

Marketing Tips & Techniques: Twitter

TRENDING NOW: 130 million tweets can't be wrong; our experts explore the benefits of using Twitter.



Symplur and the Healthcare Hashtag Project

Symplur, a social media consultancy and curator of the **HEALTHCARE HASHTAG PROJECT**, has a database of more than 130 million tweets that relate to healthcare. For more than two years, the company has been tracking and categorizing healthcare conversations on Twitter via hashtags to make it more accessible for providers and the healthcare community as a whole. According to Symplur, these huge numbers represent a vast opportunity for pharma to influence highly targeted groups, while being open and transparent to providing value added information in strategic disease areas.

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Best Practices in Advancing Twitter Presence



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It's important to remember that Twitter is a conversational tool, not a one-way medium for pushing updates, press releases, and links to articles. Always be sure to thank those who retweet content, ask questions, and respond to those who

tweet back. This is especially important for pharma companies, as patients and healthcare providers want to know that there are human beings managing the social media accounts who are available to answer questions.

Obviously, there are some questions that can't be answered in 140 characters, but you'd be surprised how many can.

When questions do come up that can't be answered via a tweet, don't send a stock response to call customer support. Instead, take the time to customize the response for each individual. With a little extra effort a simple change from "Please contact our customer support number at 1-800..." to "Hi Sally, we'd like to discuss this with you over the phone. Could you call us at 1-800..." can make a big difference in the social media experience.

Remember, there are real people at the other end of these conversations. Be sure to treat your conversations on Twitter just like any face-to-face gathering and you'll be headed in the right direction.



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Imagine having the power to tap into the best industry minds, the psyche of your customers, and know market news immediately, multiple times each day. Twitter offers that for the taking as much as you care to use it.

The first best practice is to make a concerted and strategic effort to follow a myriad of people and organizations. The more you follow, the more you learn. Secondly, although retweeting relevant tweets is an easy and effective way to show that you are at least in the conversation, the medium becomes exponentially more powerful when you actually create original content as part of your Twitter efforts. It takes thought and planning, but is worth the undertaking.

To support this step, marketing departments

By the Numbers: Symplur Healthcare Hashtag Project

- » 130 million healthcare tweets (and growing every day)
- » 2.3 million healthcare Twitter profiles
- » Two years of trending history
- » 10,000 provider profiles (M.D., RN etc.)
- » 3,500 predefined topics
- » 1,500 health communities

Source: The Healthcare Hashtag Project. For more information, visit symplur.com/healthcare-hashtags.

need to seriously consider investing in higher-level analysts and writers to create responses, proactive dialogue, and content plans for this powerful and still evolving medium. Its effectiveness will be in direct proportion to the time and energy devoted to it.



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Twitter remains the most misunderstood communication platform today, despite the fact that millions use it every day. To make it simple, from now on when you think of Twitter, always think multichannel. Another day we'll talk about what to do if stranded on a deserted island with only Twitter, but today let's talk about how to get the biggest bang for your tweet.

The quickest way to get into trouble with Twitter is to resolve to be profound in 140 characters every day. Won't happen. However, if you let others be profound — especially your KOLs, the medical associations affiliated with your diseases, or helpful patient education authors — you become the one

to refer. Then suddenly you're on safer ground. On Twitter, you don't have to be the smartest guy; you just have to know the smartest dudes and find a clever way, in 140 characters, to send people to them. Over a short period of time you'll attract a grateful following.

And since you have smart folks in your own company writing helpful content, you begin using your referring platform to send followers to your own people. Voila, Twitter becomes part of a meaningful multichannel platform.



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Many pharma companies are participating in Twitter, but they have been slow out of the gate. If a pharma company can concentrate on mentions and on highlighting actual users of a particular product — instead of focusing on the whole company or overarching brand — they will get much more value from these built-in ambassadors. Product-specific feeds offer a real opportunity to provide solid customer service, too. Setting up such systems does require extra work — monitoring, boots on the ground, and reviewing much more content. But in the end, it makes sense to treat marketing messages through social channels just like one would through other channels. Build brand equity for individual products and awareness will grow.

Using Twitter to Identify Key Stakeholders



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As the digital era changes the way the drug industry communicates about its activity and products, the Twitter accounts of pharmaceutical companies vary greatly in terms of activity and objectives. However, there is a rapidly growing number of healthcare professionals actively discussing therapy areas using this platform, especially because Twitter is an easy way to share medical knowledge across geographic boundaries.

This presents the opportunity for pharmaceutical companies to identify key stakeholders in terms

of healthcare professionals, examine the way they communicate about given therapy areas, and which of their peers they influence, thereby opening up possibilities to engage with them both online and offline. Twitter can make a great intelligence tool, but for this to happen, pharma companies have to rethink the process of KOL engagement planning to reflect the way digital channels are changing this environment.

Identifying digital KOLs is not always a straightforward process. Creation Pinpoint, a tool launched in January, makes it easy for pharma marketers to identify digital opinion leaders online by studying the perceptions and behavior of healthcare professionals in any therapeutic area. The tool uses social media analysis technology refined to observe healthcare professionals.



In December 2012, Twitter enabled everyone with the ability to download their entire Twitter archive, back to when the account was first opened and the very first tweet. The archive allows searching these tweets by date, words, phrases, hashtags, or @usernames. Twitter reports that one can even engage with the old Tweets just as if they were current ones. This tool can be valuable for tracking peaks in conversation, key stakeholders, and conversation topics, among many other elements.

For marketers, Twitter also introduced “negative keyword targeting” for promoted Tweets, which will let advertisers buy a term but avoid having the ad shown in contextually irrelevant situations. In Twitter’s corporate blog, the feature is explained this way: an advertiser that buys the term “bacon,” as in the edible product, could make sure it doesn’t show up near conversations about actor Kevin Bacon. In this case, “Kevin” would be a negative keyword. The company also introduced a bulk importing feature that allows advertisers to highlight terms they want to match and not match. In addition, advertisers can now automatically match their promoted tweets in searches to related trending topics. For example, if a celebrity’s pregnancy news starts trending, a baby clothing retailer can enter its promoted tweet into the auction for

Top 20 Pharma Twitter Accounts



Ranked by number of corporate tweets

- » @Accesspharma
- » @SanofiUS
- » @GEHealthcare
- » @GEHealthcare_HQ
- » @Boehringer
- » @novonordiskTBL
- » @JNJcomm
- » @SalixPharma
- » @LillyPad
- » @millennium_US
- » @Novartis
- » @GSKUS
- » @BayerUSNews
- » @AstraZenecaUS
- » @AbbottNews
- » @GSK
- » @pfizer_news
- » @Merck
- » @JanssenUK

Source: TweetPharm, a free interactive infographic that tracks pharmaceutical companies’ use of Twitter, sponsored by Intouch Solutions. TweetPharm ranks top pharma and biotech Twitter accounts based on authentic engagement, as well as measures of followers, following, or number of tweets.

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that trending search.

▼ For more information, <http://blog.twitter.com/2012/12/your-twitter-archive.html> or follow @twitter.