

# Leveraging Multiple Digital Tools to Connect to Customers

- ▶ Savvy consumers are forcing pharmaceutical marketers to look for different ways to connect and for messaging to resonate.

**A** competitive, highly regulated landscape combined with increasingly digitally savvy customers is forcing the life-sciences industry to be both more expansive and more strategic with its marketing programs.

Most companies have turned to digital platforms in response to customer expectations and to create a distinctive experience. As patients and healthcare professionals grow more knowledgeable when it comes to looking for information, marketers need to make sure they are providing content in an interesting and compelling way.

What that means is pharma companies must adopt a customer-centric approach to their marketing strategies and ensure they reach consumers at every touch point. Patients going through life-changing experiences — cancer, heart disease as well as chronic and rare diseases — need to be empathetic to what the consumer or patient is experiencing. That might be a call to check in with the individual or a text message to see how they are faring on their medication.

Digital marketing is now essential to any successful program. As digital anthropologist and futurist Brian Solis puts it: “Each business is a victim of Digital Darwinism, the evolution of consumer behavior when society and technology evolve faster than the ability to exploit it. Digital Darwinism does not discriminate. Every business is threatened.”

So, what are the must-do trends for today’s pharmaceutical digital marketer?

Digital marketing might best be defined as advertising delivered through channels such as search engines, websites, social media, email, and mobile apps, and require specific new ways of thinking and messaging. What good digital marketing requires is the ability to tailor messages to different audiences by using tools to first determine their expectations and then how best to meet those expectations.

## AI, Chatbots, and Live Chat Features

Artificial intelligence is becoming a growing focus in digital marketing as marketers look to it for a wide range of purposes, such as automated content tagging as well as personalization of content — while being adherent to HIPAA compliance. AI can help marketers to understand and analyze customer behavior and leverage data from various platforms to better understand ways in which consumers search for products and services.

Chatbots are rising to the fore as a way to engage with patients again with an understanding that patient privacy is paramount. One way these might be used is to extend the beyond-the-pill experience for patients, for example, by offering an insurance help hotline using chatbots and helping patients sign up for patient assistance programs. They might also be used for refill reminders, providing labeling information, and even answering general health questions or putting patients in touch with healthcare professionals.

As valuable as chatbots are, it’s equally important that pharma marketers retain that interpersonal contact. Conversational marketing is about having someone provide answers to a consumer or patient’s questions, on their terms, to build relationships.

True conversational marketing is managed at an omnichannel level, offering support through traditional means such as email, phone, or even direct mail as well as website live chat, messenger apps on social media platforms and chatbots.

One company that has been using social media to connect and chat with consumers is GSK, which has developed a social media and listening strategy to engage with followers and offer help to anyone approaching the company through different social platforms.

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## Visual Matters

Video marketing is gaining traction simply because of the huge importance of video in all media. For example, 82% of all internet traffic is generated by video, about 100 million hours of video are watched on Facebook every day, and more than 500 hours of videos are uploaded to YouTube every minute. Again, omnichannel is key to a good video marketing strategy with an emphasis on mobile given that so many people connect via smartphones today. Pharma video marketing is also an opportunity to address harmful health messages and misleading information with clear, transparent, and authoritative messages.

The value of video marketing for pharmaceutical companies doesn’t just lie in promoting brands and services but even more so in providing disease-specific information to high-

**EXECUTIVE VIEWPOINTS****Arun Divakaruni, Ph.D.**  
CEO  
Avant Healthcare**Orchestrating an Integrated Experience**

HCPs want content that is new and timely, authentic and trustworthy, relevant to them and their practice, and validated by peers. There are many different platforms out there, and it's not necessarily the case that one is more important than the other. The key is orchestrating an integrated experience across those platforms for the user as they interact with your information — whether branded or unbranded — about the medicine, device, or intervention.

**HCP Digital Opinion Leaders**

Education is delivered by HCP digital opinion leaders (DOLs). We've long known that HCPs prefer learning from their peers. So, our approach to traditional opinion leader engagement planning now incorporates DOLs — masters of scientific communication in the digital space and with regional or national followings on social media. This following translates into real opportunities for the pharma industry to expand its reach and share valuable information in local and national healthcare communities.

light their key expertise. By way of example, Gilead Sciences developed an HIV video that tells the story of the disease from the early days to the development of lifesaving treatments and the role Gilead scientists have played in this journey, and what they are continuing to do to cure the disease. Experts say great

**Rommel Fernandez**  
Chief Analytics Officer  
Fingerprint**Digitization Can Lead to Greater Personalization**

A digital marketing strategy rooted in the right combination of data and execution allows pharma to reach audiences in a more strategic and personalized way, even when they cannot be in person. Combining technology, such as AI and machine learning, with human expertise and an integrated commercialization plan will lead to the best chance of meeting the key objectives.

