



Conference Highlight

Socially Challenged Pharma

How Ready is Pharma to Engage In Social Media?

Author: Erik van der Zijden

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Note: The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author. Any editorial additions aside from style changes are the opinions of John Mack, publisher of *Pharma Marketing News*. These are enclosed in square brackets ([]).



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PO Box 760

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infovirsci@virsci.com

We all know social marketing is the Next Big Thing. Or at least, that's what we are all saying to each other. Making each other believe that the era of the 4/5/6 P's [original 4 Ps: Product, Pricing, Placement, Promotion] is finally over. And of course Big Pharma cannot stay behind forever.

More Focus on Social Media at Conferences

In a relatively short period, the content of pharma congresses has changed dramatically. Two years ago a typical pharma marketing con-gress dealt with eDetailing, brand management and CRM systems. Now it's about communities, Twitter, authenticity and transparency. Finally.

Digital Pharma Europe was ExL Pharma's first entry into the 'Old World' hosting an event already well established in the States. It seems they have found the right time to see whether the Europeans are like-minded in the exciting area of new/social/digital media in pharma.

Of course, they are not the only conference organizers hosting ePharma conferences in Europe for the first time. This year alone I have been contacted by two other organizers planning to enter this space as well. It's an interesting area to be in right now, especially when you have a story to tell.

Of course not all things were perfect. It usually isn't—especially when you do it for the first time. But I have to admit that Jason Youner, the conference organizer, and Bryon Main, Program Director, did a good job in pulling this thing off. Kudos go to them.

Now, let's dive a bit into the program. I won't cover all presentations, only the ones which were truly remarkable for me. For the Twitter feed with all tweets during the conference I refer to the EXL website with the Cover It Live (<http://bit.ly/43EJVq>) feed (or search Twitter with #digitalpharma).

Old School Digital?

The morning of the first day was reserved for a workshop entitled "Successfully integrating Digital Media into the Overall Marketing Mix." Sam Trujillo, Director of Marketing Women's Health at Bayer, explained in a three-hour session his view of digital media's place in the marketing mix.

[Here's Trujillo's workshop description:

Sam Trujillo is a US based DTC marketer who will bring different perspective to his European counterparts. Through digital and consumer communications the world has become a much smaller place -- as easily as we communicate to our colleagues around the world so,

our consumers can gather information and communicate with each other. With a global approach to digital marketing, Sam would like to share with you what he has learned, in an effort to bring incremental value to your digital marketing activities. Topics covered include:

- A look into emerging new technologies + Web 2.0
- The merging of technologies into integrated platforms
- The paradigm shift in pharmaceutical marketing to digital platforms and to customer centered strategies.
- Managing the digital marketing mix in difficult economic times
- Delivering information that is comprehensive and accurate, personally relevant and passionately delivered by credible sources
- Successfully integrating web 2.0 (SEM, blogs, social networking, mobile, and widgets) into the marketing mix]

Although Trujillo focused on digital media, I felt that the process he was describing very much resembled the traditional approach pharma companies use in other media: ie, stay in control of the message.

The rest of the day was reserved for more social media stuff. Jeff Hithcock from "Children With Diabetes" (CWD) did a touching presentation on his social network for parents and children with diabetes. Once started as a virtual space he created for his daughter suffering from diabetes, now a huge online community for thousands of diabetes children. Recently J&J acquired CWD. It's not clear to me however what's in it for J&J.

Pharma Going Social, Slowly

Another great presentation was from Heidi Youngkin, Executive Director Global Marketing at J&J. She gave an informative and engaging talk on her "Social Media Adventures" within J&J.

[Here's Youngkins' presentation description:

Developing Guidance For Social Media Engagement: A Framework Of Principles And Practices

- Moving from campaigns focus to relationships: what's changed for marketers
- Getting involved in the online conversation; examples and best practices for engaging with the online community as a marketer
- Overcoming internal objections; managing expectations]

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I was intrigued to see that a pharma company is already that advanced. No doubt the fact that J&J is a huge company with a lot of FMCG [Fast Moving Consumer Goods] helps. I'm sure that her guidelines will be used as a "gold standard" and reference frame within other pharma companies (I saw a lot of people making notes).

