Pharma Content Marketing Strategies

Insights from Industry Experts

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Wikipedia defines Content Marketing as “any marketing that involves the creation and sharing of media and publishing content in order to acquire customers. Forms may include news, video, whitepapers, e-books, infographics, case studies, how-to guides, Q&A articles, photos, etc. It is focused not on selling, but on simply communicating with customers and prospects. The idea is to inspire business and loyalty from buyers by delivering ‘consistent, ongoing valuable information’.”

Pharma’s Content Trove
Every pharmaceutical company has massive amounts of disease and product-related content and many also solicit content from patients—e.g., patient stories—to help them attract and retain customers by “consistently creating & curating relevant and valuable content with the intention of changing or enhancing consumer behavior,” which is how the Content Marketing Institute defines content marketing.

When this content is engaging, it becomes “shareable” through social sites such as Pinterest, Twitter, YouTube and Facebook. According to the PwC Health Research Institute, 90% of adults would trust medical recommendations shared by their peers over social networks.

“Such an approach has the potential to see more of our content seen by more of our customers and stakeholders, significantly further afield of our traditional content destinations, and this is a good thing!,” says Craig DeLarge, Global Leader, Multichannel Marketing Strategy & Innovation at Merck.

Diabetes Content Marketing
In December, 2013, Lilly Diabetes and Disney announced that their custom books for children and families with type 1 diabetes were available online. Previously only available through pediatric endocrinology offices, these digital books can now be enjoyed online, with optimized viewing on a desktop or tablet (see Fig. 1).

“Lilly Diabetes is always looking for ways to help families affected by type 1 diabetes,” said Kevin Donahoe, brand director, US, Lilly Diabetes. “We are pleased to bring these unique books to as many members of the diabetes community as possible, in a format that is user-friendly and free of charge.”

Meanwhile, Merck, which markets Januvia, Novo Nordisk, which markets Levemir, and Bristol-Myers Squibb/Astrazeneca, which together market Onglyz, use recipes from celebrity chefs as part of their type 1 diabetes content marketing campaigns (see Fig. 2).

Interview with Thibaud Guymard
Kakushin Group recently interviewed pharma content marketing expert Thibaud Guymard, Digital Marketing Manager at MSD France. Guymard has broad experience with pharma content marketing, including roles as co-creator of the Digital Health Think Tank and as an Advertising Manager at Saatchi & Saatchi Health. Guymard also assisted in developing the Pharma Content Marketing Webinar organized by Kakushin Webinars. This webinar will take place on February 25, 2014 (see http://bit.ly/MTG1090c).

Figure 1. Lilly Diabetes/Disney Custom Books for Type 1 Diabetes Families.

Figure 2. Merck, Novo Nordisk, and BMS sponsor celebrity chef recipes as part of their diabetes marketing strategies

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What are the current trends in pharma content marketing?

I think the biggest current trends in content marketing are:

- **Partnerships**: Find trusted partners (medical organizations, associations, etc.) to improve content quality. Trust is critical for organizations that will have to invest important budgets in content. It improves the recognition of their content (sources) and will increase the content's impact.

- **Video**: This type of content is very expensive, but the impact is also more important and can be used through various types of communication channels as key assets of a campaign or longer engagement. One simple piece of advice: keep it short and precise. This is what people like the most.

- **Social**: Having a social voice that is recognized by our customers will increasingly become more important. This is an important investment even if the ROI is still not that easy to demonstrate.

- **Business Impact Measurement**: The value of content marketing doesn't need to be demonstrated anymore (more or less), but there are still various challenges with the measurement of its impacts and the final business value for a company.

What is the difference between pharma content marketing for HCP and content marketing for patient outreach?

The major difference is the understandability of it. You need to keep in mind that you have different types of people who don't have the same level of medical understanding. Channels can also be different; content marketers have to prioritize the best channels for each type of audience, work with agility to reach as many customers as they can and validate their strategy and tactics to concentrate their investment where the ROI is the best.

