

By Taren Grom

Advertising Agencies

Opportunities exist for agencies in the new digital world.

There is no doubt that digital is no longer an emerging technology; it is now mainstream — consumers, patients, and physicians are more dependent upon their smartphones than ever before. According to a recent study by **ABI** research, by the end of 2013, the number of active smartphones around the world will total around 1.4 billion.

Experts say there are significant opportunities for companies and agencies to connect their brands with caregivers, patients, and HCPs — of all types — through integrated strategies.

One such opportunity, according to Shannon Bryant of **MarketForecast**, is the moving shift from stand-alone “unsponsored” mobile apps to more meaningful “sponsored” apps supported by insurance companies, healthcare providers, and other institutions, which will result in higher patient adoption and engagement. In addition, integrated mobile health apps will connect with other devices, apps, and data for more holistic healthcare, where information is safely shared across platforms regardless of the vendor.

Furthermore, experts and analysts say online/offline communications and messaging will become further indistinguishable from one another.

Advertisers, of course, need individual strategies for mobile, retail, and other platforms, but Ms. Bryant says they must start to integrate all those consumer touchpoints for a better, more holistic consumer experience.

With Facebook having more than 1 billion users, Twitter at 500 million users, and platforms like Pinterest and Instagram growing in popularity, **eMarketer** has raised its forecast for advertising spending on Twitter for 2013 and 2014, estimating global ad revenue at \$582.8 million in 2013 before reaching close to \$1 billion next year. More than half of that total will come from mobile, and mobile’s share will rise over the next few years.

The challenge for healthcare marketers — agencies and companies — is to create an environment that is engaging and educational.

According to David Allerman, who reports on U.S. online advertising and marketing, video advertising is gaining traction. Data from an October 2012 survey, which gauged the attitude of U.S. marketers toward visual content marketing, revealed that 96.7% believe visual content engages best on social media; 95% believe visual content is very important for online marketing; 87% believe visual content is critical for traditional marketing; and 80% plan to budget for production of visual content.



DARLENE DOBRY
Managing Partner
Ogilvy
CommonHealth
Worldwide

In today’s environment, I see three significant opportunities/challenges facing advertising agencies: talent, balance, and innovation.

We need to look at our talent and rethink our traditional staffing approach. With the dynamic emergence of digital technology, other innovative communication and customer channels, agencies

need to be seeking, hiring, and retaining curious, passionate and nontraditional thinkers. Clients want multichannel marketers who are not afraid to challenge the status quo and bring them fresh thinking — people who do not just rely on the tried-and true approaches to pharma marketing. To maintain a competitive advantage, agencies need to find these people — either within our walls or outside of them — invest in their training and development, and compensate them for their specialized skills. This is a business about people and ideas, and the agencies that enhance their talent will continue to be successful.

Balancing financial pressures with producing the best work is also a challenge. As pharmaceuti-

cal clients continue to experience financial pressures and have to do more with less, agency partners will feel this and have to respond proactively. They will need to demonstrate further value through integrated, efficient marketing solutions without compromising the quality of the team or the work. Agencies will also need to diversify their client base and product offerings to remain competitive and profitable.

The pace of innovation, particularly in the technology sector, is so rapid that it is often hard to keep up with. As soon as we seemingly master it, it is already outdated or evolved and we need to keep in step to stay competitive and ahead of our clients.

With the financial pressures cited above, this is often challenging because it requires an investment of time and money to be successful. The opportunity, of course, is the ability to transform our thinking and communication to our healthcare customers through these new approaches.



ED MITZEN
Founder
Fingerprint

Healthcare advertising agencies have long been associated with very traditional conservative work. Building brands for sales representatives’ trunks and medical journals isn’t exactly inspiring.

Now we have the opportunity to be digital storytellers through the explosion of a myriad of new media avenues. Never in the history of our business have new possibilities unveiled themselves so quickly. Finally we have the ability to reach our various healthcare consumers and truly measure the impact in real time.

For the agencies that stay ahead of the curve and guide their clients through the ever-evolving landscape, not only will they drive their customers’ business like never before, but they will have a very inspired and motivated staff.

