

Digital Patient-Centric Communications:

Learning to listen and listening to learn are critical to a successful social networking marketing plan.

W

hile the buzzword in marketing these days is patient-centric, the industry still struggles with shifting its focus from products to consumers. Years of pushing product messaging out into the universe has conditioned the industry to turn a deaf ear to customers' needs. Pharma companies that learn to listen to their customers and are able to understand patients' behaviors will have the knowledge necessary to tap into the power of new marketing techniques and turn their direct-to-consumer communications into digital-to-consumer messaging. By identifying patients' needs and providing a solution, companies can begin to build a valuable relationship with consumers that will eventually lead to a greater market share.

Listen, Understand, Respond: A Three-Step Campaign

The No. 1 key to success in the digital age starts with listening, our experts say. To build trust and loyalty from using social networking tools, marketers need to listen to what the consumers are saying, learn what they want and need and then provide a solution.

"One of the biggest risks is to be in the middle of a digital discussion where everyone is chatting intensely about how to manage patients' health condition, and instead of providing information to the conversation, the brand starts repeating ad copy," says Marc Monseau, founder and principal, MDM Communications, and former director, corporate communication, and social media at Johnson & Johnson. "There needs to be a process in place so that when a brand does get the opportunity to add to the chatter, it brings something of value to the table."

BY THE NUMBERS:

113 NON-BRAND CONTROLLED
PATIENT COMMUNITIES
35 BRAND-SPONSORED PATIENT
COMMUNITIES

Source: Dose of Digital Pharma and Healthcare Social Media Wiki via @jonmrch

This requires more than just creative copy, he adds.

"It requires being present, being responsive, and providing useful content, which comes from a deep understanding of the customers' needs and where the gaps in meeting those needs exist," Mr. Monseau says.

While other industries have already learned these lessons and are using this to their advantage, the pharmaceutical industry has been particularly slow in participating in two-way communications.

"I think the industry still believes that marketing is about pushing communications out and not having conversations with customers," says Liz Cermak, executive VP and chief commercial officer, Pozen Inc. "When a company uses social media tools to push information out and then people start talking back, it retreats under the premise that there is too much liability, but there is plenty of proof that social media can work. Most companies still want to control social media, but that train has already left the station, and our industry is the caboose."

Pharma companies should start first with unbranded conversations, Ms. Cermak suggests, since this is what research shows consumers are interested in most, and unbranded messaging is less risky in terms of FDA regulations.



"We use the insights gained from listening to our customers to understand something real about them."

YOLANDA JOHNSON-MOTON / Lilly

"A conversation about the brand would most likely be irrelevant for a company's first communication with customers," she says. "Patients are more interested in learning about the disease and receiving a broader range of information about treatment. There has been some programming that is very nonbrand specific by companies that are getting their toe in water and this is actually much more meaningful to customers."

Last year, Pozen created an advisory board of digital thought leaders from both in and outside of the industry to assist in preparing a digital strategy for the company's lead pipeline product, PA32540, which is being investigated for the secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease in patients at risk for developing aspirin-associated gastric ulcers. (For more information on Pozen's plan, the advisory board, and what other companies are doing in

LISTEN AND LEARN



“Brands need to put patients first and actively help them by substantially contributing to the conversation.”

CASEY FERRELL / Cutting Edge Information

terms of digital programs, see our related articles in our bonus digital edition.)

According to Casey Ferrell, research analyst, Cutting Edge Information, social media digital platforms offer the industry new touch points beyond the doctor's office, and the industry can use them to create responsive, positive, human interactions.

“Just as in real-world relationship building, over time such interactions serve to build trust,” Mr. Ferrell says.

The way to build trust and brand loyalty is by demonstrating to consumers that marketers — and by extension the brand — understand them and are trying to anticipate their needs; that patients are valued; and that they are genuinely interested in improving their health.

“The basic premise here is fairly simple: acknowledge that you, as a brand marketer, are putting patients first and actively trying to

help them by contributing to the conversation what you have learned they want or need most,” he says.

One of the most important steps toward this goal is to become a partner with an appropriate patient community and listen to its needs and provide solutions where possible, says Laura Kolodjeski, senior manager, U.S. diabetes patient solutions, Sanofi US.

“For example, for Sanofi US Diabetes, our use of social networking in large part is driven by the needs and wants of the diabetes online community,” she says. “To help build trust and loyalty, we focus our efforts on listening and engaging, while offering information that may help people living with diabetes make better-informed decisions about their condition.”

Ms. Kolodjeski says the effort has been successful because it adheres to the golden rule of social media: two-way conversations.

“In the end, it is less about the actual platform and more about the willingness to listen to and engage in a conversation,” Ms. Kolodjeski says. “Sanofi U.S. does this by actively participating on multiple social media channels, including Twitter, Facebook, and the Discuss Diabetes blog, but also by appropriately joining the conversation in community-hosted forums, such as TuDiabetes.”

Yolanda Johnson-Moton, strategy consultant, USMD Health Education Development, Eli Lilly and Co., says learning needs to be a big part of the listening component. Marketers need to understand what the consumer needs and then respond to those needs if they are to develop a successful digital marketing effort.

