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## **cDetailing: Addressing the Consumer Education Gap**

By **John Mack**

Consumers want in-depth information on how drugs work, how they affect their bodies and who should take them. Up until now, pharmaceutical companies have attempted to fill this need through DTC advertising on TV and in print. It is now apparent that traditional DTC advertising is not up to the task. The result is a consumer education and communications gap, which must be closed if the industry hopes to regain the public's trust.

Recent DTC guidelines drafted by PhRMA and several pharmaceutical companies pledge to address this problem by focusing more on patient education and disease awareness. Pfizer, for example, promises to "invest a meaningful amount" — on par with what it spends on a branded advertisement campaign — to create non-branded ads such as disease-awareness ads and compliance ads.

The industry also recognizes that it needs to do a better job communicating the science behind its products. Kenneth Frazier, Merck's general counsel said "We are learning as we go along about how best to present evidence to juries composed of lay people." Pfizer has also pledged to fund research to find ways to further improve risk communication and apply what they learn to DTC advertising.

### **cDetail vs. eDetail**

In contrast to consumers, physicians receive excellent scientific/medical education programs supplied or sponsored by pharmaceutical companies. Increasingly, this is delivered online by companies such as Medsite, which is a leading eDetailing and eCME provider located in New York City. Now Medsite is poised to do the same for consumers online.

Steve Smith, Editor-in-Chief of Medsite, has reengineered his company's eDetailing line to create engaging interactions crafted around effective methods to engage, inform, and educate adults. Now he has tapped this experience to design the company's first Consumer Detailing ("cDetailing") product, which is a novel rich-media online consumer disease education and drug information program. "The cDetail," says Smith, "is focused on changing knowledge and behavior through effective online engagement."

### **Yahoo! for Reach and Targeting**

In June, Medsite announced that it will partner with Yahoo!, a leading provider of online products and services to consumers, to deliver pharmaceutical-sponsored cDetails to 120 million monthly U.S. consumer users across all of Yahoo!'s properties.

"Medsite was the clear choice for the content side of this partnership," said Jack Barrette, Yahoo!'s category development officer for Health and Medicine. "They are clearly the folks doing this for the longest time and have the best understanding how to engage an adult in a linear learning conversation online that allows them to interact and leave with a better understanding of the topic. Yahoo!'s differentiator is that we can target and reach about 70% of the online audience against any health condition. If, for example, there are 9 million diabetes sufferers online at any given time, we can find 70% of them on Yahoo! through our demographic, behavioral, and purchase-based targeting tools."

### **Information Prescription**

The cDetailing product will enable pharmaceutical marketers to bring deeper educational programming to consumers via rich-media advertising — such as embedded animated or video segments — and also give them access to drug and health information that had previously only been available to physicians. "The best partner a physician can have," said Smith, "is an informed patient."

"A cDetail is a five to seven minute informational and educational program that a physician could prescribe to a patient at the office visit, or that a pharmacist can give to the patient when they get the prescription filled, or that a patient can find as they are surfing through Yahoo! online," said Sundeep Bhan, CEO, Medsite.

The idea of doctors "prescribing" information may be catching on. In the UK, for example, doctors are encouraged to recommend "self-help" books to patients with mild depression. In 2003, the state of Georgia and the National Library of Medicine implemented a Health Information Prescription pilot program through which doctors use customized prescription pads to point patients to first-rate

online health information in NLM's MedlinePlus database.

### Pharma e-Marketing at Tipping Point

Medsite, Yahoo!, and many other pharmaceutical marketers are optimistic that the pharmaceutical industry will be allocating a larger piece of the marketing pie – the “secret sauce” – to online advertising.

This optimism is based on several indicators. First, recent industry guidelines that include moratoriums on TV DTC advertising do not apply to the Internet.



FIGURE: Physicians who prescribe prescription medications to their patients will also be able to prescribe cDetails like the above to support their goals of informing patients about effective disease management techniques while encouraging them to be compliant with their medication schedules.

These same guidelines place more emphasis on disease-awareness and better explanations of risks and benefits. “The Internet is the best place to really educate consumers and give them more learning than advertising,” said Bhan.

The industry is also cutting back on TV DTC advertising and most experts think that Pharma will shift ad spending from TV to the Web. The 2004 DTC Industry Checkup — a survey of industry executives — concluded: “The majority [of experienced industry marketing executives] will dramatically decrease spend on mass media in 2005, turning instead to e-marketing and other patient relationship media.”

Such a shift makes sense on many levels. For one thing, consumers are turning away from TV and going to the Internet more and more for credible health information. According to a poll sponsored by the Medical Broadcasting Company, 42% of respondents state that online health information is

trustworthy compared to 16% for “offline” media like TV, newspapers, radio and magazines.