It all comes down to talent. Can advertising agencies today attract creative and digital superstars when there are so many other career options for them? The same people we need to produce great work are also sought after by companies such as Apple, Google, and Starbucks.

And once we have them in our camp, can we keep them fired up and creatively inspired in an industry

known at times for long hours and crazy stress? The companies with awesome, positive cultures are the ones that will thrive in an age of talent wars.



MIKE MYERS
President
Palio+Ignite

Recruiting and retaining the best talent has been and continues to be one of the biggest challenges facing advertising agencies. Sign-

on bonuses, retention compensation, and other similar measures became unnecessary when people were avoiding job moves for fear of being the new guy or gal.

As the economy has rebounded, people have become more willing to switch jobs seeking those greener pastures. As a result, agencies are increasingly challenged to keep their best people.

Recruiting future creative and strategic leaders has also become hyper competitive with bidding wars akin to a low priced condo sale in Manhattan becoming increasingly common.

Like no other segment of the advertising industry that I am aware of, our business fluctuates dramatically and quickly with governmental regulation. As we know, approval delays, nonapprovals, new labeling/warnings, and communications regulations all impact our pharmaceutical and medical device clients.

Their impact moves quickly downhill to agencies and other partners. Work can stop with a phone call. Teams that were working overtime are instantly looking for things to do during the day. The challenge to prepare for these governmental actions and their impact is daunting as in many cases they are unforeseen. Agencies need an increasingly flexible attitude and business plan in order to weather these unforeseen actions.

The potential to connect and engage with our clients' customers through increasingly personal and timely means has never been greater. The ever-expanding capabilities associated with new technologies and channels at relevant times and places via mobile platforms enables agencies to evolve the definition of creativity.

Our work is no longer just about insightful ideas that connect with customers through a strong creative campaign. The medium, in many instances, has become the message.

This is exciting for agencies and clients alike as brands can and arguably need to innovate and engage meaningfully in real time in order to succeed.



**LYNN O'CONNOR
VOS**
CEO
Grey Healthcare Group

I was a nurse before I started working in advertising. And believe it or not, in all my years in

the industry, I don't think we've faced a more interesting and exciting turning point in healthcare. I believe it is time to advance the relationship between professionals, patients, providers, and payers to leverage emerging technologies to streamline care, improve the user interface, and strengthen the overall healthcare experience.

This is driven by the confluence of mass consumerization and professional need. Consumers have greater access and appetite for health information than ever before. They are actively seeking information to help improve their health.

On the other side of the equation, the Affordable Care Act puts healthcare professionals under greater pressure to ensure they deliver positive health outcomes for patients. So they need to rely on pharmaceutical companies for the communications they need to help their patients better manage their health.

At ghg, we believe that communications is the key to establishing a healthier world — and that belief inspires our work every day. We believe the remedy for chronic diseases — and indeed the remedy for many of the challenges at the heart of healthcare messages — lies in better communications. The opportunity is in finding the vehicles, motivators, and incentives that will drive long-term behavior change and improve the patient-professional dialogue.

I believe this transformational shift will ultimately deliver healthier outcomes for patients and create new opportunities for better business results for clients.

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FRANK POWERS
President
Dudnyk

The greatest opportunity for advertising agencies in the current environment is to better leverage emerging technology to use the

plethora of available information to drive novel insights, deploy custom campaigns, and demonstrate significant ROI on new platforms for our clients. It's an exciting time with today's technology we can now mine data to better drive sales. For example, using analytics to scan and score client website traffic, agencies can determine which leads have the highest potential for converting into customers. These leads are passed seamlessly to the sales organization and appropriate follow-up programs can be implemented to further nurture the lead, and ideally convert it into a new client — thereby improving ROI.

Regarding the field salesforce, if we know when, where, and how much of a detail was shared with a physician, specific programs can be enhanced or created to generate a deeper, seamless brand experience. For example, if the oncologist asks questions about immunology or appropriate dosing using a specific protocol, agencies can develop tactics to address these issues. When we know more about what our audience wants, we can proactively deliver on these specific needs.

