AI-Driven Marketing

We have all seen those digital banners that are somehow related to what we're looking at online and appear to follow us wherever we are. Don't worry, there is nothing ominous at play and the government is not listening to our conversations through our devices. But this is not completely coincidental either. Those "timely" and relevant ads are part of a larger marketing trend that has become commonplace among our traditional B2B and B2C marketing counterparts. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to identify, message, and convert customers based on their real-life behaviors has provided consumer marketers the ability to broaden campaign reach and increase efficiencies while continuing to provide relevant and timely content. As pharmaceutical marketers, we need to go beyond just saying we recognize AI as an important trend. Marketers need to embrace AI when developing digital marketing strategies. Otherwise, we run the risk of being behind yet another marketing innovation.

Marketing Smarter

AI and machine learning executed through tactics such as account/behavioral-based marketing (ABM) have been mainstays in B2B marketing for decades. In the late 1990s, consumer brands started using early concepts of AI to help deliver more personalized experiences to a customer base. This was normally executed through predetermined media placements designed to provide a specific customer base with relevant ads. Relevance and ad placements were based on a set of assumptions that would try to determine which content would cause a reaction in the customer. This is still a common practice with the development of customer personas. Although highly successful, the driving strategy was still heavily based on assumptions and guesswork. As technology has advanced over the years, so has our ability to market smarter. Broad media placements have given way to more targeted buys in which marketers focus on a physical location (geotargeting), a more specific type of customer base (based on sales data), or content

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(endemic vs nonendemic sites). Imagine if you could now identify, execute, and refine a marketing campaign in real time and based on real-life customer behaviors. As we enter a new frontier, the advancements in AI and machine learning provide marketers with the capacity to do just those things. Not only can marketers message to a known customer base on known sites, but AI now allows marketers to learn from customers' behaviors and send messages to them based on seeing precisely where they are online and what content they are consuming. All in real time. The days of waiting weeks, if not months, to review, identify, and retarget are gone. AI and machine learning take the guesswork and time lag out of our marketing. The more a customer engages, the more AI learns, and the more we can adjust.

Real-Time, Real-Life Insights

So what does this mean for pharmaceutical marketers? In short, a lot. AI provides us with access to information that we historically have not had and the aptitude to act in real time. Marketers can use a brand's budget to be more precise and efficient with campaigns. By serving up ads based on what a customer base shows they like, a "quality over quantity"

approach can be implemented. Fewer impressions to a customer base that shows interest in a brand lead to higher, more quality engagements. The data captured during these engagements allow the brand to make decisions based on real-life insights into where physicians are engaging with content and — more importantly — what type of content they are more likely to engage with. This is invaluable as brands continue to fight for a voice in a very crowded marketplace.

On a broader scale, the data from AI-driven campaigns can be shared and implemented across the entire digital ecosystem. Integration with existing marketing automation and salesforce automation systems (SFAs) is commonplace in the B2B space. Providing a field force representative with behavioral data will allow them to cater every call to the specific needs and interests of the HCP. This will be invaluable as well when we start to navigate a post–COVID-19 world.

Historically, the pharmaceutical industry has been very meticulous and careful when implementing new strategies, especially when it comes to technology. There is usually a long phase of testing and vetting prior to a large-scale acceptance. Getting brand leads, regulatory, and IT comfortable with the concept of AI and machine learning early on is of utmost importance. Once the team has accepted the idea of AI-driven marketing, the implementation is easy.

As the world of pharmaceutical marketing tries to keep up, it is imperative for brand teams to embrace technology as early as possible. Reactionary implementation generally leads to less than optimal campaigns and less than optimal HCP experiences. Since an HCP's first impression with a brand could be the difference between an Rx and a competitor, using AI to help create a personal and relevant experience is the way to go. **(PV)**