Interestingly, J&J started slowly with a blog about the history of the company (nice and safe). After they gained sufficient experience with this new medium they introduced a blog more specifically targeted towards their end users and dealing with more complex subjects. Now they have entered the third stage, going beyond blogs such as participating in the CWD community.

Best Practices

During the rest of the conference J&J was quoted and cited as "Best Practices" on several occasions.

[Contributed by John Mack, Editor: AstraZeneca is currently developing social media best practice guidelines. Stacy Reese, Associate PRA Director at AstraZeneca, spoke on "Managing the Risks Associated with Online Discussions" at CBI's 8th Annual Forum on eMarketing for the Pharmaceutical Industry in Princeton, NJ.

Reese noted that when the FDA is doing more than pharma companies with social media, "we need to figure out how to get in there."

Although Reese did not actually tell the audience how to manage the risks, she did a great job pointing out what the risks are and presented some interesting scenarios to consider.

Specifically, Reese spoke about adverse event reporting (AER) and off-label promotion, the two scariest boogey men that pharma faces in its quest to engage in social media marketing.

Reese included a disclaimer that her comments do not represent the views of AstraZeneca and she suggested that each company should determine the best approach to social media that meets its specific business needs.

Regarding AER, Reese compared a real life sales rep/doctor conversation about an adverse event to a similar conversation held online via a discussion board. Obviously, the sales rep is obligated to report the conversation. While there is no recording or written record of the live conversation, in the case of the discussion board, the conversation is recorded and archived. But how much of it does the FDA require to be submitted on Form 2253?

Although I may not fully understand the distinction, it's questions like these that keep pharma regulatory people awake at night.

The main takeaways from Reese's presentation are (1) there are many social media marketing issues that need to be addressed, and (2) pharma companies must develop standards that tell them how to address these issues before they get too deeply involved. It appears that AZ has thought it all through and has its standards in place. If only they could share them with the rest of us.]

The first day finished with a lively panel discussion moderated by Len Starnes, Head of Digital Marketing & Sales, General Medicine at Bayer Schering. The panel discussion covered the paradigm shift of web 2.0 in the pharma world. Or should we say how pharma lives in the past not using (some of) these technologies.

I was surprised to see representatives from the FDA silently sitting in the back of the room, observing how Big Pharma is struggling with this paradigm shift. It sure is a pity they (or anybody else for that matter) didn't take the opportunity to start the conversation. And where were the European authorities?

Online Physician Communities Will Radically Change Pharma Marketing

Starnes kicked-off the second day of the event with his presentation entitled "Healthcare Professionals' Social Networks—The Beginning of the End of Pharma Marketing As We Know It."

I've met Len at several other congresses and it's always good to listen to his vision on digital marketing within Big Pharma. This time he gave a sound overview of all possible social networks available for the HCP (Health Care Professional). Although there are a few big players such as Sermo and MedScape, there is still room for niche players like Ozmosis to name one.

And what about Europe? Well, it seems that Doctors.net.uk and DocCheck Faces are the biggest players on our continent but they will soon face competition by the Powerhouse Sermo which intends to launch in Europe in the not so distant future.

The main question of course is how Big Pharma can participate in these communities. Sermo has a partnership with Pfizer, so is this the way to go? Starnes was firm in his statement that the pharma industry should observe, research, engage and

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Survey Results:

When It Comes to Social Media, Pharma Marketers Inside Pharma are Not Keeping Up with Their Agency Colleagues

By John Mack

The "Social Media Pharma Marketing Readiness Self-Assessment" survey has been hosted by *Pharma Marketing News* since December, 2007 and to date about 415 people from pharmaceutical companies, pharma vendor companies and other interested parties have taken the survey and compared their scores with the average score.