**Martha Maranzani**  
Engagement Strategy  
Fingerprint**KPIs Key to Digital Success**

There are many critical elements of a successful digital campaign — audience insights, proper channel selection, platform-specific tactics, and relevant messages — that will ensure you reach the right audience with the right message at the right time. But the most imperative ingredients to any digital campaign are clear key performance indicators (KPIs)

pharma marketing videos build strong brands and strategy and incorporate different formats, including explainer videos, image films, and product videos. These all should have patients front and center with explanations of what the drug does and the mode of action, or having patient testimonials or real-life patient stories.

and a framework for measurement. Establishing core objectives, desired outcomes, and tactical-level KPIs will allow you to define and measure the success of your campaign and its impact on your overarching business goals.

**Katie Zubrow**  
Associate Director,  
Strategy  
Ogilvy Health**The Need for a Unified Team**

Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither are successful digital campaigns; they need: preparation, flexibility, and teamwork. Teams need enough lead time to ensure the campaign is firing on all cylinders. If something goes wrong, either with the campaign or in the outside world, teams must have a plan in place and flexibility to pivot to ensure campaign performance isn't impacted by the unpredictable. And all of this can happen when agency and client are one, unified team.

**Trend Tracking**

Virtual events are the biggest trend today. The pandemic forced brands to pivot their strategies because there was no other option. Now that many of the restrictions brands faced when it came to in-person events have lifted, brands haven't been quick to go back to the ▶

According to marketing agency statistics, pharmaceutical brands increase recognition by 139% when using videos as part of a marketing program.

Virtual and augmented reality is another exciting field for pharmaceutical marketers because it encourages participation and in so

## EXECUTIVE VIEWPOINTS

ways of showcasing that they previously had relied on so heavily. Virtual events provide an opportunity for brands to speak to larger audiences at times and places that are more convenient for them.



**Patrick Richard**  
Executive VP,  
Engagement Strategy  
Spectrum Science

**A Powerful Relationship**

Digital marketing firms' continuous dedication to technology trends makes agency partners extremely adept at leveraging a vast array of platforms. When combined with pharmaceutical marketing teams' deep understanding of their therapy areas, the synergy helps create communications with real impact for healthcare professionals, patients, and caregivers. If either partner is weak, it can lead to a difficult-to-repair breakdown in the audience experience. However, the

right combination can be extremely powerful.

**Creating a Digital Journey**

We are hearing about artificial intelligence (AI) and chatbots consistently but, in five years, I believe these areas will not only continue to work in unison, but will also have significantly expanded to allow for continuous and omnipresent dialogue at the individual level. This growth will take digital marketing from linear interactivity to understanding human behavior based on 360-degree life inputs. The implications of this shift go far beyond promotional messaging, adding tangible value to decision-making at every point along an individual's digital journey.



**Michelle Keefe**  
President, Commercial  
Solutions  
Syneos Health

**Strength is in the Numbers**

Without a dedicated digital marketing

strategy, companies will miss the lessons of COVID-19. The teams you build need skills and analytic tools to understand the physicians' professional networks and the patient populations they treat. It's not just about claims data and prescribing volume. You'll need models that quantify the strength and reach of each HCP's influence. And you'll need to apply differential resourcing to accounts and institutions based on the degree of centralized decision-making and control over prescribing behavior.

**Digital: A Relationship Extender**

Everything we've learned throughout the pandemic indicates that digital is a relationship extender, not a replacement; multiple channels drive more success and relationships are the great accelerator of growth. That said, you definitely want to take advantage of innovations in technology and data/behavioral science. These allow you to cost-effectively identify and engage with qualified HCPs, down to the individual level, and synchronize the content that HCPs receive digitally, in real time.

doing, builds customer engagement. Pfizer has used AR to create a guide that answers questions about an off-the-shelf product, ThermaCare, at the point of purchase. The value of augmented reality lies in its ability to provide consumers with answers to their questions. It's success will depend on how well it targets the requirements of a specific audience and how meaningful the content is.

**Data and Analytics**

In the age of big data and analytics, knowing when and how to target a campaign is not only possible but also of paramount impor-

tance for successful pharmaceutical marketing. Predictive analytics give companies better ways to meet the needs and expectations of consumers and healthcare providers. The insights allow marketers to extrapolate data and make predictions. For example, companies might use the data to better position a product for the market, based on safety and efficacy information. They can also use information to determine how they are doing against the competition and even to determine trends in the marketplace. Predictive analytics enable pharmaceutical marketers to be more proactive in terms of assessing which campaigns are most likely to succeed and then tailoring them to suit the environment for best performance.

Companies are also making use of patient-level insights to help healthcare practitioners (HCP) with their decision-making and provide them with personalized and relevant content through HCP-preferred communication channels. Targeted messaging includes information on drug efficacy, adherence, and outcomes. Importantly, big data is enabling pharma marketers to plan and execute their campaigns at scale across global markets.

The use of AI-enabled capabilities, video or AR engagement, and data analytics are all helping marketers to improve and personalize their promotional programs, while better serving their customers — both the patient and the HCPs. **PV**





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