“Product managers need to look at their ‘secret sauce’ for media allocation,” said Barrette, “and ask if they are really reaching their customers where they are spending time. Even a 10% shift away from TV to the Internet will allow a pharma marketer to dominate online with those kinds of dollars.” The instantaneous mass reach of TV is a fairly unique proposition. Yahoo!’s goal is to “catch the folks that get interested from TV and continue the conversation,” according to Barrette.

Bhan estimates that a typical 6-week cDetail campaign will expose at least 50 million people to a cDetail on Yahoo!, depending on the budget; 3-5 million of those will view a “mini-detail” on the Yahoo! page and as many as 300K - 500K will complete the full educational experience.

### Targeted and Engaging

A cDetail on Yahoo! is essentially presented as an unbranded condition awareness and educational ad, which can be linked to a brand preference. That’s possible because it is a fully functional web experience rather than a banner ad, for example. Such rich media advertising was not available until a year or two ago.

“Because there’s no limit to the depth of the engagement we can have with the consumer on Yahoo!,” said Barrette, “we can move someone from condition awareness to brand preference in the same conversation.”

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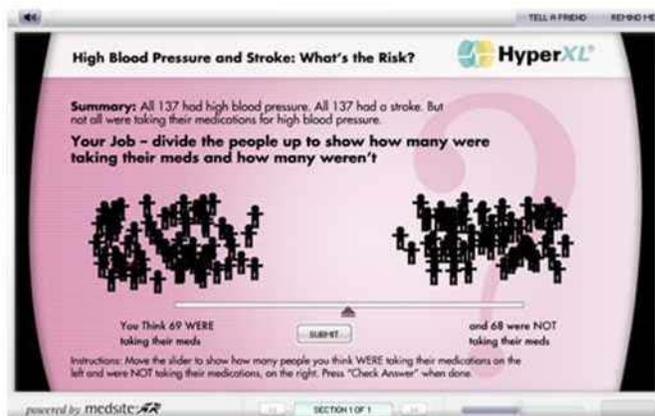


FIGURE: Medsite’s cDetails encourage patients to “get their hands on” information about their disease and its treatment to overcome compliance obstacles. On Yahoo!, rich media technology allows consumers to view a condensed version of the cDetail without leaving the Yahoo! page.

According to Barrette, between 5% and 9% of online users that see a fully-functional rich media ad — in this case, a condensed version of the cDetail — engage with it. That is, they open it up and in some way interact with the advertisement. Five to nine percent interaction rate is extremely high, much better than direct mail, but also literally multiples of the typical 0.2% clickthrough rate for non-rich media equipped banner ads. “This translates into millions of people engaging with the message compared to 100,000 monthly visitors to a good drug.com site,” said Barrette.

DTC guidelines call for delivering drug ads to the appropriate audience. Lilly, for example, promises that all Cialis TV ads will be aired during programs that have more than 90 percent adult viewership. They would also want the same ability to target ads to the appropriate audience on the Internet.

Yahoo! has a whole suite of targeting tools that allows advertisers to find the right audience on the Yahoo! web site. Demographic and geographic targeting is possible because about 70 million Yahoo! visitors are registered. Basic registration data like zip code and age can be used to geo or demo target an ad. “Through demo targeting pharma advertisers can reach tens of millions of visitors on a daily basis,” said Barrette.

The next level is behavioral targeting. Anonymously, Yahoo! can monitor visitor behavior on the site and target condition-specific or brand-specific messages to folks who demonstrated an interest, say, in diabetes. Yahoo! can monitor search behavior, clicks on advertisements about diabetes, news stories about diabetes, and participation in newsgroups about diabetes. This anonymous bucket of visitors would then be served ads related to diabetes.

“The Medsite vision,” according to Smith, “is an informed patient and an informed physician dialoging together working from the same base of information. We think our cDetail product is a big step in the right direction.”

**Pharma Marketing News**



For more information about Medsite's cDetailing program, please email [knowledge@medsite.com](mailto:knowledge@medsite.com)

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## Experts Consulted

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The following experts were mentioned or consulted in the preparation of this article.

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- **Sundeep Bhan**, CEO and Co-Founder, Medsite Inc., 212.417.9501, [s.bhan@medsite.com](mailto:s.bhan@medsite.com)
- **Stephen Smith**, Editor-in-Chief, Medsite Inc., 212.417.9574, [ssmith@medsite.com](mailto:ssmith@medsite.com)

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## Resource List

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The following resources were consulted in the preparation of this article.

“Pfizer Announces Improvements to Consumer Advertising for Prescription Medicines.”  
[http://www.pfizer.com/pfizer/are/news\\_releases/2005/pr/mn\\_2005\\_0811.jsp](http://www.pfizer.com/pfizer/are/news_releases/2005/pr/mn_2005_0811.jsp)

For a complete list of resources online, please see:  
<http://www.pharma-mkting.com/resources/resources-hp.htm>

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