

Conference Highlight

Surfing the eMarketing Big One!

By Harry Sweeney, CEO/Chief Creative Officer, Dorland Global Health Communications

The “aha!” moment in Stacy Peralta’s historic surfing documentary, “Riding Giants” comes when the legendary Laird Hamilton and the other big wave riders realize that they’ve reached the limits of human capabilities.

They concluded that people simply can’t swim fast enough to get safely onto the giant waves. So Hamilton and the others changed the paradigm. They thought outside the box. They got creative. They borrowed ideas from snowboarding. They used wave runners, the motorcycles of the ocean, to slingshot a surfer onto the roiling 65-foot monster waves, turning surfing from a community of solitary, individualists into a team enterprise.

The Big Boom

For Pharma marketers, the “Big One” is the Boomer population curve with the economic potential that it represents. A key question is: “Are we ready for it?”

The audience of 125 or so at IIR’s ePharma Summit was on its feet, as speaker Peter Dannenfelser, Head of New Channel Marketing, Novartis Pharmaceuticals, asked all those with one year or less of eMarketing experience to sit down, then five years, and then ten. Only a few people were left standing. The point had been made dramatically that we are on the threshold of an exciting new era in healthcare communications in which experience is in scarce supply, and what counts most may be an open mind and willingness to experiment.

Pharma Restraint

Following the pattern at several recent conferences, speakers bemoaned the conservative attitudes of industry legal and regulatory departments towards the Web with Peanuts-cartoon style “we have met the enemy, and it is us,” observations.

One tongue-in-cheek slide used by Dannenfelser promised “Guaranteed Success” at formulating an effective eMarketing program and, when revealed, had sections blacked out by Legal and Regulatory like the response to an FOI request from the Department of Defense.

Vendor Vision

On the other hand, presenters from Yahoo, Google, AOL and other mass market portals and search engines demonstrated mind-boggling, sonic-boom level, room-rocking websites with contests, games and other interactivity ideas from the consumer products world that creative minds could easily translate into quieter, useful, healthcare applications.

It was easy to envision websites for professionals with diagnostic and therapeutic challenges, and on-demand CME programming, just as it was not difficult to imagine the development of more effective sites for consumer information and education.

Throw Out the Plans

Speed of change and the Pharma industry’s ability (or lack of ability) to change with it was a theme that ran through several presentations. One of eMarketing’s leading proponents, Nick Pahade, president of Publicis’ Denuo Group, exhorted the audience to “Throw out the plans.”

“How can you plan in a world where 3 years ago Google barely existed?” he asked. “No YouTube, no Flickr, no MySpace, no iTunes—all brands that have become household names. Just in the last 3 weeks the critics have begun to rave about Apple’s new iPhone; Windows has gone live with Vista (its new collaboration tools), and we’ve heard how Howard Stern got an \$89 million dollar bonus for putting Sirius’ digital satellite radio on the map.”

User-Generated Wisdom

Several speakers talked about “Web 2.0”, the buzzword for interactivity on the web that has led to social networking and community building sites. Ex-Washington Post/Newsweek Interactive executive, now CEO and President of HealthCentral Network, Inc., Christopher Schroeder, captured everyone’s attention with the one-liner: “Anyone who believes in the wisdom of crowds has never been to a hockey game.”

Schroeder then went on to debunk the jibe by observing that, while funny, it misjudges “the remarkable and useful expertise” that is shared on consumer-driven, interactive sites. “Remember,”

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he said, "on these sites the individual is in charge. On healthcare sites, an unknown can become a rock star to their health community. These are real, live people, not just a scientific experience looking for a chemical solution."

Schroeder's observation was echoed in a Philadelphia Inquirer obituary the day after his presentation, which reported the death of a young woman who was an MS advocate. After her diagnosis in 1991, she began studying everything she could on the disease, the obituary reported. When she moved to a home for the disabled she volunteered to share her knowledge with fellow residents and people referred to her by the local MS society. "Sometimes doctors asked her questions," her dentist father reported. "She spoke with people all over the country and ... shared her knowledge of treatments, drugs and research."

eRecruitment

Chris Neuner, president of Greater Than One, presented an eRecruitment case history that fascinated the crowd. Tracing the campaign from awareness and lead generation, through site referral, study center interview and randomization into a clinical trial, he showed how use of the Internet had increased the yield and dramatically decreased the cost (\$1,800 per patient vs a budgeted \$4K to \$6K benchmark). He then went on to describe a number of technical tips on improving a website for better search engine results and how to protect your brand against online gamesmanship from an aggressive competitor.

Optimizing eMarketing

Cate Carley of AOL Media Networks gave an 11-point guide to optimizing an eMarketing program. "Partnership is the goal," she said.