“From Lilly's perspective, we use the insights gained from listening to our customers to dig deep and understand something real about them,” Ms. Johnson-Moton says. “For example, if we discover people are really struggling to understand certain health infor-



“Developing relationships requires active listening, access and availability, and consistent engagement and responsiveness.”

HENSLEY EVANS / imc² health & wellness



“Most companies want to control social media, but that train has left the station, and our industry is the caboose.”

LIZ CERMAK / Pozen Inc.

mation, or they are not clear about treatment instructions, we need to act and make the information easier for them to understand.”

Mr. Monseau cites a similar example of how listening, understanding, and responding can benefit both consumers and the company: AstraZeneca's AZ Cares Twitter program. When AstraZeneca discovered via Twitter that

SOUND BITES FROM THE FIELD ►

Technology tools have advanced to enable more direct interaction with patients, but the industry has been slow to take advantage of the opportunity. In preparation of next steps, experts from the field offer up best practices the industry can use to build relationships and gain loyalty through patient communications.



JEFFREY D. ERB is Managing Director at Harte Hanks, a direct marketing services company offering integrated, multichannel, data-driven solutions for top brands around the globe. For more information, visit harte-hanks.com.

“When growing relationships, it’s important to conduct a digital engagement analysis so that marketers can better understand and optimize their existing brand digital marketing efforts and measure the effectiveness of their initial digital tactics. Understanding and having a strategy for relationships with patients across the entire digital continuum is key to developing, growing, and maintaining loyalty. Additionally, incorporating serialized digital video content is becoming a significant means of building long-lasting, meaningful relationships with end users. With demonstrated sales lift and intent-to-purchase metrics of 24% and higher for brands, the costs are a fraction of the overall marketing spend.”



BRUCE GRANT is Senior VP, Strategy and Insights, Digitas Health Consulting, which works with pharmaceutical, bioscience, and medical-device companies to help their brands develop connections with healthcare consumers and professionals. For more information, visit digitashealth.com.

“Like it or not, customers’ expectations for service, responsiveness, and value are set by forces outside pharma, such as Apple, Amazon, Google, and Starbucks. It’s not that these companies are free to say more than regulated pharma; it’s what they do and how they do it. They listen to and watch their customers closely, and they build their offerings around what they hear and see. They search relentlessly for areas that deliver value to customers and at the same time deliver value to their business.

They’re humble, curious, and committed to constant change. And they view digital not as a channel, but as a tool to serve — and learn from — their customers. These are the real best practices that pharma should emulate.”



DEBORAH SCHNELL is President, Sales and Strategic Planning, Healthy Advice Networks, which provides trusted, relevant, and easy-to-understand health information to consumers and healthcare professionals when and where they need it, while delivering meaningful results to its partners. For more information, visit healthyadvisenetworks.com.

“Effective use of technology is one that enhances the customer experience. While technology gives today’s healthcare marketers opportunities to reach patients in ways never before available, delivering information consumers value, and will use, ultimately drives success. Savvy marketers will leverage the power of digital technology to deliver relevant messages customized by location, supporting brand rebate offers, co-pay cards, and patient support programs; they may even create an emotional connection with patients by communicating in their native language. Further incorporation of the ubiquitous QR code turns the patient’s phone into a magic wand. A strong, strategic plan does not use technology to cover its flaws; rather, it combines a great value proposition with social, local, and mobile messaging to drive significant consumer engagement and uptake.”



JULIE WITTES SCHLACK is Senior VP of Innovation & Design, Communispace, an online community provider that helps brands turn customer insights into action via online communities. For more information, visit communispace.com.

“Disease, whether acute or chronic, annoying, or life-threatening, creates an instant community, both

offline and on. It is a camaraderie borne of need — the need for information; for empathy; the hunger to obtain advice from ‘other people like me;’ and, perhaps surprisingly, the eagerness to share it. Building on that social glue, and using emerging technologies, pharma companies can generate insight, fuel innovation, and drive loyalty by: sponsoring small, private, safe online communities of patients, caregivers, and/or professionals to serve as ongoing advisors to each other and to the company; using Bluetooth biometric tools coupled with mobile survey and ethnography tools to understand the real-time experiences that may be triggering symptoms, let patients, caregivers, and HCPs demonstrate their challenges and victories; and demonstrating that you’re listening by thanking these constituencies for their input, and reporting back to them on what you’re doing.”



RENEE SELMAN is President of Catalina Health, which uses a proprietary database platform at the pharmacy point-of-care to help clients develop customized, measureable messages that can incite healthier patient outcomes. For more information, visit catalinahealth.com.

“Recognizing individual patient needs by understanding what motivates changes in behavior is the first step in achieving healthier outcomes. Best practices will involve companies that can provide patient insights, specialty segmentation and a way to deliver meaningful educational messages or introduce brand loyalty programs based on where health consumers are within their disease state. Messaging health consumers at their most critical touch points — the point of care with their physicians — and at their pharmacies is the key to building strong relationships. These communications will help physicians, pharmacists, and brand manufacturers partner to provide the best info possible to their health consumers.”

people were searching for patient assistance programs or alternative ways to pay for their medicines, it designed a plan to become part of the conversation and the solution.

