



📌 Social Media for Patient Recruitment: Only the Beginning

The biggest barrier for pharmaceutical companies to overcome in conducting a clinical trial is actually recruiting patients to participate. Recruiting has always been an issue but it has been exacerbated in recent years, causing many trials to be delayed or put on hold completely due to lack of participants.

Social media could play a big role in reversing this trend. According to the Pew Research Center, 57% of American adults surf the Web for health-related information. The Pew Research Center also reports that 52% of Americans age 18-64, and 75% of those age 18-29, are on at least one social networking site.

According to Scott Connor, VP of Marketing for Acurian, a clinical trial patient recruitment and retention provider, with Americans increasingly using the Web for both medical and networking purposes, pharmaceutical companies now have a fresh pool to tap to fulfill trial quotas. Sites like Facebook and MySpace not only help companies spread the word about specific trials but they can also help lower the cost per patient while targeting specific demographics.

“The Facebook ad network can display a clinical trial message to those Facebook users that you only want to target—say, women age 40-54 for your female incontinence study—and then you can narrow it further to only those women who live within 25 miles of your active clinical trial sites,” Connor said.

The ability to place ads within a certain city limit or ZIP code is a huge benefit over traditional advertising channels, said Connor, because it allows companies to target people who are most likely to take part in a trial.

“This geographic targeting is super critical when it comes to trial messaging and that’s because we all know that travel distance to the research site is still, by far, the number-one reason why a patient will or will not choose to participate,” said Connor.

For better or worse, social networking sites can also quickly spread information. This can allow companies to quickly and cheaply reach audiences that were previously unattainable. This “viral” quality can be an important aspect of the marketing strategy, but just because social sites can be a valuable tool, they aren’t an end-all, be-all for patient recruitment.

“Let me caution that social networking is not a recruitment panacea. Rarely can a social networking campaign alone fulfill the enrollment goal for any one clinical study,” Connor stated. “Web 2.0 is simply part of the media mix; that’s not a way to generate patients for free, please understand that.”

But these sites are definitely a boon for those who understand how to correctly use them.



“Last year, we generated 54% of our pre-qualified patient referrals via social networking channels and proprietary online health networks,” Connor said.

For now, social networking sites work most effectively for recruiting for trials that concentrate on a larger and younger audience, as this demographic has the most social media interest and savvy. But as this generation ages, noticeable shifts in social media usage should follow, paving the way for improved success in recruiting clinical trial participants. In fact, from 2009 to 2010, Americans over age 55 on Facebook increased by 923%. This astonishing statistic spells good fortune for future trial recruitment.

Social networking sites provide unlimited potential for companies looking to reach their core market, especially if they are small demographics that classic approaches have traditionally failed to reach. And if they can help companies with a difficult task such as patient recruitment, imagine what they can do in other areas of marketing and public relations.

For more information on how your company can use social media to recruit for clinical trials, check out Acurian’s white paper, “Leveraging On-Line Social Networks for Clinical Trial Patient Recruitment,” and the podcast with Scott Connor, at www.pharmavoice.com.

📌 Beginner 📌 Intermediate 📌 Advanced

The Time to Lay Out Your iPad Strategy Is NOW

The iPad burst onto the consumer scene with the kind of hype and buzz that only Apple can seem to generate. The device has been a hit with users, despite the criticisms of naysayers who have condemned the iPad as a glorified, larger iPhone that doesn't make calls. The iPad is here to stay, as Apple recently announced (<http://hcp.lv/dpogUT>) that sales have topped three million units, and all signs point to more of the same success when it goes on sale in nine more countries.

The question is: What is your company doing to grab a piece of the iPad pie? At this point, DTC marketers don't have the luxury of taking a wait-and-see approach when it comes to the iPad. They should be thinking about ways to get in early and create useful healthcare apps.

Sanofi-aventis understood this months ago when it created the GoMeals app (<http://hcp.lv/dbU1bY>), making it easier for patients with diabetes to make smart dietary decisions. Granted, there are many diabetes cookbooks available, but there's something to be said for creating the first diabetes cookbook app for the iPad. Being the first to offer targeted apps to key patient groups will have great advantages, and the real value will come in being able to serve iAds within those apps.

