Omnichannel and the Future of Brand Building

▶ Brand building today creates both more challenges and more opportunities for pharmaceutical companies to promote products and reach customers.

W ith so many more stakeholders to cater for — patients, physicians, payers, regulators, as well as partners and shareholders — companies must ensure the right brand-building strategy at the right time for the right audience.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an acceleration toward adopting digital channels for engaging with customers — be they patients or healthcare professionals.

Increasingly, therefore, pharmaceutical brand managers and marketers are adopting omnichannel approaches to reach target audiences, recognizing that the channel or platform can vary significantly across various stakeholders and even from one individual to another. Omnichannel engagement leverages multiple different platforms and approaches while ensuring the messages and channels are connected.

Successful omnichannel brand building requires strategic investment with integration across all channels — both digital and offline channels such as medical events, publications, and medical science liaisons.

The investment is evidently worth it for companies, with data from ZS Associates showing a more than 20% increase in engagement rates and a significant improvement in sales potential when adopting true omnichannel approaches.

Know the Customer

Consumers are online and on social media, and that's where pharmaceutical companies also need to be. According to Pew Research Centre and PwC Health Research data, 35% of U.S. adults go online to learn about a medical condition, but when it comes to younger consumers the numbers are significantly higher: 90% of people between 18 and 24 years of age engage in health activities on social media.

Whatever the forum, today's consumers expect to be part of the conversation for all products, including pharmaceuticals. Brand building, therefore, must take account of consumer needs and respond to those needs. Marketers use data analytics to gain insights into how best to target their brands to consumers. Big data analytics help brand marketers to more effectively plan promotional activities by deriving impact insights, identifying market segments for existing products, and producing effective and timely messaging for consumers or patients and delivering those messages to patients through preferred mediums.

Real-world data sets can help to pinpoint patient demographics and preferences as well as physician behavior. For example, transactional level data, such as prescriptions and hospital data, can help companies understand the patient journey, such as the specialists seen, tests and therapies, which can help companies to better target their marketing and assess future opportunities.

Social listening is another important tool for understanding the patient's needs and concerns. However, this needs to be balanced against market research to gain a complete picture of needs and expectations.

A patient-centric approach to brand building also requires responding to the patient's journey in the most appropriate way — from their diagnosis to treatment. How does the patient want information and support? This might include touchpoints that provide support for newly diagnosed patients, text reminders for refills, or working with other healthcare providers, such as pharmacies, to improve the patient experience.

Integral to brand building is having strong relationships with HCPs and, increasingly, the interactions between sales reps and HCPs have become digital, particularly since COVID-19.

Identifying a Good Omnichannel Setup

To start, commercial teams must gather data and turn it into insights by:

▶ Gaining a deep understanding of the customer journey and their unmet needs
▶ Gathering and synthesizing these insights so the organization is ready to respond appropriately
▶ Delivering information HCPs might need in a format and at a time of the individual doctor's choosing
▶ Creating agile feedback loops that drive deeper, more granular customer knowledge at a faster pace

A successful digital response will then require several key building blocks:

▶ Two-way HCP communications
▶ A digital backbone capable of serving HCPs on an omnichannel basis
▶ Adopting the right digital tools for the job
▶ The leadership capable of driving commercial excellence in an omnichannel context
▶ Support for change across the commercial function and redefining the role of the rep
▶ Blending the digital and the personal to get the best from each

Source: Adapting to the multichannel imperative: A special report, Reuters Events

Omnichannel Best Practices

▶ Customize customer journeys across several channels, with seamless flow from one channel to another
▶ Develop key messages so they appear simultaneously in different channels
▶ Create a single KPI tracking system
▶ Manage content reuse and updates
▶ Integrate content between contiguous channels

Source: Viseven

Successful omnichannel brand building campaigns with HCPs depend on several factors. First, who the target audience is, which includes subgroups most likely to prescribe the company's drug. Second, determine what motivates those HCPs and the type of content they look for through various communication channels. Third, identify the combination of channels they are most likely to use and trust with certain types of disease and product information, and what channels they might be eager to use going forward.

Whether engaging with patients or HCPs, strong brand building involves telling compelling and personalized stories based on the needs and expectations of the audience. To achieve that, companies need to know the type of information their audience is looking for and understand the types of barriers their audience face in their healthcare or prescribing journey. The brand story must not only be compelling but also easy for audiences to consume, with bite-size, actionable pieces of information. And

all stories need to link back to the overarching communication objectives.

A Social Contract

Strong brand building is about making a connection, and that connection is often most effective if the message is connected to a name and a face. Two of the many companies leading the way with building brand awareness on social media are Novartis and Merck. Both create

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Ryan Mason
Chief Strategy Officer
closerlook

Bringing the Power of Relevance to Brands
Biopharma has been successful in managing brands by creating novelty events, such as new products/ indications, mechanisms of action, etc. However, these are no longer enough. We need to create engagement beyond "novelty events," and agencies can play a critical role by producing meaningful content that meets the needs of patients, families, and healthcare professionals. Bringing relevance to brands is one of the most powerful ways to engage customers, change behaviors, foster better outcomes, and drive brand growth.

