

# Trending 2018: Brand Engagement

Pharma needs to shape its brand engagement around the rise in health tech and tech-empowered patients for a successful brand experience.

As patients start to manage their health through digital devices, not only does the pharma industry need to be more patient-centric, but the brand story must focus on the patient and his or her journey to create true brand engagement.

According to a report from DRG Digital, as the pharmaceutical industry shifts its commercial model from volume to value, brands must use patient experience as the driver of strategic initiatives, since better experiences lead to higher health engagement and, ultimately, better health outcomes.

Pharma companies with genuine patient-centric approaches must look beyond traditional, antiquated models of understanding patient behavior in order to arrive at a more holistic view of patients' experiences with their condition; this new understanding will, in turn, enable pharma companies to surface ways to message patients beyond the point of care.

For example, Twitter recently reported that GSK's paid Twitter campaign for Excedrin about headaches and the 2016 political debates is one of its case study success stories. Although an OTC, the brand certainly hit a home run with its campaign. According to the write up, using social media to connect with consumers via relevant happenings such as the election helped revive the Excedrin brand after its recall in 2012.

At the October PProvoke17 Global Public Relations Summit, speaker Judy Berei, Excedrin's global brand lead and agency transformation global lead, discussed the campaign's success. Excedrin tied in the brand to the 2016 presidential debates with the premise that no matter which side of the election someone was on, the debates would give him or her a head-

ache. Ms. Berei said by inserting the brand into the conversation in a way that made a lot of sense created "great buzz results."

In other channels, Excedrin also drew in consumers by using a VR migraine simulator to create awareness on what it's like to have a migraine. As a result of the success from these efforts, the company said it now uses 60% of its ad spend on digital and social, leveraging platforms to tell emotional stories about living with migraines, when previously 100% of the spend had gone to TV. (For more details about the campaign, see sidebar).

In a tweet coming out of the #PProvoke17 conference, Ms. Berei was quoted as saying: "We couldn't have done the #DebateHeadache campaign if we didn't know who we were as a brand."

Being able to identify the brand, and to create this type of brand engagement by using social media, will help brands gain loyal consumers who will like, share, comment on, and contribute to a brand's narrative, as illustrated in the Excedrin example.

In the coming years, utilizing technology to connect with patients and putting the patient in the center of the message will be crucial for brand success.

"Once upon a time, pharma brand messaging was based almost entirely on the resolution of symptoms, how well a drug could solve a specific clinical problem," says Steve Ham-

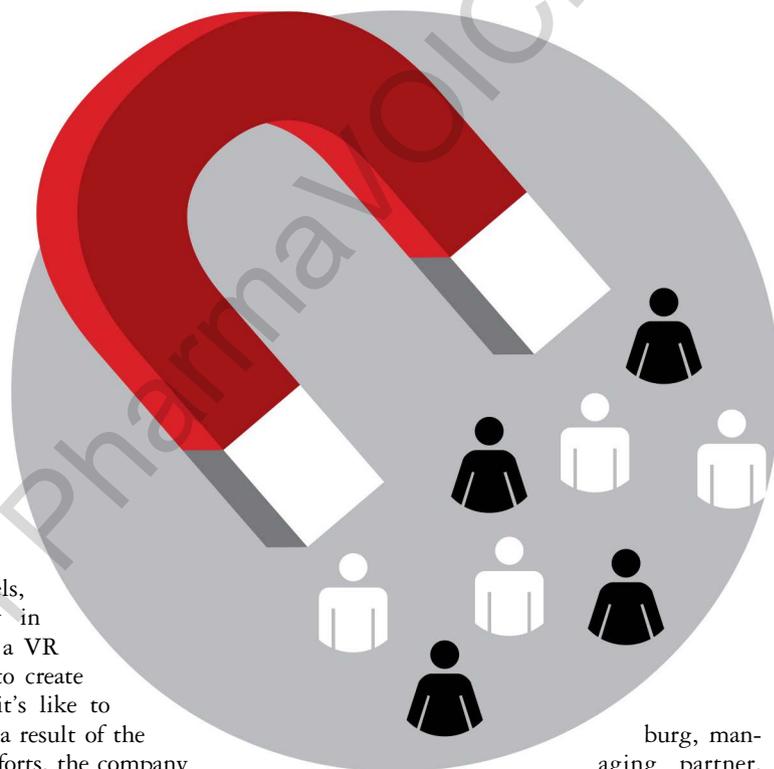
burg, managing partner, chief creative officer,

Calcium. "For brands to succeed today, they must seek to become more deeply embedded in the broader fabric of a patient's life."

