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Super Consumers = Super Patients

EMPOWERED PATIENTS ARE SHAPING THE WAY HEALTHCARE — AND HEALTHCARE INFORMATION — IS DELIVERED AND PHARMA COMPANIES CAN NO LONGER STAND IDLY BY.

The world has changed. While it may seem as though change has happened at warp speed, there has been a gradual, but steady, increase in the number of patients who are taking the reins of their own healthcare education as they search for information that equips them to make better decisions toward improved healthcare outcomes, as Robin Robinson reports in this month's Forum: Empowered Patients.



Today's super patients are plugged in. They are advocates. They are early adopters. And they have buying power. However, there are still companies that are hesitant to embrace the growing consumerism of healthcare, which extends far beyond pills and tablets. The super patient is interested in a holistic approach to improving their own health and living a healthier lifestyle. Life-sciences companies that want to be part of the super patient's healthcare team need to expand their role and provide valuable information and services that enable better health outcomes all along a patient's journey.

Pharma companies can no longer ignore that the majority of patients are connected to information both before and while "in market." According to Mike Solomon of The Search Agents, an online marketing intelligence company, while companies are still great at creating demand and stimulating a desire for products, they fail to realize that the story does not end there; the journey continues into the digital world. He says if companies don't match their offline presence with a properly executed and fully funded digital one, then they will not capture demand.

Empowered patients are logging on to online data sources in ever-increasing numbers. According to a recent Pew Internet Project research report related to health and healthcare, 81% of U.S. adults use the Internet and 72% of Internet users say they looked online for health information within the past year.

Furthermore, 77% of online health seekers say they began their last session at a search engine such as Google, Bing, or Yahoo. Another 13% say they began at a site that specializes in health information, such as WebMD. Just 2% say they started their research at a more general site like Wikipedia and an additional 1% say they started at a social network site like Facebook. There is a huge opportunity here for pharmaceutical companies and their partners to provide the right tools and information to this data-hungry group of consumers and patients. Any online strategy today must include mobile. Pew reports that 31% of cell phone owners and 52% of smartphone owners have used their phone to look up health or medical information. These numbers are only expected to increase. See Denise Myshko's article this month — Evolving Regulations in mHealth — to read more about how pharma is addressing various challenges.

Technology and readily available data via the Internet are changing people's relationships with health information and with each other.

Regards,

Taren Grom
Editor

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Their Word...

DENISE MYSHKO
Managing Editor



Addressing counterfeit drugs is complex and requires global cooperation between companies, regulators, and law enforcement.

ROBIN ROBINSON
Senior Editor



The industry has begun to cater to the super consumer through patient tools and services that meet their demand for information and control over their health.

KIM RIBBINK
Features Editor



Singapore provides a supportive, innovative, and highly developed environment for companies to conduct research and manufacture their products.

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