



Improving HCP engagement: tapping into the voice of HCPs

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COUCH Health Comms

Healthcare professionals (HCPs) are not just a group of individuals who happen to have chosen the same vocation in life. They share a wide range of interests, beliefs, hobbies and lifestyle choices, and as such form a group with its own unique dynamic. Therefore, in order to master HCP engagement, pharma must understand this dynamic. Before you can begin to promote your products to this community, you must first understand *who they are*. In knowing who they are, you'll have a much firmer knowledge of what they want and then be able to tailor effective solutions to their specific needs more effectively.

HCP engagement

The group dynamic of HCPs directly influence how they communicate with each other and the wider world. They have a *voice*, which you must understand if you want to join their conversation.

If we consider the wider world HCPs live in we can safely assume that a majority will be regular internet users. There are multiple channels involved, ranging from social media sites to medical industry forums, and to engage with HCPs fully means to immerse yourself in all these platforms.

The 'voice' is the dialogue which is consistent throughout. In order to use this voice across platforms, pharma brands must find where there is a considerable online presence of HCPs and engage with these platforms. You can then build your brand awareness, share content, and promote products in settings HCPs feel comfortable to navigate.

Is pharma behind the times?

In a [EPG Health Media survey](#), nearly 90% of HCPs claimed they used diagnostic tools from online sources (at least once a month), yet as much as **one third** of pharma companies said they didn't provide these tools.

Besides diagnostic tools, HCPs are seeking other materials which many pharma brands are failing to supply online. These include:

- Medical images (40% of pharma doesn't provide)
- Medical education (30%)
- Patient materials/tools (20%)
- Branded promotional materials (20%)

With HCPs having less time to study in the traditional ways, much of their education comes increasingly out of core working hours. In this way, there has been a shift from the more traditional methods of face-to-face meetings and the salesman knocking on the door, and the EPG survey suggests that pharma brands haven't fully embraced this shift.

So what now?

To build strong HCP engagement, you need to approach the challenge both instinctively *and* in a human-centric way. As far as the 'science' goes, it's all about understanding the algorithms and processes of the internet. Considering only **8% of HCPs use Facebook**, for example, whereas 23% visit YouTube regularly – it's knowing these stats that gives you a clearer idea of how to proceed and facilitate meaningful engagement with HCPs.

Pharma has to focus on *providing* rather than *selling*. It's the same across the board with all marketing. In age where information is available with a click, and competition is through the roof, meaning products can be found easily. So what makes consumers choose one brand over another consistently? Not price, because there's countless brands offering the lowest, and not quality either, because that too can be found elsewhere in any given moment.

It is an engaging and meaningful relationship, as well as clear brand awareness that is shaped around the voice of HCPs, that will ultimately allow a product to set itself above the rest today's fiercely competitive market.



About the author

COUCH.

COUCH is a new breed of health communications agency that, due to a very personal experience, has at its core a mission to improve the lives of everyone. And so we are motivated by the profound understanding that, collectively, we need to do better. We are human to work with because we focus on using our skills and expertise for the common good.

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