The survey asks respondents several questions to gauge readiness in 3 categories:

1. Regulatory Environment of respondents company
2. Their company's Corporate Culture viz-a-viz comfort with social media
3. Respondent's personal Knowledge & Opinion of Social Media

You can read more about the details of the questions and get a summary of the results through 26 March 2008 by downloading this *Pharma Marketing News* article reprint: PMN Reprint #73-05; <http://bit.ly/4grLT>.

Looking at the data from three different time periods, I find something perhaps interesting: Vendor companies (eg, ad agencies) that provide social media marketing services to pharmaceutical companies have become more knowledgeable about social media, whereas their clients have not (see the figures on pg 5 for details). The knowledge score for vendors increased steadily from 60% during the first time period (26-Dec-2007 through 31-May-2008) to 66% in the 2nd period (1-Jun-2008 through 30-Nov-2008) to 72% in the 3rd period (1-Dec-2008 through 24-Apr-2009). Meanwhile, the knowledge scores of pharma respondents at first increased from 49% to 58%, but then dropped down to 53%! The same trends were noted in the "corporate culture" and overall scores (see charts on page 5).

- Period 1: 26-Dec-2007 through 31-May-2008
- Period 2: 1-Jun-2008 through 30-Nov-2008
- Period 3: 1-Dec-2008 through 24-Apr-2009

One explanation may be that there is a lot more turnover in pharmaceutical companies and the "new" people may need time to catch up with their predecessors. This explains why conferences such as ExL's Digital Pharma Europe have focused so much attention on social media. There's some unmet need out there among pharmaceutical marketers to learn about social media as quickly as they can!

Or maybe pharmaceutical marketers are just handing off the responsibility to agencies, which is good news for the latter but could be troublesome for the former. Typically, agency knowledge of media does not guarantee knowledge of regulations. We've seen the result in recent FDA letters sent to 14 companies warning them of violative paid search engine ads.



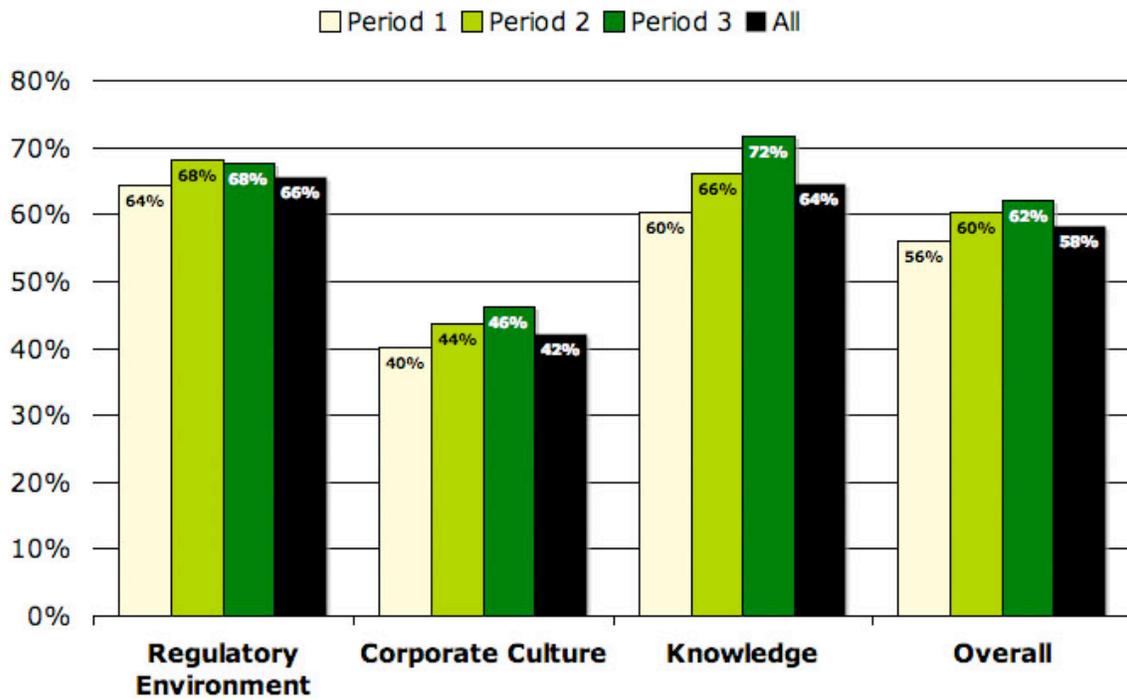
What's Your Social Media Marketing Readiness Score?