Doing that necessitates a whole new approach to messaging, one that looks at the entire patient rather than just the clinical problem he or she may be facing.

Brands in the multiple sclerosis space, for example, have done a particularly effective job with this; they've created customer relationships that extend well beyond the traditional sphere of therapeutic impact, Mr. Hamburg says.

"Diseases like MS affect the whole person — not to mention caregivers and family — and the smart marketers in that space have been crafting their communications to touch on every part of that whole," he says. "Patients expect us to address their entire experience now, so we can no longer limit ourselves to the strictly clinical; we have to view the whole patient and his or her whole experience, and tailor our strategies and our campaigns accordingly."



Brand engagement is basically patient engagement, which means exploring the patient's mindset, environment, current journey, and evolving needs.

**DEBORAH LOTTERMAN**  
precisioneffect



Perhaps the best place to start is to reframe brand engagement as patient engagement, says Deborah Lotterman, chief creative officer, precisioneffect. This forces marketers to prioritize a deep and continuous exploration of the patient's mindset, environment, current journey, and evolving needs.

"Marketers need to understand fully why patients make the choices they do today and how the brand can be a meaningful, active character in the patient's narrative," she says.

Kevin Dunn, VP, strategy and client engagement, life sciences, at LevLane, agrees noting that over the past couple of years the industry has been abuzz about going beyond the pill and supplying HCPs and patients with more than just a medication, and that there was a need for a suite of clinical and financial tools.

"Now it's patient experience," he says. "But it's the same thought, and one we haven't translated into action as well as we should have. We have to lower the obstacles that stand between patients and optimal therapy."

"A big obstacle, and one that we don't always acknowledge, is the patients themselves," Mr. Dunn continues. "People don't want to be sick, they don't want to be reminded that they're sick, and they don't want to be treated like an illness or a constellation of symptoms. So patients aren't going to interact with our brands the way they do with Ford or Coca-Cola. People want new trucks. They don't want asthma medicine or insulin; these things are part of life, but not something they look forward to. So if we want to engage patients, we have to do a better job of getting into their



Strong relationships with health consumers built through brand engagement have the potential to significantly impact business for biopharmaceutical and healthcare companies.

**CHERYL LUBBERT**  
Health Perspectives Group

heads. What would make their lives easier? How can we help lighten their load? Start with these questions and answers and work from there to generate a patient experience that is meaningful and drives outcomes."

Ms. Lotterman believes many pharma marketers use regulatory requirements as an excuse for continuing to promote products using traditional tactics, instead of investing in a compliant disease awareness and social action conversation that could establish meaningful and sustainable relationships with patients.

### Changing Metrics to Evaluate Brand Engagement

Brand engagement can be defined by the ability of the campaign to drive desired changes in patient behavior. The quality of a patient-centric brand campaign can thus be measured by:

- ▶ Interaction Rate – how well a campaign is able to drive patient interactions (e.g., click rate)
- ▶ Perception Impact – measurement of the ability of a campaign to impact customer perceptions of a brand or therapy (e.g., social listening to identify negative/positive sentiment changes)
- ▶ Behavior Changes – effectiveness of a campaign to promote changes in behavior (e.g., script lift, claims data); ultimately greater adherence with a prescribed regimen or drug therapy

Source: Outcome Health

To Ms. Lotterman's point, digital campaigns have focused mostly on promoting disease awareness or promoting patient assistance solutions and not on telling the brand story. To overcome this challenge, brands will need to focus on three key elements, says Roger

