

» MARKETING: SOCIAL MEDIA

TO TWITTER AND
BEYOND

Pharmaceutical marketing will include social media, but the verdict is still out on its ultimate impact on stakeholders.



For several years there has been much debate regarding whether pharma companies should even use social media as a means to communicate with its consumers. Our experts project that social media will move beyond Twitter and support many functions within marketing strategies, thus securing a permanent place in the industry's marketing channels.

Unquestionably the role of social media in healthcare has its place, says Mike Rutstein, president of StrikeForce Communications.

"In many ways it may offer significant long-term opportunities to generate a dialogue and provide relevant and motivating content for patients and their caregivers," he says. "However, used incorrectly, social media also brings about many risks, including losing control of the brand story and tarnishing the reputation of pharmaceutical companies as intervening in sacred spaces for commercial purposes."

The time has come to have less chatter about the channel and put more focus on the idea and messaging, Mr. Rutstein says.

Marc Ferrara

Jobson Medical Information

"We foresee that social media will become a significant channel in the marketing mix for pharmaceutical and biotechnology organizations."

"Brand managers want to communicate with key stakeholders with the fundamental building blocks in place and a sound planning strategy, but the role of social media, if any, should develop naturally," he says. "Only with time and careful consideration will we come to realize the full potential of social media, as well as its implications and effectiveness."

Elizabeth Estes, executive VP, chief strategy officer, GA Communication Group, believes the natural flow of social media in the industry will take the shape of more niche and targeted groups, including expanded disease communities.

"Patients now own the media and will increasingly share their experiences, both good and bad," Ms. Estes says. "Although the

A BREAKDOWN OF PHARMA SOCIAL MEDIA

Cegedem Relationship Management recently conducted an opinion survey among decision makers in the pharmaceutical industry regarding current trends and issues, including the use of social media. Below are some of the findings.

Social Media Use

- 59% of respondents reported using social media for marketing.
- 34% of respondents reported using social media for PR.
- 27% of respondents reported using social media for internal communications.
- 14% of respondents reported using social media for CRM.
- 11% of respondents reported using social media for human resources.
- 2% of respondents reported using social media for other functions.
- 3% of respondents reported they were not using social media.

Investment in Social Media

- 51% reported less than 5% of the budget was allocated to social media channels.
- 22% reported 5% to 10% of the budget was allocated to social media channels.
- 9% reported 11% to 20% of the budget was allocated to social media channels.
- 2% reported more than 20% of the budget was allocated to social media channels.
- 16% reported they didn't know what the budget allocation was.

Source: Cegedim Relationship Management. For more information, visit cegedim.com.

Lisa Ebert*Medicus Life Brands*

"As marketers we must resist the temptation to use social media as a platform for selling. Rather, we should focus on conversing, building communities, maintaining relationships, and promoting advocacy."

**Jay Bigelow***MicroMass Communications*

"Brand managers need to find ways to insert their brands into the conversation that will be accepted, instead of trying to control the conversation."

FDA may disagree, this power will continue to disrupt the gatekeepers, and make it virtually impossible for brands and companies to ignore these conversations."

SOCIAL MEDIA AND STAKEHOLDERS

As the industry moves into an era where the number of stakeholders is increasing and the impact of stakeholders is shifting, it will be important to leverage the channel of social media in the form of online social networks and the many interactions that they enable.

According to Terry Hisey, vice chairman, U.S. life sciences leader, Deloitte, social networking is playing an increasingly pivotal role in the dissemination, collection, and facilitation of interactions in the healthcare arena.

"Social networking is not just about technology but rather technology enabled strategies that lead to desired actions and behaviors that ultimately drive improved patient outcomes in the healthcare sector," Mr. Hisey says.

Marketers need to embrace the way in which social media is now making information acquisition and connectivity with others dramatically easier for everyone — patients, providers, physicians, etc.. This evolution will allow brand marketers to hit their targets with more than just interruptive promotional messages.

"Social media will blur the lines between advertising and content," says Todd LaRoche, executive VP, managing director of creative, Palio. "Advertising is becoming more about offering ways for patients and physicians to

take better care of themselves, and each other, than it is about selling."

According to Lisa Ebert, managing director, at Medicus Life Brands, the complex mix of stakeholders in the pharma industry demands a deep understanding of what motivates different individuals to share certain types of information in certain communities vs. others. With this deep understanding, engaging in social media — as part of an overall integrated communications plan — has the potential to help healthcare brands build relationships with customers via both branded and non-branded efforts from early market development through patent expiration.

