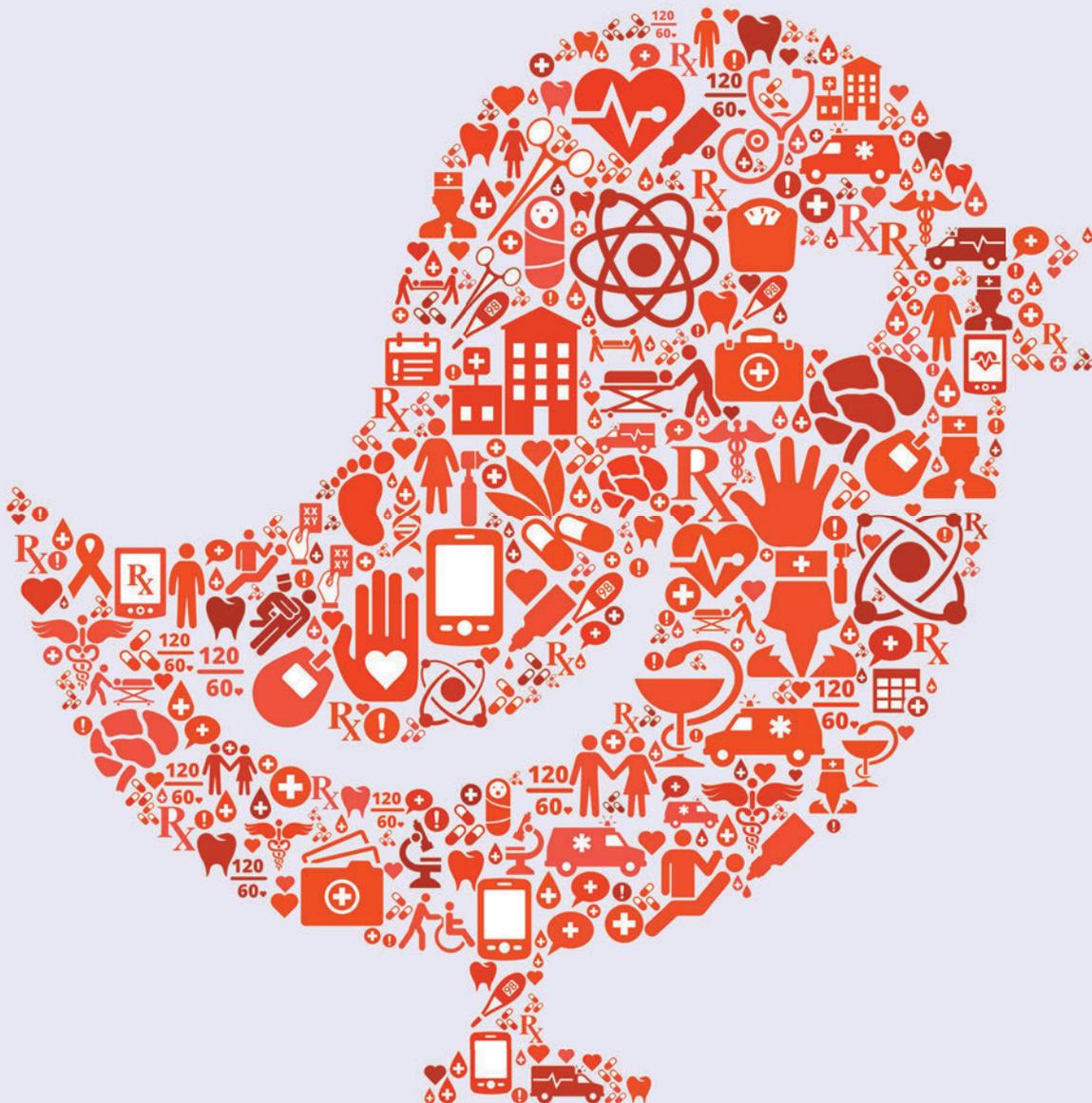


No more excuses: 9 ways to create pharmaceutical social campaigns that resonate & engage





No more excuses:

9 ways to create pharmaceutical social campaigns that resonate & engage

by Melissa Lane Porter

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Introduction

The pharmaceutical industry is one of the world's most highly regulated sectors. It is also, according to Gallup, one of the least well-regarded. (Gallup Poll, 2019).