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## How Brands Stack up

According to a social media engagement analysis of 15 pharma brands conducted earlier this year by Unmetric, a social media marketing research firm, the following rankings for pharma were determined:

- AbbVie has the highest engagement score on Twitter
- Bayer has the largest number of Facebook fans
- Novartis leads on the follower front on Twitter and Instagram
- Pfizer has the biggest audience base on LinkedIn
- Merck has the highest growth rate of 56% on Facebook
- Allergan was the brand to grow fastest on Twitter, at a rate of 28%
- Lilly replied to the largest percentage of mentions
- AstraZeneca replied the fastest to mentions

Sawhney, senior VP of industry strategy at Outcome Health.

“Digital marketing strategies have demonstrated numerous advantages in engaging the patient/caregiver audience, however, digital approaches still struggle with brand activation,” he says.

Marketers must first focus on the timing of the messages. There are several points along the patient care journey that offer attractive opportunities for brand engagement, with point of care being a particularly strategic time as the patient is more likely to engage with campaigns and the bulk of crucial care decisions occur at this time.

The second element is targeted messaging: “Educating the patients on their specific disease area and relevant therapeutic options not only increases likelihood of engagement, but also enables the patient to become more proactive in their own care,” Mr. Sawhney says.

And third, in order to build solid relationships, the engagement will have to be meaningful. Empowering the patient with tools that can intertwine into the patient-HCP dialogue such as education on treatment options, copay cards, and patient assistance programs allows for the possibility of new levels of brand engagement and the ability for a patient to make the best healthcare choice for themselves.

Brand teams need to work in collaboration with healthcare providers, family members, and patient advocacy organizations to ensure patients have the information and support they need at every key touch point.

**JOE DEPINTO**  
Cardinal Health  
Specialty Solutions

Digital social platforms and interactive tools enable brand engagement campaigns through their continuous, immersive capability. As consumers turn to more on-demand media, they are free to engage with a brand — or not — at will, on their own terms. Brand engagement is no longer limited to the essentially passive act of watching a TV spot or opening a magazine.

“With interactive tools, we no longer have to be intrusive, the way a TV spot or a magazine ad might be — interactive is largely voluntary,” Mr. Hamburg says. “The flip side is that now we have to create incentives for our audiences to engage, and we need to actively keep them engaged.”

Engaging consumers with the brand will require being resonant with some need or

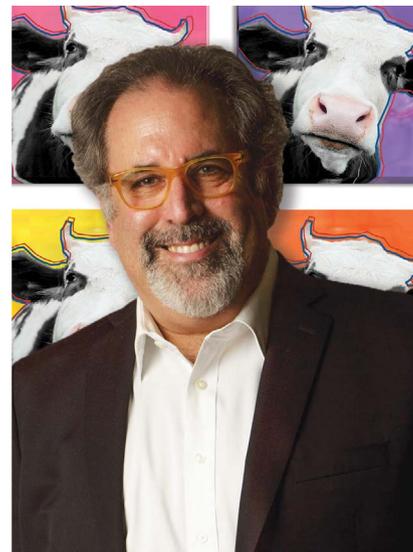
Patients can't have a relationship with a brand if they don't know its name, and four out of 10 Americans don't know the name of the company that makes their prescription drug.

**KYM WHITE**  
Edelman



want, and digging down past the basic demographics to more granular attitudes about content consumption, all of which can be targeted and measured now. Brands must keep the engagement going by constantly offering new content, replenishing and refreshing, and testing and responding to the impact of that new content.

“The key elements on which brands will need to focus in the future are incentivizing engagement with the right message in the right place and time, and then maintaining engagement on an ongoing basis — and every part of both of those processes must be based on as close and responsive a view of the indi-



Brand engagement today requires a whole new approach to messaging, one that looks at the entire patient rather than just the clinical problem he or she may be facing.

**STEVE HAMBURG**  
Calcium



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vidual consumer as possible,” Mr. Hamburg says.

The most effective way to build long-term loyalty and make a genuine connection is by structuring conversations through the lens of the patient and infusing that perspective into clinical and commercial initiatives early and often.