"As marketers we must resist the temptation to use social media as a platform for selling," Ms. Ebert says. "Rather, we should focus on conversing, building communities, maintaining relationships, and promoting advocacy. Our measures will shift from looking at behaviors, such as page visits and click-throughs, to analyzing changes in stakeholder attitudes."

Pharma should look toward successful examples in other industries to learn how to adapt and implement the medium.

"Whether it's leveraging social media to improve customer-service effectiveness like Comcast has done, or using social media to develop new products, services, and customer-experience improvements like Dell and Starbucks have done, the ultimate opportunity that social media provides is to get a better understanding of customer wants, needs, and behaviors, and align business objectives with these insights," advises Ken Burbary, director

SOCIAL NETWORKS GAIN POWER AROUND THE WORLD

SSI's study of more than 5,000 adults in the United States, Europe, and Japan demonstrates the growing power of social networks. Among 18 to 24 year olds in all countries studied, social network usage is high — more than 80%. The social network phenomenon, however, is not limited to the young. In the United Kingdom, the United States, France, and Spain, about half of all study respondents reported that they used social media within the last week. Even more surprising is the growing percentage of people older than 45 years participating in social networks — 40% in the U.S., 45% in the UK, and 50% in Spain.

Source: Survey Sampling International. For more information, visit surveysampling.com.

**Mike Rutstein***StrikeForce Communications*

"Used incorrectly, social media can bring about many risks, including losing control of the brand story and tarnishing the reputation of pharmaceutical companies as intervening in sacred spaces for commercial purposes."

of digital and social media, advisory services, Ernst & Young.

Participating in social media will require the industry to let go of old ideals, says Nancy Beesley, chief marketing officer, HC&B Healthcare Communications.

"The Internet and social media have essentially redefined the way we communicate with our target audiences," she says. "We gave patients and doctors information on our terms and told them what we wanted them to know about our products. Now, consumers are more in control of the conversation by talking among themselves through online communities and applications.

INDUSTRY MARKETING LEADERS DISCUSS SOCIAL MEDIA GOALS

According to industry social media experts, there are at least 350 examples of pharma or healthcare related social media programs online, according to Jonathan Richman and his social media wiki (visit: doseofdigital.com/healthcare-pharma-social-media-wiki/). The level of pharma engagement ranges from conservative efforts to full on social marketing, with a fair amount of abstainers still on the sidelines. PharmaVOICE had the opportunity to speak with two marketing professionals in the industry about their companies' plans for social media in the coming year.

Below are excerpts from our Q&A with Holly Babirak, senior product manager at Bausch + Lomb, and Mike Derkacz, VP, marketing, CNS, at Cephalon.

Q: HOW IS YOUR COMPANY PRESENTLY EMPLOYING SOCIAL MEDIA IN ITS MARKETING STRATEGIES?

HOLLY BABIRAK, Bausch + Lomb. The pharma division of Bausch + Lomb is currently not using social media as part of its marketing strategies. The current regulatory environment dictates that marketing pharmaceutical products via social media be entered into cautiously. The rules of the game are still somewhat grey. However, Bausch + Lomb does conduct social media outreach for the broader company, including OTC, vision care, surgical products, corporate news, and global philanthropy. Doing so builds the brand without risking missteps in a grey regulatory environment in the pharma space.

MIKE DERKACZ, Cephalon. Social media will continue to grow as an important channel for the pharmaceutical industry to help people get information in a timely, relevant, and transparent way. At Cephalon, we understand the need to be proactive in the social media space, so we've begun by implementing a corporate-wide policy with guidance on how to interact in social media platforms as a company and for all of our brands. We believe the first important step is listening — marketers need to understand who's out there and what they're saying before entering the conversation. We've conducted an online audit of our brands to gain insights on how social media

is changing the landscape and to identify who is shaping the message that is ultimately received by customers — be they physicians, patients, or payers. Once we have a sense of the customer landscape, we can look at ways to engage them or be a part of online conversations. We have held Web-based market research with community opinion leaders, where we interact with bloggers to identify, validate, and modify customer insights that will help drive our ability to engage key customer segments. We're beginning by learning as much as we can about what is already out there and by making informed decisions on how to become more engaged with our customers.

Q: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ADVANTAGES TO USING SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN THE BIO/PHARMA MARKETING SPACE?