So, there is a need for strong communication via social media, yet marketers can feel hampered by regulation. But getting this balance right is easier than you think.

The pharma industry is accustomed to regulation. And social media has long been embraced by pharma as an opportunity to advance marketing goals. For pharmaceutical marketers looking for a captive audience, social media has never been a better way to engage.

62% of U.S. healthcare marketers named social media as the channel with the most opportunity (2021 MM+M/HealthLink Dimensions Healthcare Marketers Survey.) And the number of social media users worldwide surpassed 4 billion in 2020.

A smaller study by MedData Group reports that 72% of physicians surveyed were active on Facebook every week, while 38% were active on Instagram and LinkedIn.

Late in 2020, eight new major pharma companies placed branded and unbranded Facebook and Instagram Stories ads, according to Fierce Pharma.

No one need defend the use of social within pharma anymore. It would be more likely to get pushback for not being involved. Here are 9 things to keep in mind for 2022.



1. Before you begin, know the regulations

Be clear on social media guidelines, especially when marketing in more than one geographical area.

In the UK, the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry creates the guidelines.

Prescription only medicine adheres to the Code of Practice of the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry. OTC medicine follows the Proprietary Association of Great Britain (PAGB) with PAGB Medicines Advertising Codes.

It prohibits the promotion of prescription-only medicines to patients for any reason. This includes media and marketing channels. It also recommends

caution regarding social media. Companies can share information impartially, but they cannot promote it.



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“Companies should take particular care if they use social media. Any information so provided must observe the principles set out in this clause; that is, it should be factual, balanced and must not encourage members of the public to ask their doctors or other prescribers to prescribe a specific prescription-only medicine.

It must not constitute the advertising of prescription-only medicines to the public prohibited under Clause 26.1.” – Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry 2021”.

The United States allows promotional messaging for prescription-only medicines and devices. It is subject to FDA regulation and AMA guidance however, which dictates that both risk and benefit need to be disclosed within posts. This can be challenging on platforms with character limits, such as Twitter.

Whereas the European Union has three regulatory bodies: The EU legislative framework, Individual national laws incorporating EU provisions, and Voluntary codes of conduct (self-regulation).

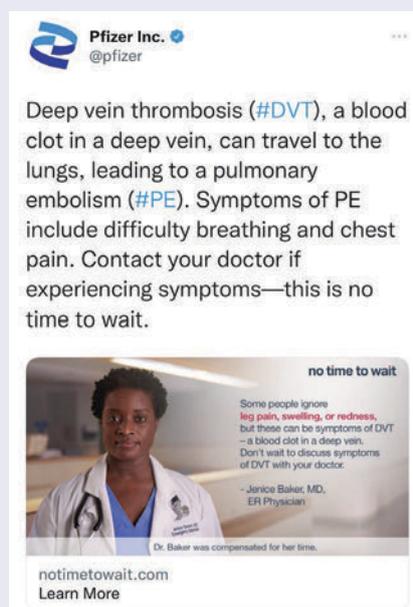
Penalties for failing to adhere to guidelines will vary as much as the guidelines themselves, but they can range from loss of license to severe fines.

2. Define your social media marketing goals

Most marketing campaign goals can be met with social media fast and effectively, while remaining compliant with regulations. Done well, they can increase brand awareness, engagement and lead generation. Include people, patients, science and life (ie. the betterment of mankind through medicine) and you won't miss.

Here are some examples:

Education: Whether it's "how-to", illness prevention tips, health check reminders or dispelling medical myths, education (including combatting misinformation) is an important and widespread marketing goal.



Example of an educational social media tweet by Pfizer

Information: This goal can include news, company results, partnerships and medical achievements. Examples vary from curing cancer to financial results, new partnerships, and investor information.



AbbVie posting an informational tweet about a partnership with DirectRelief

Brand Strengthening: This goal is currently being achieved through personalisation, storytelling and the right combination of information, education and community building. It should be part of any social media strategy.

3. Know the platform and audience demographics

Facebook: Serves mostly the 30+ crowd and is the most frequently used platform for the 65+ age group. Multiple forms of content work on Facebook, such as video, images, infographics and copy.