“Rather than assuming their needs, marketers need to gather experiences and input from patients directly in order to create products and programs that are customized to their needs,” says Cheryl Lubbert, CEO, Health Perspectives Group. “It’s clear that strong relationships with health consumers have the potential to significantly impact business for biopharmaceutical and health-care companies.”

A thorough understanding of the patient journey and leverage points within that journey are critical to the success of many specialty brands, says Joe DePinto, president, Cardinal Health Specialty Solutions. By using qualitative and quantitative market research and external data sources, brand teams will need to identify the barriers facing patients in their treatment journey — whether they be symptom management, adherence, financial needs, or psychosocial support — and have interventional programs in place to help patients manage these challenges.

Savvy brand teams will increasingly recognize that when the patient experience is optimized, so is the brand’s position in the market.

“Key to this is having access to actionable patient data, which enables the team to intervene with the right support at the right time,” Mr. DePinto says. “Brand teams will also need to work in collaboration with healthcare providers, family members and caregivers, and even patient advocacy organizations to ensure patients have the information and support they need at every key touch point.”

Educating the patient on their specific disease area and relevant therapeutic options not only increases the likelihood of engagement, but also enables the patient to become more proactive in his or her own care.

**ROGER SAWHNEY**  
Outcome Health

There are two major drivers that are increasing the importance of patient experience in terms of strategic initiatives and marketing design, according to Kym White, global sector chair, health, at Edelman.

The first is increased responsibility born by patient trends in health plan design; the second is technology that empowers patients to track, monitor, and measure their health.

“With higher deductible plans, increased co-payments, incentives for prevention, and the drive for patients to become smarter buyers of healthcare, the experience they have will increasingly matter,” Ms. White says. Whether those first experiences with new products or delivery models, such as telemedicine or retail clinics, are positive and perceived to be of value will have tremendous influence on whether new products and services succeed in gaining repeat customers.

Technology will also drive patient experience — with apps, support services, and medical grade wearables under the same pressure to prove their ease and utility to ultimately change behavior and be more than a soon-broken New Year’s resolution.

“Patients will increasingly vote with their pocket books as well as their digital bandwidth, and their experience will determine what sticks,” Ms. White says. “That same patient experience must be positive as companies increasingly compete for patients to fill clinical trials in categories like oncology, with ease of participation and a good experience increas-

ingly a driver of the speed at which a trial can enroll and reach completion.”

Patient-centricity has become such an important focus in many pharma companies that they have created and hired patient officers and established patient value teams to focus solely on how to provide solutions to the unmet needs of patients. These roles will further impact how the organization interacts with patients and, drilling down, how each brand can engage with them.

“These individuals could be highly influential in designing engagement strategies if their objectives are clear and differentiated from those of traditional marketers,” Ms. Lotterman says. “If they truly bring the voice of the patient into internal decision-making, the results could be transformational.”

### Peanut-free Baseball Drives Home Brand Message

This summer, Minor League Baseball (MiLB) and AUVI-Q (epinephrine injection, USP) collaborated to bring fans that suffer from peanut allergies the chance to enjoy America’s national pastime with less concern.

The two groups have a multi-year agreement, making AUVI-Q the Official Epinephrine Auto-Injector (EAI) of Minor League Baseball, where a number of MiLB teams across the country hosted Peanut-Free Game Days this season and more are planned for next season. AUVI-Q is an FDA-approved prescription medicine used to treat life-threatening allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis, in people who are at risk for or have a history of serious allergic reactions. It is manufactured by Kaleo.

To make baseball games safer to sufferers of peanut allergies, the peanut-free games at MiLB ballparks will feature no in-park sales of peanuts or products containing peanut ingredients. The games throughout the partnership will also include informational displays and in-park messaging.

“This kind of commitment to driving the mission of the brand vs. promoting the message of the month is how pharma brands will gain lifetime loyalty,” says Deborah Lotterman, chief creative officer, precisioneffect. Kaléo is a precisioneffect client.