What sorts of applications could pharma companies offer to iPad users? Pharma Marketing's John Mack offered up several suggestions in an early April blog post (<http://hcp.lv/cRDjD6>):

- Weekly/monthly health eMagazine for disease state information
- 3-D, touch interactive MOAs for disease or treatment education
- Branded support program materials delivered weekly or daily
- Social media-based content for brands or disease groups

It will be interesting to see how creatively and quickly pharma companies roll out applications like these for the iPad. If the industry's foray into social media is any indication, the early adopters can expect to see a huge return on their investment.



Pfizer, AstraZeneca Roll Out New iPhone Features for Physicians

Those of you who read our BDI Social & Healthcare Communications recap (<http://hcp.lv/c9ADJ6>) already know that some pharma companies are leading the way when it comes to engaging with a social media- and tech-savvy public. Pfizer and AstraZeneca have been doing a good job of utilizing new and efficient technology to their benefit, and earlier this month, they displayed their commitment to staying ahead of the curve yet again.

It's no secret that physicians crave their information on the go. If a company isn't offering some form of mobile application, they are missing out on a large audience of healthcare professionals. Knowing this, Pfizer and AZ added some innovative features to their iPhone and iPod Touch applications, enabling physicians and allied health professionals to pose on-label questions or file adverse event reports (AERs) on multiple brands. Now, any physician who accesses the highly popular Epocrates drug reference guide on either of these devices can directly access these features on the drug profiles of more than 40 Pfizer brands and eight AZ products.

We all know how hard it is to go from having an idea about how to utilize new technology to actually creating and executing an effective plan, especially in the heavily regulated pharmaceutical industry. Kudos to both of these companies for providing healthcare professionals with a quick and easy way to gain information about medications or report AERs.

Pfizer, AZ let clinicians query medical affairs staff via mobile phone (<http://hcp.lv/cTebvF>)
Physician Mobile: MDs are Mad About Mobile (<http://hcp.lv/b2rmye>)



Follow them on Twitter!

Copy4Pharma – "Copywriter for a digital agency specializing in the pharmaceutical industry."
<http://twitter.com/Copy4Pharma>

Lewis Forman – "SEO/SEM/Social Marketer working for a fantastic company in Norwood, MA. Boston Bruins fanatic and PMC Rider."
<http://twitter.com/lewisgprod>

Melissa Davies – "Social Media Practice Lead at Return on Focus. Passionate about healthcare and social media. Mom of 2 girls."
<http://twitter.com/MelissaKDavies>

Pharmainfo NET – "Pharmaceutical News."
<http://twitter.com/pharmainfonet>

Tim McLaughlin – "Senior Interactive Account Executive for Roska Digital."
<http://twitter.com/TPMcLaughlin>



Social Media Tool of the Month: The Hubspot Dashboard

Every so often, we like to profile a program or app that has had a tremendous impact in the field of social/digital media so that you can implement it and thank us later. You may be familiar with a company called Hubspot, and you may have even checked out one of the many webinars they provide for free to those looking to learn the latest and greatest social media tools and tricks. What you may not know is that the company has created the ultimate social media/SEO dashboard to accommodate just about every digital media need you can think of. Want to monitor every single time your brand is mentioned in a blog post, Facebook status update, tweet, or anywhere else on the Web? Hubspot provides that information at your fingertips. Are you interested to know how all of your social media profiles are doing? Hubspot also provides in-depth analytics so that you can keep an eye on your referral traffic and see what social media sites are serving you better than others. Perhaps you'd like to create a landing page to capture information from your website visitors by offering a white paper or podcast; Hubspot can help you create it instantly and easily. This is just the tip of the iceberg. When you're finished playing with all the tools that can help you keep track of and promote your brand, make sure to share access with your IT department. There's a whole area of tools on the dashboard dedicated to improving the SEO of every page on your website. Each page will receive a grade, and if the page needs improvements, the Hubspot dashboard will tell you exactly what they are and how to incorporate them. This will generate immediate ROI by spiking traffic to pages that were previously unseen by search engines. Perhaps most importantly, Hubspot will even provide you with a "Keyword Grader," which tells you what keywords you already rank highly for in search engines. Once you have digested that knowledge, you can then take that information and translate it into blog posts (which the tool can also help you create). In this way, you'll be capitalizing on the low-hanging fruit at your fingertips. There's a reason that Hubspot is growing so rapidly, and has a retention rate of around 98%. Check it out, and if you decide to utilize this tool, let us know what you think!