“AZ jumped in on Twitter and began redirecting these people to its patient assistance

programs,” Mr. Monseau says. “It’s a minor example, but a good one. The company put itself in a place where it could hear the conversations and then respond rapidly to the need by having the proper structure and process in place. This, of course, takes some cultural courage.”

This is a strategy that makes all the sense in the world to Mr. Ferrell.

“Consumers on social media gravitate toward brands that embrace the customer service opportunity presented by digital channels,” he says. “So if a brand finds a lot of conversations

around its product are about pricing, then it can build loyalty by offering affordable solutions. If brand marketers discover that much of the online chatter is about side effects, then they can point people to resources where the consumer can gather accurate, credible information about risks and benefits."

Shifting from the traditional one-sided conversation to a two-way dialogue will be difficult for pharmaceutical companies but it is a skill they need to learn to better communicate with all stakeholders, says Hensley Evans, chief strategy officer, imc² health & wellness.

"It is important to remember that social media is about building sustainable relationships with multiple stakeholders," Ms. Evans says. "From patients, to caregivers, to key influencers and media, developing relationships with these stakeholders takes time and requires active listening, access and availability, and consistent engagement and responsiveness to foster these relationships."

Be Aware of Challenges and Missteps

Using digital media for patient communications is not without its challenges. There are many common mistakes that can cause com-

munication efforts to fail, or worse, put the company at risk in terms of regulatory compliance.

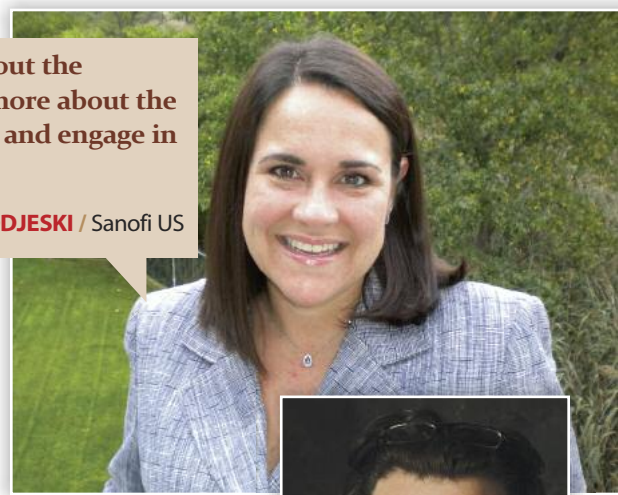
"The most common mistake the industry makes in using online patient communications is only engaging in a one-sided communications effort," Ms. Kolodjeski says. "In essence, they are speaking, rather than listening and do not offer the ability to truly engage in a dialogue. Through our channels, we created a space where we can engage in a dialogue with the diabetes community. By adopting a true patient-centric mindset, we are encouraging people living with diabetes and their loved ones to share insights and feedback, which will ultimately help us succeed in the social media space."

Eileen O'Brien, director of search and innovation, Siren Interactive, agrees.

"As marketers, it can be hard to make the shift from talking about our products to thinking about the patient point of view," she says. "We need to approach social media from the patient perspective and determine how biopharma can add value with relevant content that provides a reason for patients to engage."

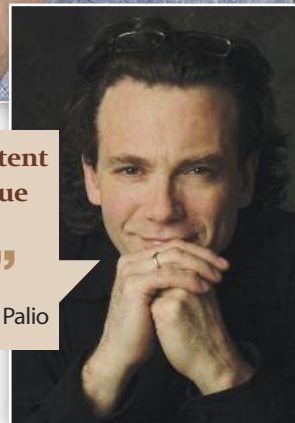
"Success is less about the platform used and more about the willingness to listen and engage in a conversation."

LAURA KOLODJESKI / Sanofi US



"Placing branded content within the social dialogue has a huge potential to alienate the audience."

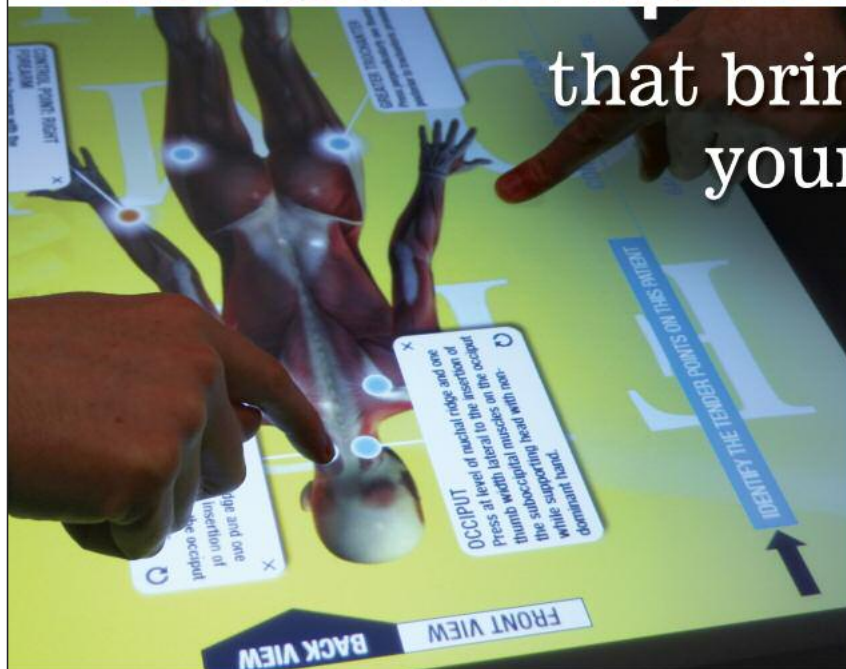
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A branded message is fine when it appears as an advertisement on the page or site where the conversations are happening, but branded messaging within the social networking con-