### GSK Uses Twitter for Brand Engagement Success

@Excedrin had done research that showed how most people thought that avoiding headaches was impossible during the election. They wanted to use this to promote the brand of its headache-relieving product at a time when most were striving to avoid getting sucked into the contentious election news cycle. By using humor, cartoon graphics, and deft copywriting to associate its product with the event in an unusual way, @Excedrin created a Promoted Trend campaign that focused on one thing common across all political beliefs: political debates can give you a headache. The #DebateHeadache campaign played to the idea that, by the time this debate occurred, even the most enthusiastic political junkies were in need of some assistance.

#DebateHeadache was an unqualified success, producing huge increases in brand awareness for @Excedrin and a considerable amount of positive response. In the middle of a contentious political campaign filled with vitriol, it acknowledged the realities of modern

politics without becoming part of them. In addition to performing well for the brand, the campaign was acknowledged by many as an excellent example of how a brand can use a controversial event for marketing without becoming part of the problems associated with it. #DebateHeadache “won the debate before it even started,” according to CNN.

“As the head pain expert, Excedrin is committed to providing relief and finding solutions for all headaches — both real and metaphorical,” says Scott Yacovino, senior brand manager, US Pain Category, GSK Consumer Healthcare. “Through social listening and our own proprietary research, we uncovered that the 2016 presidential election has caused more headaches than any other, and this served as the basis for our #DebateHeadache program, which aimed to draw nonpartisan attention to the headaches caused by American politics.”

According to AdWeek reports in 2016, after the first #DebateHeadache tweet appeared, Excedrin benefited from 46,000 Twitter mentions, representing a 3,100% increase compared with the prior day.

Sources: Aggregated from Twitter, AdWeek, PRDaily



The strategic process for shaping initiatives isn't terribly complicated. It's all about understanding the key inflection points in a patient's journey to successful treatment.

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AbelsonTaylor  
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concept of patient-centricity, and to embrace the whole patient journey as opposed to just the clinical one, Mr. Hamburg says.

“We need people who are focused on the whole patient, who will help us as marketers define and address a broader range of needs than just the clinical,” he says. “End value to the patient needs to be at the center of all our marketing decisions, and so having someone in the room for whom that is the first priority will always be helpful. Marketing that focuses on the brand's functional/clinical story is still vital and relevant; but it's also time for us to capture other voices.”

### New Metrics for Brand Relationship Campaigns

Brand engagement is in itself difficult to quantify, and to many the term has different meanings. However, digital is enabling a bit more structure around the term, with its ability to track and monitor interactions.

“The traditional metrics — prescriptions and sales — aren't going away any time soon; they will still matter,” Mr. Hamburg says. “But quality and degree of engagement as quantified in the digital realm will enable us to define success in a way that moves beyond prescriptions and sales, because prescriptions



We have to lower the obstacles that stand between patients and optimal therapy.

**KEVIN DUNN**  
LevLane  
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“The patient experience is already transforming the way biopharmaceutical companies work,” Ms. Lubbert says.

Not only are companies restructuring with C-suite roles to manage patient engagement,

they are also incorporating patient input that directly impacts the drug development process, from clinical trial design to key attributes of new therapeutics.

These new roles are necessary to further the

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By Kate Perry, MSc, PsychD  
Director, Behavioral Science



## Leveraging Behavioral Economics to Guide Healthy Decision-Making

People living with long-term health conditions make many decisions about their health, often on a daily basis, including whether to adhere to prescribed treatments. What insights from the world of psychology can help us create effective programs that guide healthy decision-making around adherence?

One important insight is a fundamental tenet from the discipline of behavioral economics: *Decision-making behavior isn't necessarily rational.*

**Behavioral economics** applies psychology insights to understand how people make real-life decisions. Although the term may imply a connection to finance, it's not exclusively about how we spend our money. While that is one decision, behavioral economics can be applied to nearly any decision in our lives. This includes patient decisions relating to health behaviors, such as the choice to take treatment as prescribed.

A key assumption within behavioral economics is that individuals are inherently irrational, with a tendency towards making common errors when it comes to decision-making.