HOLLY BABIRAK, Bausch + Lomb. The fast-paced, at-your-fingertips nature of social media matches well with the needs of physicians who seek to gain information quickly. Social media would be an excellent component to the overall marketing mix for products whose lifecycle and positioning require reminder ads, whose utilization spreads across a broad physician population or for consumer-focused products. Examples might include products in crowded markets, well-known products that might be phasing out salesforce support, high-potential launch products to be used by the FP, GP, and internal medicine specialty, for example. However, these tools will not replace traditional professional marketing strategies because the reach is so unpredictable. Social media targeting becomes more unpredictable with more specialized products. The need to reach the right physician audience confirms that it is critical to have a variety of marketing tools in the mix as physicians continue to increase the different means they are utilizing to seek information. Social media could potentially be one of these tools, but not the primary one. On the flip side, social media could very well lead the way in marketing tactics for consumer-based strategies.

MIKE DERKACZ, Cephalon. Gaining direct insights from our customers is one of the great

advantages of using social media in the healthcare space. We can gather actionable insights from what people are posting online. We gain valuable insights from traditional market research but social media offers a glimpse at what the customer doesn't say "behind the glass." That additional insight offers deeper understanding of customers that can fuel our ability to provide appropriate, relevant, and meaningful content. Social media will continue to augment conventional activities and may eventually play a bigger role but I don't anticipate a drastic change in the next few years where the current strategies are replaced entirely. The use of social media is still situation-dependent and may not be right for all brands or disease states, so it's important to evaluate its use as part of the overall marketing mix and determine what tactics make the most sense for each case.

Q: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PITFALLS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN THE BIO/PHARMA SPACE?

HOLLY BABIRAK, Bausch + Lomb. Measuring return is a challenge with most pharmaceutical marketing tactics, but it is particularly challenging with social media. The ability to target a particular audience, especially for a specialty product has not been perfected, so much of the spend could potentially be going toward unprofitable impressions. The regulatory rules of social media marketing are not clearly defined and are still subject to interpretation, which is somewhat risky. The nature of the medium is brief and concise. However, the need for full disclosure of risks associated with a product are prohibitive to that very conciseness. Partnering with the regulatory and legal counsel for the brand early in the process of initiating a social media tactic will be critical to the implementation and early assessment of the true cost and impact of the tactic.

MIKE DERKACZ, Cephalon. One pitfall could be if a company considers using social media just because it's a new channel. Any strategy still has to be the right fit for the brand and for the audience. It's important not to force social media tactics, but to be genuine and transparent in the approach and fully understand the platforms.

Chris DeAngelis

Survey Sampling International

"Through social media, we have the chance to move from one-way to two-way communications — from simply pushing messages out to audiences to listening and responding to them."



Leigh Householder

GSW Worldwide

"If pharmaceutical companies want real ROI from their investment in social media, they have to start thinking about it as a commitment rather than as a campaign."

could just be the answer," says Jon Hudson, VP, digital and media services, MedThink Communications. "The first company to step up, pull the curtain back, and be completely transparent will be the catalyst for change for the entire industry."

Mr. Hudson predicts that soon more pharmaceutical companies will truly embrace social media and become fully transparent in all that they communicate. This may include one-on-one conversations and addressing controversial issues, including how drugs are priced, he says.

Social media provide a vast opportunity to gather opinions from millions of people worldwide. Through social networks, researchers have the chance to listen to their targets — and use the information they hear to shape messaging in both new and traditional channels.

"For the first time, a researcher truly can be the proverbial fly on the wall," says Chris DeAngelis, VP of sales, North America, Survey Sampling International. "Through social media, we have the chance to move from one-way to two-way communications — from simply pushing messages out to audiences to listening and responding to them. This dialogue opportunity can take both marketing and research a tremendous way forward in effectiveness."

The problem is that many pharma mar-



R. Shane Kennedy

Sudler Digital

"Pharma companies should be scouring tweets, blogs, and posts to source out real-time stories, problems, and even adverse events to help improve outcomes."



eters still have the mindset of "how do we maximize this channel for marketing growth as opposed to how do we build relationships with our customers," according to R. Shane Kennedy, executive VP and managing director, Sudler Digital.

"Pharma companies are still afraid to actually listen to their customers outside of focus groups," Mr. Kennedy says. "Rather pharma companies should be scouring tweets, blogs, and posts to source out real-time stories, problems, and even adverse events to help improve outcomes."

Jobson Medical Information research illustrates how effective social media can be for collecting data and identifying consumer needs.