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versation has the potential to backfire on the brand because it is less than an honest, genuine approach, says Guy Mastrion, chief global creative officer, Palio.

"Pure brand marketing and promotion within the social space as a media buy has great potential to connect customers with brands but placing branded content and messages within a social dialogue has a huge potential to alienate the audience," he says.

Mr. Mastrion gives the analogy of the early days of the telephone and the party line. The party line was a single line shared by any number of families and at any given moment a neighbor might pop onto a call or listen in.

"Brands and brand language and promotion that appear within the context of the social dialogue are usually just as unwelcome as old aunt Gertrude popping onto the party line," he says. "Attention getting, yes. Welcome? Not so much."

Mr. Monseau believes it will be difficult for the industry to make this shift from product-centric to patient-centric, and branded efforts may miss opportunities to connect with patients.

"One place companies could provide a lot of value, where they aren't currently playing in a big way, is providing unbranded info about the particular disease state their product treats," he says. "Patients are less interested in forming a relationship with medicine and more interested about forming a relationship with someone who is knowledgeable about their disease and can help them make better decisions."

According to Mr. Ferrell at Cutting Edge

Information, other challenges are regulatory issues. The industry needs to be mindful to avoid violating any compliance regulations during patient communications and to have a plan in place in case its messaging inadvertently does cross the line.

"Patient-centric communications are by their very nature going to involve some unpredictability; it's important that companies are positioned through solid strategizing to be responsive, agile, and aware of risk," he says. "There are a lot of ways a pharma company can find itself on the wrong side of regulatory compliance with patient communications."

Among these concerns are patient-privacy concerns, off-label communications, adverse event reporting, fair balance, and content sharing, Mr. Ferrell adds.

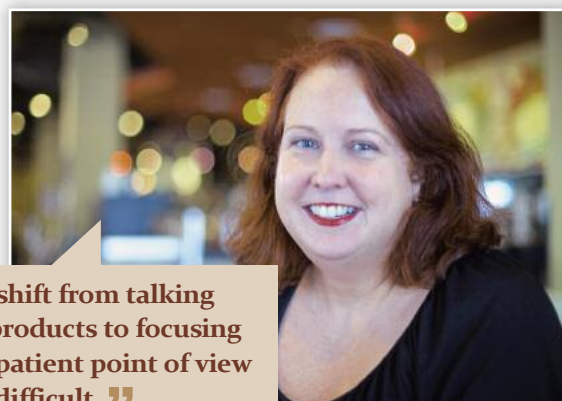
"Smart brands will war game worst-case scenarios and develop crisis management protocols to handle those situations," he says. "The old business adage applies here: plan for the worst, hope for the best, and be prepared to be surprised."

Another challenge is to resist being in the social space because it's the "trendy" thing to do, Ms. Johnson-Moton cautions.



“Brands need to better understand how to be a part of, rather than control, the online consumer relationship.”

MAUREEN MALLOY / Manhattan Research



“The shift from talking about products to focusing on the patient point of view can be difficult.”

EILEEN O'BRIEN / Siren Interactive

EXPERTS ►



LIZ CERMAK. Executive VP and Chief Commercial Officer, Pozen Inc., a pharma company

committed to addressing unmet medical needs and providing affordable medicines to patients and physicians. For more information, visit pozen.com.



HENSLEY EVANS. Chief Strategy Officer, imc2 health & wellness, which serves health and wellness clients on a variety of initiatives,

including medical content and health-centered tools to create connections with patients, physicians, managed care groups, and more. For more information, visit imc2healthandwellness.com.



CASEY FERRELL. Research Analyst, Cutting Edge Information, a research, consulting, and publishing firm focused on best-practice benchmarking

for the pharmaceutical, biotech, medical device, and healthcare industries. For more information, visit cuttingedgeinfo.com.



YOLANDA JOHNSON-MOTON.

Strategy Consultant, USMD Health Education Development, Eli Lilly and Co., which makes medicines that help people live longer, healthier, more active lives. For more information, visit lilly.com.