Hubspot has created the ultimate social media/SEO dashboard to accommodate just about every digital media need you can think of.



Mark Your Calendar

6th Annual Public Relations and Communications Summit

When: July 26-27

Where: Pfizer World Headquarters; New York, NY

What: Featuring top industry communicators from leading companies, cutting-edge topics with take-home strategies, and tracked sessions focused on product, corporate, and internal communications, this event should provide plenty of bang for your buck. Attendees will also be able to sit in on relevant case studies and attend a conference cocktail reception to network with industry and agency executives.

Find out more and register at <http://hcp.lv/dccWCN>.



Bio/Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Forum on Patient Centered Marketing

When: July 28-29

Where: Hilton Philadelphia Airport; Philadelphia, PA

What: Attend this conference to find out how your peers and competitors are approaching patient communications as consumer marketing continues to experience a shift. Topics of discussion will include strategies for addressing a more educated consumer; capitalizing on the potential of emerging channels; effectively measuring hard and soft ROI to ensure accuracy; and compiling, analyzing, and leveraging patient-level data.

Find out more and register at <http://hcp.lv/aqFNWD>.

NEW! Join them on Facebook!

As regular *Avatar* readers already know, we suggest new Twitter accounts to follow in each issue. These accounts provide followers with the opportunity to build their networks with sources of useful information. But why limit your newsfeed to just Twitter? Chances are that you already have a Facebook account. With that in mind, here are some groups and pages on Facebook that will enhance your already impressive *Avatar*-influenced newsfeed.

Pharmaceutical Marketing & Sales Representatives & Officers

"This group is totally dedicated to the marketing, sales, and business development professionals."

<http://hcp.lv/bZD6XY>



Pharma Marketing News Fans

"A group specifically for subscribers and fans of Pharma Marketing News to communicate with each other and with John Mack, the editor of PMN. Find out what's planned for upcoming issues of PMN and receive calls for content/collaboration, notices of special offers, and other stuff to be determined."

<http://hcp.lv/d9Mzpc>

Pharmaceutical Marketing & Sales

"This group invites all jobless or jobfull healthcare marketers... to explore the possibilities of networking in pharma industry around the globe!!"

<http://hcp.lv/ccmVpb>

Watch, Listen, Learn



Watch: Article Marketing + Submission for SEO

You're always looking to bring more awareness to your brand. One excellent way to do so is to create worthwhile content. But even if you are creating great content—whether it comes in the form of a blog, podcast, or video—it can be an exercise in futility if consumers can't find it. That's why you must always stay up to date with search engine optimization (SEO) strategies and techniques. One excellent place to learn the latest and greatest strategies is SEOMoz's blog. An *Avatar* favorite, their blog offers "Whiteboard Fridays," which consist of SEOMoz employees dishing out the most recent info on SEO techniques. Check out one of their latest posts "Article Marketing + Submission for SEO," at <http://hcp.lv/ccmVpb>.



Listen: Industry Experts Weigh in on Marketing Research after PMRG

PharmaVOICE is one of the leaders in producing podcasts for the pharmaceutical and biotech industry. In this episode, they cover various topics pertaining to marketing research in the pharmaceutical industry, and feature "three distinguished thought leaders who represent different perspectives on marketing research, and offer some takeaways from the 2010 PMRG Annual Conference." Check out this podcast (and more) at <http://hcp.lv/bP5Igx>.



Learn: Hubspot's Marketing Kits

Hubspot is a leader in marketing and they provide a plethora of resources for those interested in learning about how to boost traffic through social media, inbound marketing, press releases, and much more. Check out their variety of marketing kits at <http://hcp.lv/bJXL7O>.



Avatar is now online!
Visit us at www.avatarnewsletter.com.



HCPfive.com

HCPLive is the pre-eminent online source for physicians and other healthcare professionals who are looking for information, tools, and techniques to improve patient care.

MD NEWS **NG**