"We foresee that social media will become a significant channel in the marketing mix for pharmaceutical and biotechnology organizations," says Marc Ferrara, CEO, information services division, Jobson Medical Information. "Feedback from our recent efforts in this area — PharmQD and SightNation — reveals that social media has created a robust arena for product discussion, information solicitation, and the exchange of practice issues and best practices among practicing pharmacists."

While social media marketing can be effective by allowing pharma companies to get closer to patients, healthcare professionals, and caregivers, the real benefit that pharma companies can derive from social media will be through integration across enterprise business functions, Mr. Burbary says.

Ahnall Purohit, Ph.D., CEO and president,

"Consumers can say good things and bad about our brands, and there's nothing we can do about it," Ms. Beesley continues. "So we need to be okay with the conversation, find a way to live in a space that we can't control, and embrace the changing landscape."

Jay Bigelow, CEO of MicroMass Communications, agrees with Ms. Beesley. Rather than pushing messages from the marketing side, conversations and decisions are now being pulled from the consumer side.

"Today, customers are really in control; they are determining what information they want, when and where they want it, and how want to they interact," Mr. Bigelow says. "As a result, brand managers need to find ways to insert their brands into the conversation that will be accepted, instead of trying to control the conversation."

Patients, physicians, caregivers, and healthcare information seekers now control the conversation, and pharmaceutical companies need to engage on their customers' terms.

SOCIAL MEDIA: A TWO-WAY DIALOGUE

As pharma engages more and more in social media it may come to realize the power of two-way dialog being leveraged differently across diverse social media platforms depending on the communications objective, the audience, and the therapeutic category.

Leigh Householder, digital strategist, at GSW Worldwide, hopes that the industry will catch on to the two-way conversation needed to make social media effective.

"One-way communication is out of place in social media," Ms. Householder says. "If pharmaceutical companies want real ROI from their investment in social media, they have to start thinking about it as a commitment rather than as a campaign."

David Ormesher, CEO of closerlook inc., holds the same view as Ms. Householder.

"There are several important values that have become core to the experience of social media, and woe to the marketers who violate the social contract implicit in this medium," Mr. Ormesher says. "At the center of social media is the idea of community and with it a commitment to collaboration, mutual respect, honesty, reciprocity, kinship, and relevance. Old information structures are falling away, and consumers and physicians are looking for new structures that embody both convenience and authenticity."

The industry needs more leaders in the space to prove best practices and lessons learned that will convince reluctant stakeholders that this is a media channel with value.

"The pharmaceutical industry needs a pill to fix its reputational issues, and social media

Purohit Navigation, believes the day will soon come when social media are used in healthcare communications in the same manner that other industries have adopted them: as part of their online marketing spend.

“Social media provides the ability to build, maintain, and strengthen relationships and, ultimately, boost trust and credibility in a brand,” Dr. Purohit says. “However, there is a pitfall — focusing on the technology while losing sight of the conversation that happens as a result of the technology.”

Just tweeting promotional messages and PR releases falls short of developing a mutually beneficial relationship, so Dr. Purohit advises her clients to actively develop ongoing tactics that focus on two-way communications that benefit their brands and their customers.

“The tools used and how they can be used remain unsettled because of regulatory issues,” she says. “Nonetheless, we are confident that social interactions will be a major component of healthcare communications in the near future.”

Marketers will continue to increase their use of social media in peer-to-peer communications, agrees Leo Francis, Ph.D., president, Publicis Medical Education Group.

“These forums allow healthcare professionals to discuss medical issues, and air and share their opinions freely without being limited by legal and regulatory restrictions,” he says. “And because the conversation takes place among peers who offer credibility, authority, and respect to the conversation, these forums can have a significant impact on changing the

behavior of participants. Social media is also, of course, being used to generate a dialogue to enhance patient awareness, support, and education among unbranded websites, where sufferers can find information from patient spokespeople and advocates. Patients can also share their experiences and feelings with others, making them feel they are not alone. In the future, marketers will continue to search for ways to harness social media for promotional purposes, with, in the United States, the blessings of DDMAC, of course.” ♦

PharmaVOICE welcomes comments about this article. E-mail us at feedback@pharmavoice.com.

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EXPERTS

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Industry Service Companies Lead by Social Media Example

AS THE INDUSTRY GRAPPLES WITH THE QUESTIONS SURROUNDING SOCIAL MEDIA, MANY OF THE COMPANIES THAT SERVICE PHARMA ARE ALSO WORKING OUT THE SAME HURDLES. PHARMAVOICE ASKED SEVERAL ORGANIZATIONS HOW THEY ARE USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN THEIR OWN BUSINESS EFFORTS.