LAURA KOLODJESKI. Senior Manager, U.S. Diabetes Patient Solutions and blog curator, Sanofi US, a global and diversified

healthcare company that discovers, develops, and distributes therapeutic solutions focused on patients' needs. For more information, visit sanofi.us.com.



MAUREEN MALLOY. Senior Healthcare Analyst, Manhattan Research, a healthcare market research company. For more

information, visit manhattanresearch.com or email mmalloy@manhattanresearch.com.



GUY MASTRION. Chief Global Creative Officer, Palio, an advertising agency creating pharmaceutical and healthcare marketing

experiences. For more information, visit palio.com.



MARC MONSEAU. Founder and Principal, MDM Communications, a healthcare consultancy. For more information, visit

mdmcommunication.net or tweet @MDMonseau.



EILEEN O'BRIEN. Director of Search and Innovation, Siren Interactive, a relationship marketing agency focused on understanding the

behaviors of patients, caregivers, and physicians dealing with chronic rare diseases. For more information, visit sireninteractive.com.

Also, beware of unclear goals and objectives; they can undo a social networking campaign quickly.

“Online social media programs must have clear goals and objectives; I can’t stress this enough,” she says. “In this industry, companies should not engage in social media tactics just to be there. There really needs to be a valid reason to invest that is supported by consumer research.”

There are several examples of companies that have developed apps and have developed Twitter feeds or Facebook pages just because it seemed like the thing to do, Ms. Johnson-Moton says. Companies that do not conduct the appropriate research that allows them to understand how and where their target customers choose to engage will most likely have programs that fail. Keeping them coming back is also crucial to success.

“The content must continue to be relevant and fresh, and interactivity is a must,” she says. “I would strongly suggest investing in tools and resources that support engagement and most importantly, enable users to share and engage among their peers, friends, and family.”

Transparency is another fundamental element in social media that pharma doesn’t

want to overlook, and there are many examples outside the industry that show how lack of honesty has backfired.

“I would say lack of transparency and authenticity are two of the biggest pitfalls a brand can encounter in the social media space,” says Maureen Malloy, senior health-care analyst, Manhattan Research. “But one advantage of pharma brands lagging a bit behind other verticals in terms of connecting with consumers online is that they can learn from mistakes by other industries.”

“Being fully transparent as to who you are and what your goals are and what you are trying to accomplish out there in the social media space lends itself to building credibility and trusting relationships,” Ms. Johnson-Moton says.

Another common mistake marketers make is confusing a more-or-less linear patient journey with the very non-linear nature of health information seeking behaviors, Ms. Evans says.

“Consumerism has greatly impacted how patients regard their health, medication, treatment regimens, purchase decisions, HCP interactions, and market trade-offs,” she says. “Patients are increasingly looking at medications and health with the same lens as other

important purchases in their life. As a result, they are expecting higher levels of user experience, design, multi-platform access, and content relevancy. We find that the pharmaceutical industry as a whole tends to design communications and marketing ecologies that are not as flexible, integrated, or complete as patients’ desire,” Ms. Johnson-Moton continues. “Additionally, med-legal reviews of digital materials often prove more cumbersome or generally more challenging than reviewing offline material. This hurdle may contribute to why marketers tend to rely on traditional marketing channels and tactics and continue to invest heavily in general awareness initiatives.”

To fulfill patients’ needs and expectations, Ms. Evans advises pharmaceutical marketers to do their research regarding consumers’ needs, and use that information to develop both offline and online content and tactics, and orchestrate the two to work toward stated objectives. **PV**



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Industry Leaders in Patient Communications Share Insights

The industry needs to improve its reputation as a way to capitalize on the benefits that digital communications can bring to bear for not only its products but patients and physicians.



“Social networking allows us to partner and educate by providing quality information around all aspects of health and well-being.”

YOLANDA JOHNSON-MOTON / Lilly

Few pharma companies have given digital marketing a designated place in their overall marketing plans and have instead viewed social networking tools as nice-to-haves or add-ons to traditional marketing mixes. One company, however, has taken steps to not only build digital efforts into the early stages of the commercial strategy development but also enlist an advisory board to aid in making appropriate digital marketing decisions.

Last year, Pozen, a specialty U.S. pharma company, created an advisory board of digital thought leaders from both inside and outside of the industry to help move forward the company's vision of creating a new pharma commercial model. When the company began discussions regarding the commercial strategy for its lead pipeline product PA32540, it realized it had the unique opportunity to build a media marketing plan that includes digital networking from the start. The company decided to look outside its own walls for experts who could

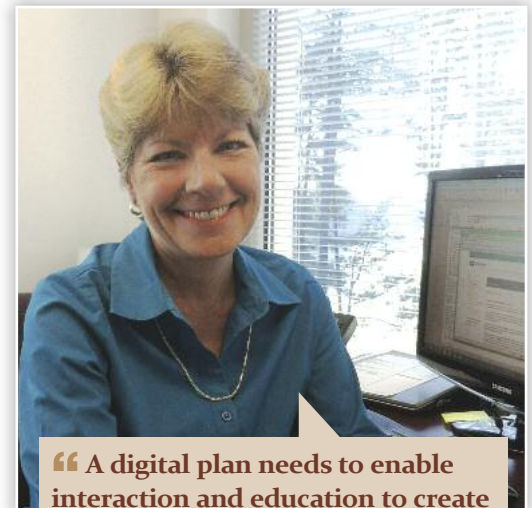
help lead this novel effort. According to Liz Cermak, executive VP and chief commercial officer at Pozen, implementing such an advisory board is a first in the industry. Pozen expects its lead pipeline product, PA32540, to be launched in late 2013 or early 2014.