The lack of comprehensive regulatory guidance to execute novel healthcare promotional activities in the emerging mobile and social venues is a consistent challenge. Most clients operate in a risk-averse environment, so taking a chance on an innovative program is not something they are willing to do. So instead, agencies concentrate on making sure that the point of differentiation for every product is clearly identifiable on the website. Then we make certain the message is visible, whether a healthcare professional (HCP) views the website on a laptop, iPad, or smartphone. This way, no matter where the HCP views the website and on what device, the HCP gets a clear understanding of the specific benefits that our brand provides.



ANNE STROUP
Managing Director
True Health

In a changed pharmaceutical landscape where spending the way to commercial success is no longer a viable option, agency

challenges are the same ones that clients wrestle

with every day: finding the right promotional formula so that brands can reach adoption goals within ever-shrinking budgets.

This universal challenge opens the door for advertising agencies to come to the table with a new way of thinking. We believe that effectively delivering a brand individually to the most valued customers produces new opportunities for business growth.

The art and science of making a brand relevant to the individual begins at the very inception of the brand. Taking a deeper dive into data helps provide insights that inform the brand's creative articulation — how it speaks, relates, and behaves. When a brand engages in a relevant dialogue with healthcare professionals or patients, it becomes a part of their daily life.

This new brand and customer relationship leads to greater brand adoption. But, how can it be profitably achieved considering today's budget parameters? The answer is a blend of technology and analytics.

Bringing brand relevance to specific customers on a singular level is enabled by connected cross-channel deployment and data collection platforms. These communication engines not only socialize the message, they generate the data so that what motivates the individual's adoption of the brand is understood. Rigorous analytics, along with primary and secondary research, allow companies and agencies to evolve the tactical plan, creative campaign, and the brand.

Inventing market-changing ideas that can be efficiently delivered is a significant challenge.



AL TOPIN
President
Topin & Associates

The conversations that take place daily in the pharmaceutical market continue to evolve and change.

More voices have been added as the roles of nurse practitioners and physician assistants grow while patients look to spouses, caregivers, and pharmacists for information and support.

The Internet, patient advocacy groups, and social media have multiplied the available channels of information. The FDA and payers have added rules, regulations, and uncertainty. Relationships keep shifting, and the standard pathways to successful communication now look more like a game of Chutes and Ladders.

To a medical advertising agency and its clients, these dynamic market conversations represent both a significant challenge and a competitive opportunity.

Monitoring these conversations and reacting

rapidly to changes are clearly an ongoing challenge. But responding with dynamic programs, modified strategies, and aligned multilevel messages creates unusual competitive opportunities.

There are few constants left in our business today. There always will be patients with medical needs. And there always will be innovative companies to create molecules, processes, and devices that can treat those needs. How they will communicate with the marketplace to tell physicians and patients the benefits of what they offer, how to use it, and how best to acquire it — that will continue to be in flux.

The insightful marketer and agency that keeps a critical eye on the market, listens to the many conversations, and remaps the most important relationships and pathways have a unique competitive advantage because it's not just about the drug anymore.



ALEXANDRA VON PLATO
President, Global
Chief Creative Officer
Digitas Health &
Publicis Healthcare
Communications
Group

We are most excited about the opportunity to help clients develop ideas that take full advantage of the new media reality to support the way people make healthcare decisions today.

After more than a decade of treating digital strategy as an accessory to advertising, marketers are finally entering the post-digital era.

In the coming years, we will see more brands move from ticking boxes on a tactical plan to inventing new go-to-market strategies that drive more meaningful customer engagement across channels and over time.

We are already beginning to see clients moving beyond campaign development to the creation of customer-fit strategies that integrate paid, owned and earned media. Yes, advertising will rightly still be a key tactic for many brands, but many more brands will achieve customer fit by combining finely cut segmentation and tailored content to engage with more customers, across more segments with a single integrated strategy.

We actually see innovation as the silver lining in the turbulent economy. If necessity continues to be the mother of invention, then we are about to go through a period of massive creativity and innovation.

The brands and agencies that embrace the new media reality to achieve customer fit will reinvent the campaign and transform healthcare marketing in the post digital age. **PV**



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