human-centered design thinking methods produce the best outcomes, but these can quickly result in tangential off roads when a team hasn't aligned on what experiences they are mapping, whose story they are telling, and committing resources to research and visualize those insights at a fidelity that can support the agreed upon goals."

Matt Flesch, executive director, product communications at Horizon Pharma, says one of the biggest challenges for pharma is ensuring that the company tells the patient's story as accurately and authentically as possible. The only way to do that is by collaborating with the patient and his or her family.

"We increasingly hear from people who want to share their stories through the platforms we've created, and this tells us we're getting it right," Mr. Flesch says. "For instance, hundreds of people living with rare disease have come forward to share their story with us

through our RAREis campaign, an initiative designed to elevate the faces and stories of people living with rare disease."

For patient stories to work well, they must be grounded in real life, and be 100% true, which is also challenging for pharma companies. Scripted stories are safer from a regulatory and brand awareness standpoint, but will fall flat with patients.

"Good, compelling patient stories are the ones that share the messiness and reality of real life, and for pharmaceutical companies that's a fine line," Mr. Barrette says.

Karen Gaudette Brewer, HealthCentral executive editor at Remedy Health Media, says it is essential that companies are real and that they share the good and the bad and talk openly about the challenges that patients may encounter along the path toward a better way of living.

"People trust those who are confident enough in their product — be it advice or in this case, a drug or treatment — to be open about what could go both wrong and right," she says. "And seeing a real patient thriving, and sharing all aspects of their journey, is the ultimate witness to the desired outcome."

"Real patients talk about all the drugs they use, not just one company," Mr. Barrette says. "Real patients may be upset with their physician for not collaborating. Real patients sometimes look sick, sometimes look too well, and sometimes stop using a drug. But that's the real in reality storytelling. Pharma companies can't ignore regulatory, but the messy truth we deal with every day is better than scripted stories." ^{PV}