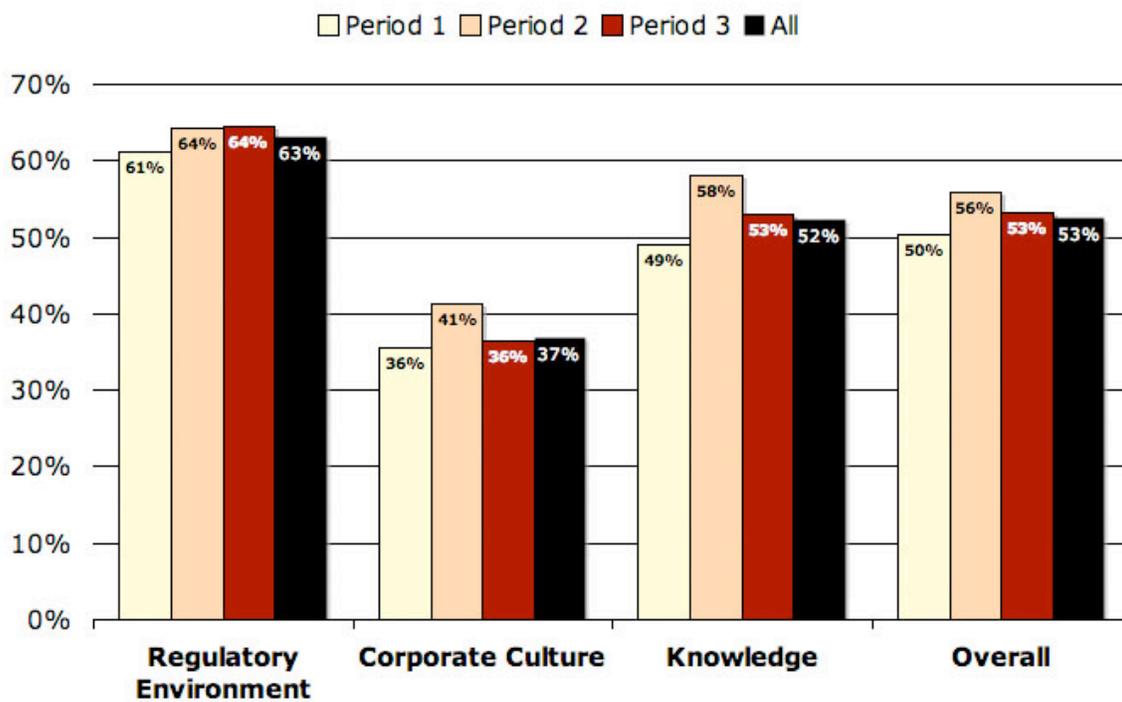
Rate Your Readiness for Social Media Marketing

<http://bit.ly/yiu2a>

A Vendor's Social Media Readiness Scores



B Pharma's Social Media Readiness Scores



discuss, but under no circumstances should it hard sell. He also did a small poll on LinkedIn which showed that 69% of his network believes that Social Networks will have an impact on pharma marketing within 2 to 5 years (see Figure 1, pg 7).

[Contributed by John Mack, Editor: According to Starnes, Sermo's "secret sauce," aside from its 35,000 members, is that posts made by members consists of two parts: (1) the post itself as a discussion thread, and (2) a multiple choice poll asking readers what they think. "It adds a quantitative dimension to qualitative posting – in real time," says Starnes in his presentation, which can be found on LinkedIn (<http://bit.ly/W3iuV>).

