

How Cognitive Computing will CHANGE HEALTHCARE MARKETING

Until recently, most marketers didn't really know how to best use Big Data efficiently and effectively. Cognitive computing may provide a solution marketers need and in the process, close the communication gap between pharma, providers, and their patients.

The Rise of Cognitive Computing

The idea of "structured data" — information that is highly organized, linear, and formulaic — has been around since the era of early computing. A basic example of structured data might be a form that requires individuals to type in First Name and Last Name as entry fields. The predictable results can be sorted, counted, reported, and accessed through a dashboard.

Natural language, which is how we communicate with each other, is considered "unstructured." The information we use is more abstract and requires a certain level of knowledge, experience, and insight, and is then subject to greater interpretation.

The idea of creating a type of computing that could potentially decipher and understand unstructured language is also known as artificial intelligence. This type of computing can not only decipher human language patterns (i.e., natural language processing) but also "learn" when given additional input and engagement. Think Hal in Space Odyssey 2001 or Mother in Alien.

Arguably, the integration of technology in

healthcare and pharma has traditionally lagged behind because of the highly regulated environment. Over the past several years, however, there have been several, almost concurrent, advances that have shifted the tide, fueling the movement toward cognitive computing (see chart). These include:

- ▶ **Big Data.** Companies now realize there are insights to be gained from abstract info that can help them make better decisions.
- ▶ **The cloud.** We now have the capability to process and store millions of data points quickly and reasonably.
- ▶ **Social data.** The Internet gave rise to an entirely new set of unstructured data, such as videos, blogs, and reviews. Physicians also share information with each other about clinical articles, breaking medical news, or consults.
- ▶ **Technology and devices.** Our interactions with technology and devices have changed, and most of us now rely on our devices for more than just social interactions.

There are often no black-and-white answers in medicine. The "best" answers can be ambiguous, can conflict with other approaches, and are colored by individual physician experiences and opinions. Cognitive computing could become a valuable decision support system for providers, helping them wade through millions of patient data points, hundreds of published clinical articles, and multiple treatment protocols quickly and easily.

While there are several companies currently focused on building cognitive computing models, IBM (through IBM Watson) has carved out a niche in healthcare. In fact, IBM and Apple have been collaborating with each other and with multiple organizations to explore how cognitive computing can transform how medicine is taught and practiced. IBM is also partnering with Johnson & Johnson and Medtronic to create new offerings that benefit patients. These include:

- ▶ Intelligent coaching systems to help patients with preoperative and postoperative care for surgeries.
- ▶ Health apps to remind patients about doctor appointments, medication use, or refills.
- ▶ Personalized management programs for patients with chronic conditions like diabetes.

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For agencies, the use of cognitive computing will help fulfill client goals of improving patient health through their brands, enabling brand marketers to:

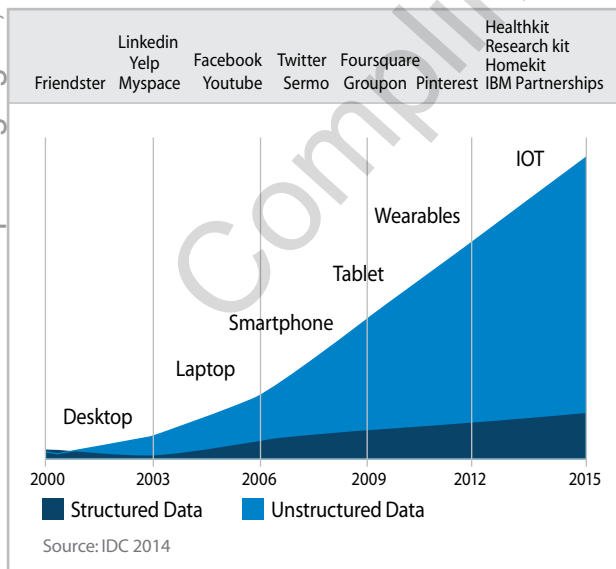
- ▶ Gain deeper insights through "embraceable" data
- ▶ Find and understand patients better
- ▶ Target audiences with hyper-relevant messages
- ▶ Change their approach in real time
- ▶ Predict patient needs more reliably
- ▶ Build more meaningful relationships

But to truly embrace cognitive computing, agencies will need to restructure how they approach data, analytics, tactics, and return on investments. We will need to break down the silos and focus on greater integration among multiple departments, such as account, creative, digital, and data analysts. We'll also see new roles, such as brand technologists, become key members of the brand team.

Cognitive computing will disrupt how marketers approach brands and brand loyalty. While conventional wisdom dictates careful entry, we no longer have the luxury to sit back and wait. To gain the competitive edge, brand marketers should begin now to explore this burgeoning area and to collaborate with agencies on how to best use cognitive computing to build meaningful relationships with providers and their patients. **PV**

AbelsonTaylor is an independent medical advertising agency serving pharmaceutical, biotech, and health-and-wellness companies globally. Since 1981, the agency has remained singularly focused on brands that help people live healthier lives.

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