LAST Word



Taking Digital Communications to the

Next Level

JAY BOLLING, President and CEO of Roska Healthcare Advertising, provides his insights on the changing marketing landscape.

PV: Last year, Roska took a bold step and was among the first healthcare agencies to use a QR code as part of a marketing campaign. How has the industry's use of QR codes changed in the past

BOLLING: According to a survey fielded last year at this time, about half of the respondents said they were somewhat familiar with QR codes, while only 12.3% said they were very familiar. Results from a recent follow up survey found that 46.6% said they were somewhat familiar and overall 43.1% said they were very familiar. Last year, 64% of the marketers reported that their companies are not currently using QR codes for marketing purposes and another 28% weren't sure. This year, 33.3% of respondents are using QR codes in a variety of marketing tactics, including conference materials (29.3%), patient handouts/brochures (25.9%), professional trade journals (24.1%), pharmaceutical trade journal ads (24.1%), consumer magazine ads (19%), sales aids (19%), doctor's inoffice posters (17.2%), newspaper ads (10.3%), and outdoor (6.9%).

There is no doubt that the use of QR codes is on the rise (72.4% said they have noticed an increase in marketing campaigns), however marketers need to do a better job in providing relevant information to the user. Among this year's survey respondents, 53.4% found that the content provided was not useful.

PV: How can companies and their communications agencies break through the white noise? **BOLLING:** Everyone loves highly creative campaigns. We give them awards, share them virally, and give them equal viewing status with the game during Super Bowl. Does this mean they "break through the white noise"? And, while we love to talk about the ads, do we always remember the brands? And even if we do, does that mean these ads actually move market share?

If we truly want our healthcare marketing efforts to stand out from the competition and break through the white noise, let's ensure we're offering something of value, because it's the overall value proposition that will get people's attention and



break through the white noise, and not a clever headline

PV: How are the changing needs of clients impacting their marketing partners?

BOLLING: As clients focus on a new set of acronyms — CRM, ROI, SEO, SEM, and NPP agency models must shift as well. Engagement is the new awareness, and response is the new recall. Sales calls may or may not include a rep; medical journal print ads will be replaced by paid search; sales aids are shifting to tablets; and websites are turning into mobile platforms. Whether by M&A or organic growth, tomorrow's agencies won't be traditional or digital, they'll be customer-centric, multichannel communication specialists — now we just have to come up with a new acronym for that one.

PV: How will communications change in the future? **BOLLING:** We are starting to see pharma throw off the tried-and-true methods and embrace innovative communications strategies to answer critical questions such as how to reach more customers with the least amount of marketing investment and how to better understand their target audiences and what influences their decisions. To achieve their objectives, companies will restructure their clinical, marketing, and sales strategies to include greater use of: targeted drug therapy and diagnostic collaboration; payer partnerships; digital technology; nonpersonal promotion; influence mapping; and pharmacoeconomic

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