While this shift in approach may be cumbersome for large pharma culturally and operationally, Pozen has the advantage of not having to fight years of legacy protocol and culture. Marc Monseau, former director of corporate communication and social media for Johnson & Johnson, who currently heads his own MDM Communication company, is a member of the advisory board, and he believes Pozen is in an enviable and advantageous position in the industry.

“What’s been exciting about being a part of this board is that Pozen doesn’t have to struggle against an age-old culture or resistance to change and, therefore, is in a better position to focus on building new structures instead of trying to dislodge institutionalized structures,” Mr. Monseau says. “Once those institutionalized structures have been created, it becomes very difficult to redefine them and to prove the value for change.”

“At Pozen, we have the opportunity to take the time to figure out what will be the best vehicles to use and what is the best way to interact with our customers,” Ms. Cermak says.

Pozen wants to get its digital plan right for its own sake, but also for the sake of patients and the healthcare system as a whole. The company has already discovered through discussions with the advisory board and potential customers that these days it is imperative that



“A digital plan needs to enable interaction and education to create a better therapeutic outcome for the patients.”

LIZ CERMAK / Pozen

a brand be engaged with patients and physicians through social networking.

“A digital plan needs to enable interaction and education to create a better therapeutic outcome for the patients, and this is one of the areas the industry is not doing so well in and frankly, it’s exactly what our healthcare system needs,” Ms. Cermak says.

She says the company will share its learnings as they develop, as she expects through the coming years that the board will create new practices that can benefit others in the industry. (To read insights from Pozen’s first board roundtable, visit pozen.com/media/videos/media-roundtable-event-september-16/)

The major learning so far is that in this robust digital environment today the industry should be looking toward digital experts from all fields for guidance. According to Ms. Cer-

mak, the industry can no longer stand on its own expertise because “nobody cares and nobody listens” to pharma.

“If you build it, they won’t come, so the industry needs to bring thought leadership to the table on its own behalf,” Ms. Cermak says. “Experts could be individuals or from advocacy associations but they need to add value to the ongoing digital dialogue, and this is our strategy.”

Eileen O’Brien, director of search and innovation at Siren Interactive, says engaging with trusted third parties and being transparent will help the industry improve its reputation.

“Whether warranted or not, the pharmaceutical industry is distrusted by many consumers,” Ms. O’Brien says. “A great solution is partnering with a trust agent, a nonprofit organization with third-party credibility that is already trusted by the brand’s target audience.”

Pharma can leverage the online relationship and social media tools of the trust agent to provide resources and support. These relationships can be beneficial for the nonprofit, the pharma company, and patients.

“An excellent example of this is the partnership between Sanofi and the March of Dimes on whooping cough awareness and the importance of vaccination,” she says. “They have an educational campaign that includes a Facebook page, Sounds of Pertussis, where the community is engaging in a great dialogue on this topic.”

Laura Kolodjeski, senior manager, U.S. diabetes patient solutions, Sanofi US, says her company is “particularly proud” of the leadership role that it has taken in the social media space.

“On the diabetes front, our goal is to become a total partner in diabetes care — an organization aimed at health, not just treatment,” Ms. Kolodjeski says. “To date, Sanofi US has been a pioneer in social media and online patient communications through several initiatives, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube channels, and the Discuss Diabetes blog.”

Eli Lilly & Co. also is using social networking to be a good partner in the healthcare space, says Yolanda Johnson-Moton, strategy consultant, USMD Health Education Development, Eli Lilly and Co.

“Social networking allows us to partner and educate by providing quality information around all aspects of health and well-being,” she says. “We truly believe it is about listening to what the patient is saying and then taking action on that information in attempt to create a quality, positive experience for them.”

Lilly has garnered a lot of engagement with its non-product branded online health education resources at Lilly for Better Health and the Lilly Health Channel on YouTube.

“It has been a wonderful platform that has given us the opportunity to reach customers like never before,” Ms. Johnson-Moton says.

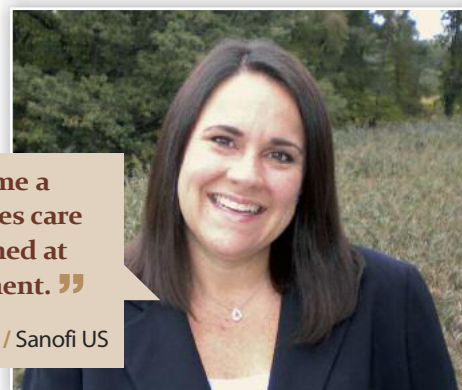
Cultural courage, or lack thereof, adds to the challenges of incorporating digital marketing into the mix, Mr. Monseau says. Many companies using digital media have openly stated that they are changing their marketing strategies to include the voice of the customer.