### What does this mean for patient health behavior?

Once we understand this concept, we can create strategies for messages, or message environments, that reduce the likelihood of these errors occurring. Here are two examples of how errors in decision-making can be mitigated in a patient support program:

- ▶ **Temporal discounting** - this phenomenon refers to a person's tendency to place more value on immediate gains versus longer-term benefits, sometimes described in the context of impulsivity or the desire for instant gratification.
  - Rather than focusing solely on longer-term benefits of medication, pharma can consider supporting patients to set shorter-term goals and to associate regular medication taking with small steps towards meeting these goals.
- ▶ **Choice overload** - this term describes the phenomenon whereby individuals become overwhelmed by too many choices and may lead to decision deferral or avoidance.
  - Support programs can limit choices in patient communication tools to 3 or 4 options, or offer a default option.

### Involve Experts

As with many new trends, the use of behavioral economics is occasionally criticized as coercive or manipulative. Clearly, it's important to have trained psychology experts lead the application of these insights for patient support materials. It's also important to apply these principles with sensitivity and within a framework of patient-centricity, respecting autonomous choice and offering some level of transparency so patients have an awareness of the strategies being employed.

Learn more about our use of behavioral economics in patient support programs at [www.atlantishealthcare.com](http://www.atlantishealthcare.com). [@AtlantisHlthUS](https://twitter.com/AtlantisHlthUS)

and sales are an outcome of relationship building, and engagement is the critical factor in relationship building."

Mr. Hamburg says how well brands speak to customers and achieve relevance in their lives will be the new metric.

"The answer to that question is our most important new metric, and that metric is getting more measurable every day, from the data we are able to collect on the length and degree of customer interactions with our content," he says. "It's not just hits or visits; it's the duration of time interacting with the brand, and the impact our content has on the customer."

Marketers should be seeking to maximize both the frequency and length of brand interactions, because those interactions are the reflection of a relationship, and that relationship is the underlying structure that allows a sale — allows many sales, over and over again — to happen.

Ms. Lotterman agrees that traditional measures still work for the short term, but in the future, metrics will go way beyond quantitative measures.

Companies such as Meltwater and RadiumOne are designed to uncover more robust qualitative insights, illuminating social — and dark social — sharing behavior, as well as identifying user experience nuances that aren't normally captured through traditional reporting suites, she says.

"Those brands that are serious about leveraging patient engagement will invest in ongoing qualitative assessment of the brand's equity, behavior, and activities," Ms. Lotterman says. "Some will even develop smart communities to offer continuous learning."

The sentiment on social media will become more important as the canary in the coal mine, signaling where and when brands are finding a foothold in patient lives. Down the road, the sentiment will eventually influence a rise in sales. But it will take each individual brand time and testing to understand just where that horizon lies.

Jay Carter, senior VP, director of business development, AbelsonTaylor, believes that whether we are talking about traditional marketing tactics or new technology-based outreach mechanisms that the focus was always upon building relationships.

"The technology may not have been digital, but broadcast TV promotion with a call to action to join a CRM program in 1999 was still all about developing a relationship with a potential customer," he says. "To do that, you had to provide value, which was usually information and potentially a co-pay card.

"Today, we can accelerate the same relationship and speed the patient's move to a useful therapy using technology, but the transactions are the same," he continues. "We create awareness, aid in brand evaluation, reduce the barriers to trial, and encourage adherence and brand utilization."

Mr. Carter says the key variable today is the cost to reach the customer — typically broadcast remains the lowest cost option for broad awareness and engagement in disease states where the patient is 55 or older, while digital is becoming more and more cost-effective for pure awareness for diseases that affect younger groups.

"The strategic process for shaping initiatives isn't terribly complicated," he adds. "It's all about understanding the key inflection points in a patient's journey to successful treatment. We evaluate those events, we track them, we figure out the decision points where our best chance of successfully intervening is, and then we cost out those points and decide which to invest in. I followed the same process in middle school: I decided which young lady I wanted to take to the dance, I found out things that were important to her, I found out how she made decisions, and found the perfect time to ask her." PV