Pharma may now mine the wisdom of the Sermo crowd by:

Observing – view community via a customized list of subjects based on keyword tags

Action – placing "hot spot" icons next to targeted conversations allowing access to relevant pharma information and services

Insight – post questions directly to community and take polls

Starnes said that 6 pharmas besides Pfizer are about to sign up with Sermo.]

Enterprise 2.0 and Pharma

My presentation was next, talking about the internal use of Social Media in the light of innovation in marketing services (see <http://bit.ly/IBTpm> for the video).

I am surprised that the drug industry just jumps on the social media bandwagon for external use but forgets that they first have to deal with yet another—equally important—community: their employees.

Why is it that I can't find more about my colleagues in Outlook's address book other than their name, telephone number and office number whereas when I check on Facebook and LinkedIn I can find half of their life? Why is it that even a New Media Specialist is blocked from access to YouTube at the office because she "might watch YouTube videos all day long?"

Get serious, executives. Wake up in a new world and brace yourself for the entrance of the digital natives, people who are actually used to sharing information with each other (and are hence not afraid to lose their "power" when they do). Essential reading: "Facebook, YouTube at work make better employees: study" (<http://bit.ly/ucc0x>).

We want to create a common platform within our organization where employees can find our internal blog, wikis, podcasts and share ideas. And if that means that we have to pull-in some people screamin' and kickin', so it is. Change is never without some pain.

YouTube Genius

Kevin Nalty, Marketing Director, Dermatology at a large pharma company, the name of which was not revealed but starts with an 'M' and ends with 'erck,' gave a presentation entitled "Stories of A Pharma Marketing Director/YouTube Comedian."

Obviously, besides his serious job Nalty moonlights as an official YouTube Comedian. His website Willvideoforfood is described as "a blog for online video, advertising, viral marketing, consumer generated media and blatant self-promotion."

I don't know if he really needs a site doing all this since he's one of the top-10 most viewed YouTube comedians with more than 750 videos seen in excess of 60 million times. He even wrote an e-book "How To Become Popular On YouTube Without Any Talent."

Well, I don't have to explain to you that I agree 100% with his vision about the power of video in communication. I believe that although content is still king, form is becoming more and more important. By that I mean that the basic elements of filming should be carried out well (e.g. sound, lightning, basic rules of camera movement). That doesn't mean that I think one should make a slick commercial. Please don't. Some "rough edges" usually gives video a bit more genuine look. But I will skip videos where the sound quality is poor, even if they have a nice story to tell.

Now, online video is exploding: Pharma, wake up and start using it!

The last presentation was an overview of the possibilities Google has to offer big Pharma. Interesting in that respect is Google.org, a CSR initiative of Google helping the community with their innovative concepts.

The Future of Digital Pharma

The next Digital Pharma Europe congress should include participation by European authorities since they are the gatekeepers of communication possibilities within our industry. Europe is different from the US in that respect. Also, because we (still) have many different local authorities that have their own rules.

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Figure 1: LenStarnes' LinkedIn Poll. Will doctors' social networks radically change pharma marketing & sales? N=142 as of 23-April-2009. Find current results on LinkedIn: <http://bit.ly/pA0HW>

The market is changing, people are getting more informed. The question is which information they use in order to get informed, and to what extent the quality of information is improved if Pharma can participate in the discussion. Pharma should take responsibility by being open and transparent about their products and claims. Pharma is low on the trust-scale. It's time to open up and fix that. Looking to the people in the audience I have the feeling that Pharma is ready for it. Now authorities, give them the opportunity to do so.

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About the Author

Erik van der Zijden is an entrepreneur, marketing professional, new media evangelist and autodidactic techno-nerd. Together with René van den Bos he co-founded DigiRedo, consultants and producers of new media for internal and external communication. He currently also holds a position at Intervet, a global leading veterinary pharmaceutical company (part of Schering-Plough) as Innovation Manager. You can reach Erik at Erik@digiredo.nl