“This is more than just creating a sound marketing plan, but also implementing a change in company culture to support these goals,” he says. “Sanofi, for instance, has been outspoken about the need to change marketing and the way in which the industry communicates with consumers through the approach they call SoLoMo, for social, local, and mobile. Boehringer Ingelheim is another company that is creating communications and initiatives that are much more focused on providing compelling and useful information through different channels. This is what makes it so exciting to serve as an advisory board member for Pozen. Within Pozen, they are building from the ground up rather than re-



“Partnering with a trust agent, a nonprofit organization with third-party credibility, is a great way to improve a brand’s reputation.”

EILEEN O'BRIEN / Siren Interactive



“Our goal is to become a total partner in diabetes care — an organization aimed at health, not just treatment.”

LAURA KOLODJESKI / Sanofi US

Pozen’s Digital Strategy: A Case Study

The pharmaceutical industry has only begun to scratch the surface of employing digitally based commercialization approaches, and Pozen plans to lead the way by creating a new pharmaceutical commercial model by enlisting the help of a five-person advisory board.

“As Pozen develops the commercial strategy for its pipeline, the goal in collaborating with these advisors is to look beyond the industry to identify untapped digital strategies this will help shape a commercial strategy that is highly customer-centric,” says Liz Cermak, executive VP and chief commercial officer of Pozen.

The Pozen Digital Advisory Board is comprised of leaders in technology, social media, and digital marketing, including:

» **Raj Amin**, CEO and Co-Founder,

HealthiNation; previously VP, Business Development, N2 Broadband

» **Bonin Bough**, Senior Director, Digital and Social Media, PepsiCo; previously Director of Global Interactive, Social and Emerging Media Practice, Weber Shandwick

» **Marc Monseau**, Founder and Principal, MDM Communications; previously Director of Corporate Communication and Social Media, Johnson & Johnson

» **Daniel Palestrant, M.D.**, CEO and Founder, Par80; previously CEO and Founder, Sermo

» **Meredith Ressi**, President, Manhattan Research; previously Chief Operating Officer, Integrated Wellness Solutions

The advisors will participate in a media briefing and roundtable discussion on the topic of advancing the pharma model through lessons in digital later this year.

Source: Pozen. For more information, visit pozen.com.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PATIENT CENTRIC COMMUNICATIONS ►

Our thought leaders provide crucial steps and tips for developing a patient-centric digital marketing strategy.



LIZ CERMAK is Executive VP and Chief Commercial Officer at Pozen Inc., a progressive pharmaceutical company that is transforming how the healthcare industry addresses unmet medical needs. For more information, visit pozen.com.

“There are two very important elements to consider. One is that the industry needs to let go of its notion that social media is used to push communications out and to start having true conversations with customers. The other factor is that all the conservative marketers who grew up on sales reps and DTC need to understand there is a new way to reach people and it is not as risky as they think. Often, product directors will come up with new ideas for using social media with plenty of proof that it works, and marketers don’t understand and still feel they need to be able to control the message. But they can’t, and that’s the way it is. They also have to leave behind the attitude that social channels are just another medium for forcing behavior change; it’s actually a different medium and the industry needs to get on board.”

HENSLEY EVANS is Chief Strategy Officer of [imc2 health & wellness](http://imc2health.com), which serves a broad



portfolio of health and wellness clients on a variety of initiatives including medical content and health-centered tools to create connections with patients, physicians, managed care groups, and more. For more information, visit imc2healthandwellness.com.

“There are several things pharmaceutical companies can start doing now, regardless if they are using branded or unbranded communications to strengthen relationships and encourage engagement. First, get to know the audience to gain a clearer understanding of who your followers are and how they describe themselves by using a tool such as Research.ly. Having this information can influence your content strategy, provide insights into the segments or niches you’re attracting, and align communication objectives to meet the needs of a particular segment. Understand their interests by using a content creation tool like [Summify](http://Summify.com) to better understand what people are actively sharing. Use this information to inspire future posts, create an editorial calendar, and gain a broad picture of what your audience is actively sharing. Next, keep it interesting. A recent eMarketer study shows that multimedia content such as photos, videos, and links are more likely to drive engagement. Also, keep the message

interesting by leveraging assets from local events, marketing/PR campaigns, cross-channel media from other social sites like YouTube, or any other content at your disposal. Consider asking followers what they think by creating polls or (if your regulatory team will allow it) fill-in-the-blank questions that offer an opportunity for feedback. Finally, make time to respond. Return calls, texts, and messages, but ensure you’re attentive and authentic when you do. In social media, make it a practice to do so with consistency. Ensure to balance postings with responses. For example, if you post an average of three times per week, be prepared to respond as often. If a post garners a lot of attention/response, participate in the conversation that follows. So, start small, keep it simple, learn about your fans/followers, and be interesting and engaging. Whether you leverage existing content, source third-party information, or provide exclusive access to the brand, remember to communicate on purpose. Say thank you, show appreciation, and reward fans for engaging.”