"Finding and building programs with suitable partners is key to reaching the audiences that you want to reach. You have to begin with the end in mind (Rule #1, see box), know where your customers live online (Rule#2), and build on what's working (Rule #3)". Along with the other eight rules, Carley demonstrated each of them with an array of successful

eMarketing campaigns from J&J, P&G, Unilever, GMC, Intel and many other well-known consumer brands that partnered with other brands to achieve mutual exposure and success.

Tablet PCs

Melanie Brown and Anthony Manson from Avenue E Health Strategies demonstrated cutting-edge, tablet PC detailing programs and the data and metrics that can be derived from them.

"It's the difference between one-loop marketing and closed-loop marketing," Brown said, "that makes these programs so effective. Reps see the potential, marketing recognizes the benefits, and doctors say it's a better experience" she continued. Effective use of eDetailing involves significant upfront training, Brown said, but the volume of data gathered allows for the development of sophisticated predictive modeling and brand message metrics that never existed before.

ComScore Study

The Avenue E stress on metrics was followed by the presentation of a new set of study results from ComScore Networks by Carolina Petrini. The ComScore study evaluated aided and unaided recall (awareness), favorability (brand perception), new prescription starts, and adherence/next Rx fill data, as well as the "drivers of conversion," i.e. the type of online media exposure that delivered the best marketing results.

By monitoring online activity, a researcher can confirm that a given subject never saw an online ad, or saw one but never clicked through it, etc. ComScore compiled data from fifteen studies of ten brands ranging in annual sales from \$100 million to over \$3 billion, and distinguished between exposure to a banner ad (i.e. media), referral from a paid, search-engine key-word, or an "organic" result (i.e. from the general results of an online inquiry). Results were slightly better for key words than banner ads, and slightly better for organic searches than key words. Conversion rates were best for those who

IN PURSUIT OF PARTNERSHIP

- 1) Begin with the end in mind.
- 2) Know where your customers live online.
- 3) Build on what's working.
- 4) Go beyond reach and frequency.
- 5) Invest in relationships with your consumer.
- 6) Be true to yourself
- 7) Make the ordinary, extraordinary.
- 8) Rethink media campaigns with the Web at the core.
- 9) Make your program "ownable" for consumers
- 10) Plan ahead
- 11) Be bold, yet relevant.

EXPERIENCE IT!

viewed more pages (3+ pages or more) or who stayed on-site longer (i.e. over 3 minutes) and, the ROI delivered for incremental sales increases of about \$10.5 million, was \$2.10.

Web 2.0 Video Prospects

The day finished with a series of roundtable discussions led by experienced, eMarketing executives. I selected a table moderated by Manhattan Research president, Mark Bard, who kept participants intensely focused by asking the group "What does "Web 2.0" really mean to you?" The consensus of the table was that "Web 2.0" is a term that describes the evolution of Internet applications using the Web for interactive collaboration and data collection.

"For example," Bard continued, "how do you see the use of Internet video going? Up? Down?" Despite the presence of Rick Rock of ORlive—the home of "Live Surgical Video"—at the roundtable, one participant said: "I think that the use of video will increase, but not by much as a percentage of all health information. Most health information is more of a reader medium. Video could be a great way to educate people who are healthcare illiterate with little programs, but for the mainstream consumer, too much of the content would just be talking heads."

Dan McKillen, former CEO of Reuters Health, now president of HealthDay, agreed. "Costs of video are still too high to create a sustainable business model," he said. "We have looked at it and while there are very good animation and photographic materials available, the costs for an online publisher to maintain that kind of content is far more than most clients are willing to support at this point. If the rapidly increasing use of 'self-publishing' on the Web using YouTube is any indication, and there's something worth seeing in the health care space, then we might see more of it. But broadcast quality video is another matter."

Self-Regulation

Another participant raised the topics of transparency and self-regulation as important future issues. "If someone from industry or the agencies is going to participate in a chat room, they're got to be transparent about who they're speaking for" he said. "Otherwise, not only will trust erode, but critics will get angry and call for regulation. And, in addition, as we heard today, there are also the reporting and potential liability issues that flow from consumer chats about adverse effects."

Tell Powerful Stories

"However, there's no question about the power of the medium," another participant chimed in. "Just ask anyone who has seen the home video of the autistic, high school basketball manager." He went on to explain the recently reported story of Jason McElwain of Rochester, NY, an autistic, team manager who had practiced, but never played.

As thanks for his years of service, team coach Jim Johnson, allowed McElwain to dress for the final game of the season. With about four minutes left in the game, the coach put Jason in as a substitute. He missed a couple of shots and then, in a miracle finish, pumped in six 3-pointers, turning the auditorium into pandemonium, and was carried off in a scene right out of Rocky. There have been over 900,000 viewings on Google and YouTube, and McElwain has been seen by millions more on Oprah, with President Bush, and other TV appearances as a result of the online exposure.

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