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## Letters

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## The appeal of the iPad...

It's hard not to be seduced by the power of the 9.7-inch, high-resolution LED-backlit IPS display and incredible multi-touch capabilities, all bundled in a sleek casing that is light enough to take anywhere. The iPad, what will Steve Jobs and his techno-creatives think of next? Like all inventions, the second offering to the market is not far behind. Dell is preparing to launch its 7-inch Android Tablet called the Dell Streak.

Whether you Apple or Droid, smart devices are here to stay and are providing pharmaceutical companies and their communications partners with a whole new way to address their customer bases: physicians, patients, care givers, etc.

As reported in this month's feature article "Pharma is Taking Its Byte of the Apple," pharmaceutical companies are jumping on the consumer iPad bandwagon and equipping their sales forces with the Apple mobile tablets and other smart phones and devices. The strategy is easy to understand. With an iPad in hand, a sales representative can bring the product story to life in a more accessible and engaging way, according to Darren Ross of Cramer. And with physician engagement mission critical today, an iPad or smart phone is the smart bet for companies looking to provide value to their customer engagements.

As mobile devices become more powerful, more people, including physicians and other healthcare professionals, are relying on them as their point of entry onto the Web. Eileen O'Brien says while mobile marketing is not for every brand, with the ability to target and deliver a unique brand experience, it's a channel that should be explored as part of the marketing mix.

Some recent statistics are, quite frankly, amazing: there are 5,820 medical, health, and fitness apps available for smart phones today, according to MobiHealth; 81% of physicians want more apps related to their specialty, says Manhattan Research, which also reports that 71% of physicians believe their PDA/smart phone is essential to their practice; and 87% of physicians rely heavily on their mobile devices for clinical decision support, according to Skyscape.

This digital infusion opens doors across the board: clinical trials can be enhanced; CRM can be provided in a more targeted fashion; messages can be brought to life in new and different ways; and marketing, well let's face it, the sky's the limit.

My colleague Robin Robinson, who reports on consumer- and industry-related technology and the like for the publication, recently had the opportunity to see first-hand how some consumer buzz-generators can be applied to industry tactics at a Cramer-sponsored A to Z Marketing Technology event. She was particularly taken with Web keys that look like USBs (but aren't) that plug into any USB port and take users directly to a microsite where they can find relevant, targeted information. The Web key and microsite are trackable so companies can identify who is looking at the site and how they are participating in online activities. One of Cramer's clients has used this tool for product education and has experienced a high level of online participation from newly diagnosed patients researching their treatment options. Multiple landing pages can be designed to rotate on the site in order to alter the look and feel for users who may log in multiple times.

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Apples to Droids