MARC MONSEAU is Founder and Principal of MDM Communications, a healthcare communications consultancy. For more information, visit mdmcommunication.net or tweet @MDMonseau.

designing existing systems and processes. We have the opportunity to be part of the creation of a new culture from the beginning.”

One of Boehringer Ingelheim’s efforts includes Drive4COPD, (drive4copd.com) a national public health campaign that aims to find the missing millions of people who may be at risk for COPD and are unaware.

Guy Mastrion, chief global creative officer at Palio, gives the program a thumbs up, but believes that most industry digital efforts fall short.

“I can’t single out any single pharma brand as a good example, not because there are not some good efforts out there but they all have a little icky brandy, creepy thing going on,” Mr. Mastrion says. “The Drive4COPD is a multi-sponsor supported effort that is really well done. On the nonpharma side, PatientsLikeMe is a rich environment for those willing to participate. It’s still a fledgling spreading its wings, but it is an emotionally powerful and validating experience. I also think the Mayo Clinic is doing an outstanding job and an example we can all learn from.” **PV**

EXPERTS ►



LIZ CERMAK, Executive VP and Chief Commercial Officer, Pozen Inc., which is committed to addressing unmet medical needs and providing affordable medicines to patients and physicians. For more information, visit pozen.com.



YOLANDA JOHNSON-MOTON, Strategy Consultant, USMD Health Education Development, Eli Lilly and Co., which makes medicines that help people live longer, healthier, more active lives. For more information, visit lilly.com.



LAURA KOLODJESKI, Senior Manager, U.S. Diabetes Patient Solutions and blog curator, Sanofi US, a global healthcare company that discovers, develops, and distributes therapeutic solutions focused on

patients’ needs. For more information, visit sanofi.us.com.



GUY MASTRION, Chief Global Creative Officer, Palio, an advertising agency creating pharmaceutical and healthcare marketing experiences. For more information, visit palio.com.



MARC MONSEAU, Founder and Principal, MDM Communications, a healthcare consultancy. For more information, visit mdmcommunication.net or tweet @MDMonseau.



EILEEN O'BRIEN, Director of Search & Innovation, Siren Interactive, a relationship marketing agency focused on understanding the behaviors of patients, caregivers, and physicians dealing with chronic rare diseases. For more information, visit sireninteractive.com.

“There are three main things the industry needs to remember when developing a patient-centric strategy. First, have a presence where people are seeking health information. Second, interact and respond in a timely and relevant way. And third, tap into the company’s own internal knowledge to provide pertinent information that will help patients understand the disease. Considering the amount of time and energy that is invested in creating a new prescription medication or medical device, the organization itself has some extremely knowledgeable researchers who know how the disease state works. Often, this information is kept under wraps and considered proprietary, but there is an opportunity to share it externally to help patients, caregivers, and the physicians better manage the disease or condition. And on the commercial side, companies gather a lot of information to make decisions around developing and marketing products, that could also be used to bring about better health outcomes.”



MAUREEN MALLOY is a Senior Healthcare Analyst, Manhattan Research, a healthcare market research company. For more information, visit manhattanresearch.com or email mmalloy@manhattanresearch.com.

“A good first step for approaching a relationship building online plan is to look beyond macro level trends and dig deeper into target audiences’ digital health channel mix and preferences for interacting with brands online. For example, some patient groups are relatively strong users of Facebook and Twitter, but at the same time show very little interest in communicating with pharma companies on these channels. Are patients more open to pharma playing a role in dedicated online health communities? Do they want to connect with pharma companies through a patient advocate or a medical expert? Are they interested in pharma helping them manage certain challenges associated with their disease and treatment? Understanding these patient needs and communication preferences can help brands figure out a relationship plan that works for both them and their audience.”



GUY MASTRION is Chief Global Creative Officer, Palio, an advertising agency creating pharmaceutical and healthcare marketing experiences. For more information, visit palio.com.

“For a real example of community-based relationship building online, go to Flickr and type in diabetes. What you get is a treasure trove of human emotion and relationship building from diabetics and their support networks. Here you’ll see people sharing and connecting through images illustrating all the love and wonderment, triumphs, and struggles in their lives. Occasionally, you also see images of people trying to sell stuff, very quickly you can see how these approaches seem so out of context. As an alternative, and I would argue a better approach for a company marketing a diabetes-related product or service, is to sponsor a quarterly photo art contest among the diabetic population on Flickr. Make the competition about self-expression; make it genuine; make it about living with diabetes; make it free of advertising and direct promotion — make it about them. Put up a gallery of winners on Flickr and award prizes. Connect the group with famous professional photographers, have them judge the work, mentor the group, and make fine art prints of the best work. Ask Sotheby to set up an on-line auction of the work and donate the proceeds to a diabetic foundation. Link it to a blog for diabetics to tell the stories behind their work and their inspiration. We could go on and on with this approach.”

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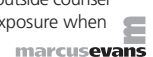
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Michele Westergaard
T: 312 540 3000 ext 6625
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