

» SALES TOOLS

DIGITAL TOOLS OPEN PHYSICIAN DOORS

Digital tools and technologies are shaping new sales trends.

Digital media touch all facets of the relationship between pharmaceutical companies and prescribers. The reliance on building and sustaining the customer relationship through face-to-face interactions is changing dramatically. The increase in multichannel communications with customers and in particular the significance of the digital channel have resulted in an evolved relationship management model that recognizes customer preference related to communication channels of choice.

“Organizations are becoming more sophisticated in their ability to collect and analyze how customers prefer to be communicated with and what information customers want from the organization and where they want to get that information,” says Karla Anderson, partner and principal, pharmaceutical and life sciences advisory practice, PwC. “The result is a more refined customer interaction model that acknowledges that a successful customer relationship can be developed and grown through multiple communication channels.”

Now more than ever, physicians live in the digital age, with quality real-time education, information, and patient management tools available on demand, says Jay Bolling, CEO, Roska Healthcare. Digital technologies will continue to facilitate quality peer-to-peer connections among physicians and patients alike.

“As an industry, we’ll find the most successful health outcomes result from programs that optimize and improve the quality of the in-office doctor-to-patient dialogue and relationships,” he says.

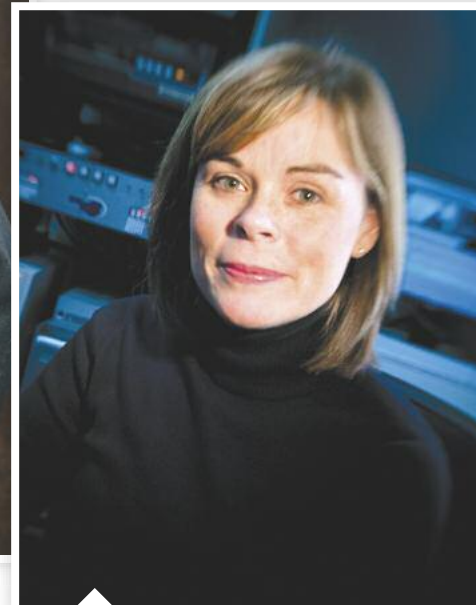
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ness digital health trends impacting just about every physician interaction.

“In a word, digital health trends are completely transforming every aspect of how life-science companies communicate with physicians,” says Rick Keefer, president and CEO, Publicis Touchpoint Solutions. “Newer digital communication channels help fulfill the objective of providing physicians with what

customers want, when they want it, and how they want it.”

For example, field representatives are increasingly using tablet PCs and now iPads in their discussions with physicians. The use of live video detailing, which is expanding dramatically, can only occur because of innovations in the digital arena, he says. Even physicians’ interest in and use of e-sampling and e-detailing — as well as electronic distribution of medical education — is growing.

Companies are continuing to invest in new technologies and physician-oriented mobile and health applications that provide new ways to sell and are easy to implement.

“Supporting traditional sales activity with a digital strategy enables organizations to demonstrate thought leadership and forge discussion between doctors and patients about treatment options, and exposes a wider audience to key brand messages,” says Greg Barrett, VP, Marketing, Daiichi Sankyo. “Through more interactive content, reps will be able to provide detailed information and deliver a richer, better and more effective sales experience.”

Digital engagement tactics or digital pro-

grams help companies capture all of the data points and use them to paint a better picture of physician behavior and preferences across a range of areas. The longer reps can capture integrated data and the more data available, the clearer a picture they have of how physicians like to receive information.

“This is when CRM really works and can be used to provide better service and value to physicians and ultimately the patient,” says Richard Micali, senior VP, sales services, at PDI.

More companies are using technology to schedule satellite broadcast meetings and webcasts to provide their sales reps with a meaningful, engaging, and appealing event to invite their area targets to. These meetings combine the benefits of local, face-to-face interactions with a controlled and unified national message — often presented by the scientists and physicians from whom HCPs around the country most want to hear.

“Having the ability to invite their local HCPs to intriguing and detailed scientific presentations, can enhance sales reps’ credibility and access,” says Doug Mack, president of Event Support Services Rx.

The digital universe helps reps collaborate

with those within the company as well, says Kelly Gratz, president, inVentiv Selling Accelerators.

“In many cases, sales and marketing have often worked in silos,” she says. “Now, we are working with clients to blend those disciplines to strengthen the offering via closed loop marketing, virtual promotion, and data collection and analytics to continuously evolve the mix.”

The data collected across these platforms inform the deployment strategy and ultimately drives value to the brand and the client, and most importantly, to HCP audiences.

“The iPad is an excellent example of how quickly technology can change the way the field force has, and will continue to, evolve in the months to come,” she says. “Integration with these evolving channels and the manner in which they can be leveraged to engage HCPs in valuable conversations helps make the time that HCPs do spend engaged with a brand as valuable as possible.” ♦

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

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KARLA ANDERSON. Partner and Principal, Pharmaceutical & Life Sciences Advisory Practice, PricewaterhouseCoopers, which focuses on audit and assurance, tax, and advisory services in 16 key industries and provides targeted services that include — but are not limited to — human resources, deals, forensics, and consulting services. For more information, visit pwc.com.

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comprehensive and integrated array of outsourced biopharma message delivery channels — field teams, virtual teams, and clinical education teams — plus full-service support solutions.

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