What are the hottest issues in content marketing?

Again, business impact measurement. There is huge also much work to do to gain internal buy-in for this type of non-conventional marketing.

What are the critical legal issues in pharma content marketing?

The legal issues aren't different than those for classic marketing activities. The rules are the same, but the marketer's role is to explain that to his legal/regulatory colleagues and show how they are followed. The only real issue as a marketer is being able to react in real time when speaking/communicating with customers who do not want to wait for legal/regulatory validations.

A strong relationship has to be nurtured to facilitate everyone's goals.

What are the topics you would like to hear about from speakers at the Pharma Content Marketing Webinar taking place on February 25, 2014?

Specific campaigns or long-term engagement activities that put content first and show content marketing best practices and their limits. In addition, it's important to explain how they bring value to customers and ultimately to the company. Concretely: their key metrics and how they've been measured.

Why Content Marketing Now?

In his opening remarks at the eXL Pharma Content Marketing Conference in Philadelphia, PA on December 2, 2013, DeLarge presented the following arguments for why pharma should now use content marketing:

- Customers want content (information & stories) more than marketing, and can control this choice more than ever.
- Enhances other marketing results: SEO, PPC, PR, & social
- World class marketers use it: P&G, John Deere, Microsoft, Cisco Systems, etc.
- Better supports pivot towards customer centric marketing
- Better leverages pull versus push marketing, being more shareable & conversational, which is best leveraged via digital, social, and mobile channels
- Better fills the top of the customer acquisition funnel, & plugs the customer retention holes in our marketing
- Assumes the truth of: 1) mutually beneficial intention, 2) attention to other's interest, & 3) faith in reciprocity
- Has longer shelf life, better reach & lower lifetime cost effectiveness

Turn Brochures Into Infographics

“Content is the king for marketers in pharma for years, but in the age of social and mobile it cannot be text-only content,” said Piotr Wrzosiński, a sociologist focused on digital marketing in highly regulated industries.

As DeLarge has said (see "Do you need an infographics strategy?": [http://bit.ly/pn1301-01-1](http://bit.ly/pn1301-01-1)), “a brand or company could do well by deliberately publishing and distributing infographics that represent key disease demographics, disease state, company and product information, which now resides on our websites & brochures.”

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Some experts note the explosion in visual content and this underscores DeLarge’s advice to pharma to have a clear Pinterest strategy and a process to determine what kind of information and boards to offer the public. DeLarge pointed out that “more of our website content might be consumed more regularly and intently, if designed in more interesting infographic formats, versus the prose/image approach that is the current fashion.”

DeLarge believes a strategy is needed to “gain advantage in a competitive situation” and “leverage this trend to better educate and serve our customers and stakeholders who are being exposed to other engaging information that too much encourages them against good health practices.” His strategy involves:

1. content planning to determine which content is best suitable for infographic conversion,
2. devising a common infographic branding & graphical vocabulary so that your infographics are easily associated with your issue, company and brand,
3. development of a content placement & distribution plan to assure that your infographics are most relevantly placed in, and distributed to those customers and customer destinations where they are able to offer the best value.

The pharma industry has taken DeLarge’s advice and embraced infographics. See “Leveraging Infographics and Search for Better Health Communications” in this issue.

**Content Centers of Excellence**

Lately, there’s been a lot of “hubbub” about “centers of excellence” at pharma companies as in “Digital Center of Excellence” and “Content Center of Excellence.”

Rebecca Lieb, Industry Analyst with the Altimeter Group and author of “Content Marketing,” explained how to organize a Content Center of Excellence—a consortium of experts from a variety of organizational divisions that provides leadership and best practices—in her presentation at ExL Pharma's Content Marketing conference (see Fig. 3).

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**Figure 3. How Companies Organize for Content Marketing. Source: Altimeter Group.**