On-Demand Healthcare
The pandemic accelerated adoption of on-demand healthcare. Patients have learned to adapt to this new environment, and in many cases prefer the convenience and personalized plan digital health offers. Understanding which digital health innovation will endure — wearables, telehealth, remote monitoring — and which will disappear

when the pandemic subsides will be interesting to see as patients continue to dictate the type of care they deserve.

Amy Hutnik
General Manager – Agency, Advisory and Evidence Services
EVERSANA

Create an Immersive Customer Experience
The most successful brands create an immersive experience that meets the needs of their consumers with a personalized touch. Instead of falling for the temptation to "be everywhere," meet consumers where they are to make every engagement count. Manufacturers need to adopt a comprehensive omnichannel model that allows for data-driven planning and real-time analysis of results from marketing campaigns, field activities, and patient services to create a cohesive brand experience.

Data and Persona Development Critical to Success
Data-driven targeting and persona development has never been more crucial for brand success. With a comprehensive omnichannel strategy driven by best-in-class data and analytics, manufacturers can identify key high-value targets and

then leverage personas to develop customized engagement strategies that drive therapy adoption. Deploying dynamic campaigns to an array of stakeholders delivers a seamless brand experience with maximum impact.

Nick Bellomo
Tech Lead
Ogilvy Health

Making the Most of Media Dollars
As ABM/EHR platforms evolve, there are many factors to keep in mind and data to track. Each platform has its own set of strengths when it comes to targeting specific types of HCPs and patients. Working with an agency that is an expert in this field allows you to partner up and make the most of your media dollars.

Analytics Dashboard Provide Marketing Insights
EHR platforms continue to evolve and add capability around targeting and analytics. Some of the most anticipated new features include real-time benefit eligibility checks and patient SMS text messaging. The trend of providing an analytics dashboard will allow marketing professionals the opportunity to adjust

a personal connection by showcasing the individuals behind the brand on social platforms, whether researchers focused on life-saving treatments, team leaders focused on diversity initiatives to drive better innovation, problem solvers, mentors or brand connectors. This person-centric approach enables companies to showcase both the brand message and the overall company culture.

Bristol Myers Squibb has dramatically adapted its promotion model for rep/physician interaction in Japan in the wake of the pandemic. Now, instead of a push model, the company is focusing on key product messages to better understand physicians' prescription behaviors in order to determine the information these HCPs need. The company is striving to respond to physicians' brand informa-

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targeting and messaging with less lag time.

Samantha Glasgow
Creative Director
Purohit Navigation

Creating a Framework for Success
To build a unique, successful brand, we use a six-step framework: establish mission and vision reflecting purpose and future aspirations; define core values; create positioning appealing to the right audience — with a competitive difference; resonate effectively with said audience via defined tonality; establish core messaging for a memorable takeaway and brand recall; and design brand identity for a distinctive look and feel at every touchpoint.

Navigate To Opportunities
To consistently drive success, agencies must generate novel marketing strategies and breakthrough creative campaigns — navigating brands to unexpected opportunities. Strategic planning identifies and maps critical brand issues — internally and externally — to discover those opportunities. Developing a brand platform and persona is vital to establishing an elevated edge that competitively distinguishes the brand. After tactical execution, constant market monitoring is imperative, proactively

prompting campaign updates to maintain reach and effectiveness.

Justin Rubin
Chief Creative Officer
Spectrum Science Communications Inc.

Feel the Brand Love
Journey mapping, positioning, personality, color/logo, media consumption, campaign, while these — and more — are foundational, ultimately we must view brands like people to build real relationships and trust. Every element of the brand experience must make people feel the love. A brand must also be conscious of its bedside manner; while efficacy, safety, and commitment to science are critical, we are really in the security business. People want to feel that their health is protected.

Listening the Key to Learning
Neither agencies nor clients are the intended audiences for the brands they build together. Client leads, strategy, and creative work in lockstep to bring clients into the hearts and souls of their stakeholders. To do so, we must all rise above our collective expertise and be expert listeners. As the Dalai Lama says, "When you talk, you are only repeating what you already know. But if you listen, you may learn something new." Wise words.

tion needs through enhanced web connections, chatbots, and more on-demand content. The objective is to build flexible omnichannel solutions to enhance the engagement with healthcare professionals.

In sharing best practices, experts note that customer-centric brand building requires a rethink of the way new content is created, for example, tagging content, paying attention to metadata, and capturing messages delivered — all based on a vision and common ground for what the company wants to achieve. Having a multichannel team responsible for evolving the digital marketing approach, made up of many different teams bringing cross-functional ideas, ensures accountability.

Another best practice is to have a connection between two key teams — a customer experience group and a technology team, both embedded with brand teams — to drive effective programs. Success requires partnering with agencies to deliver messaging through various channels and to ensure there is unity around how targeting will be handled in the future. Furthermore, it requires bringing in ideas from different industries, such as hospitality and the consumer goods industry.

Pharmaceutical companies are increasingly embracing social media forums and ideas from other industries to build their brand campaigns and effectively reach their audiences in engaging and progressive ways. **PV**

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