NANCY BEESLEY is Chief Marketing Officer at HC&B Healthcare Communications, a full-service healthcare marketing agency that

services pharmaceutical, medical device, biotechnology, hospital, payer, and provider clients. For more information, visit hcbhealth.com.

“We plan to continue to use social media like crazy, because so far it has worked well. In addition to our company Facebook page, we have a blog we call Med Men — a take on our universally favorite TV show Mad Men — that we update constantly with new posts. Our company’s success with social media may be due to our location in Austin, which is known as a techie, social-media driven city, as well as a very young city. We are constantly getting calls from folks who have found Med Men or our Facebook page because they are ready for something different.”



BRAD DAVIDSON is Senior VP, Management Supervisor, Ogilvy CommonHealth Worldwide, a provider of 360-degree marketing services. For more

information, visit ogilvycommonhealth.com.

“Our company has recognized that the first key step in understanding the digital landscape is to create a map of the important people and places that relate to the brand or product, which we call a Virtual Community Map online leadership analysis. A new form of influence mapping is required to identify and engage the emerging eKOL, as well as to track the emerging health lexicon as it evolves in

real time on the Internet. With this first step, we are able to determine the appropriate next steps to take in terms of evolving messaging, relationships, and campaigns that will stay relevant and have a share of voice in the evolving information ecosystem.”



DAVID HAHN is Chief Operating Officer of The Medical Affairs Company (TMAC), a provider of strategically aligned and customized MSL programs.

For more information, visit themedicalaffairscompany.com.

“One of our goals with social media efforts is to build a pool of great people who are excited to work at and with TMAC. Therefore, TMAC has moved away from traditional Web 1.0 recruiting and promotes its career opportunities through social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Soon, TMAC plans to move toward the adoption of Web 2.0 platforms to augment its client-facing marketing campaigns. Gone are the days of static corporate web sites with one directional PR. Today’s highly educated and savvy decision maker expects advanced tools, such as widgets and videos, that give the potential client a greater window into a company’s corporate culture and philosophy.”



LEIGH HOUSEHOLDER is a digital strategist at GSW Worldwide, a provider of an array of services from strategic insight and guidance, branding and

hallmark creation, prelaunch, and disease-state awareness to medical education, digital and closed-loop marketing, patient outcomes,

brand entertainment, and DTC campaigns. For more information, visit gsw-w.com.

“We read a lot of information online and talk with others both online and off, and share our thoughts on various online communication channels. This action creates opportunities for discussion and for meeting valuable people. Our strategy is to look for big ideas in health-care and outside the industry by talking to smart people online and off. Then, we openly share our ideas and perspectives through blogs, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Slideshare. We’ve met a number of like-minded people this way — from interesting experts to potential clients to outstanding global talent.”



R. SHANE KENNEDY is Executive VP and Managing Director, Sudler Digital, a developer of interactive relationships that

empower customers to access the information that is most relevant, offering key insights into the decision-making process. For more information, visit sudlerdigital.com.

“Sudler Digital uses a range of social media, including Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Flickr. We believe living by our own recommendations is the best way to be convincing.”



TODD LAROCHE is Executive VP, Managing Director of Creative, Palio, which is a full-spectrum advertising and communications agency. For more information, visit palio.com.

“Palo has been using social media as a marketing tool for quite some time now. We have a presence on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Flickr, among others, as well as a blog, which gives people a quick way to see how our folks think. In short, we’re using social media as a tool to recruit, to promote, inform, and engage our current clients around the issues driving the pharma marketing space.”



DOUG MACK is President of Event Support Services Rx, the parent company of Advantage Broadcast Solutions, AV Solutions, and Total Health Rewards. For more information, visit essrx.com.

“Social media may help in developing content for national meetings and also assist in recruitment. For HCPs who are excited about a program they are going to, or recently participated in, social media provides an outlet to spread the word.”



MICHAEL SZUMERA is VP, Public Relations Practice Lead, MedThink Communications, a healthcare agency that provides full-service offerings with a focus on scientific and promotional communications. For more information, visit medthink.com.

“MedThink uses social media as a way to educate clients and followers, as well as to notify people about agency initiatives. Clients turn to our social media properties for relevant news and resources. We also use our properties to provide information on broader trends affecting communications and to engage with people in our industry.”

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