Instagram: As of October 2021, roughly 32 percent of global Instagram audiences were aged between 25 and 34 years. Over two thirds of total Instagram audiences were aged 34 years and younger, one reason it's favoured by marketers (Statistica, 2022). This is a visual platform for images, short videos and reels.

TikTok: Approximately 50% of TikTok's global audience is under the age of 34 with 32.5% aged between 10 and 19 (Omnicores, 2022). Consider the goals and concerns of this group.

YouTube: Don't underestimate YouTube. Hootsuite reports that it's the second most visited website following its parent company Google (Hootsuite, 2022). People aged 25-44 make up 44% of all users (Social Films, 2022). The YouTube search function and autocomplete suggestions will help you search

for content relevant to your brand, competitors, and the interests of your audience. Answer questions about conditions through short videos.

Twitter: As of April 2021, global Twitter users were broken up by Statista as 38.5% ages 25-34 years old, 24% less than 24 years old and 21% of users aged between 35-49 years old, while users aged 50 or above accounted for roughly 17 percent (Statista, 2022). This platform is frequently used for customer complaints, so it's important to set up monitoring and a customer service response team here.

LinkedIn: The age group with the most LinkedIn users is between the ages of 25 and 34 at 60.1% (Omnicores, 2022). LinkedIn strictly bans paid ads for prescription medicines, herbal supplements and similar products. Audience includes HCPs, insurance reps, pharmaceutical reps, etc.

Incorporate video with subtitles and plenty of stats and research based posts.

Pinterest: The largest age group of Pinterest users (38%) are between 50-64 years old (Omnicores, 2022). Like LinkedIn, Pinterest also bans prescription medicines, herbal supplements and products that are similar to these.

4. How to get personal

The tone and level of personalisation is changing. As we move beyond the Covid-19 pandemic, social media users



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We will never give up our search to discover, develop, and deliver the next generation of innovative medicines that transform patients' lives.

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Bristol Myers Squibb 'The Touch that Transforms' campaign, January 2022

demonstrate a greater interest in a 'familiar' marketing tone. LinkedIn's B2B Institute first noted a heightened empathy among audiences in 2020.

LinkedIn's B2B Institute first noted a heightened empathy among audiences in 2020. "Brands must today, more than ever, show their generosity, spontaneity, humility and self-awareness, even give people something to smile about.

It is these most human of characteristics that advertisers need to adopt, if they are to come out of the crisis, and come out of it stronger."

This has inspired ads such as Bristol Myers Squibb's "The Touch That Transforms". The campaign, which featured on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, represents how science and pharma can positively impact patients' lives.

Twitter profile communicates the intention to invent for 'life'. The theme common to most pharma profiles is that the company is invested in the health and wellbeing of human beings.



12:23

Inventing for life

Merck ✓
@Merck

We have always been and always will be inventing for the single greatest purpose: Life. Intended for U.S. residents only. FLS: bit.ly/10c7M6I

Kenilworth, NJ merck.com/privacy

Joined April 2009

1,005 Following 220.6K Followers

Merck's twitter profile, February 2022

For instance: 10 out of 11 of the below Instagram profiles will contain the words 'people', 'patients', 'science', or 'life'.



11 pharma company's Instagram profiles

MERCK: We have always been and always will be inventing, and we do it for the single greatest purpose: Life.

NOVARTIS: Our purpose is to reimagine medicine to improve and extend people's lives.

ABBVIE: This global page celebrates our people, our work & how #AbbVieGivesBack.

SANOFI: We chase the miracles of science to improve people's lives.

PFIZER: Breakthroughs that change patients' lives.

ROCHE: Advancing the future of health through science.

ELI LILLY: Lilly unites caring with discovery to create medicines that make life better for people around the world.

JANSSEN: At Janssen, we never stop working toward a future where disease is a thing of the past.

GSK: Life at GSK, the science-led global healthcare company — an inside look at our science and our people.

BRISTOL MYERS SQUIBB: Each day, our employees around the world work together for patients - it drives everything we do.

ASTRAZENECA: Discover life at AstraZeneca: the science-led global pharmaceutical company — an inside look at our people and our journey.

The pattern is clear. Emphasise people, science and success through storytelling and visual imagery.

5. Hashtagging in 2022

In 2022 Twitter and Instagram are currently using both the most hashtags, and the most challenges that incorporate hashtags.

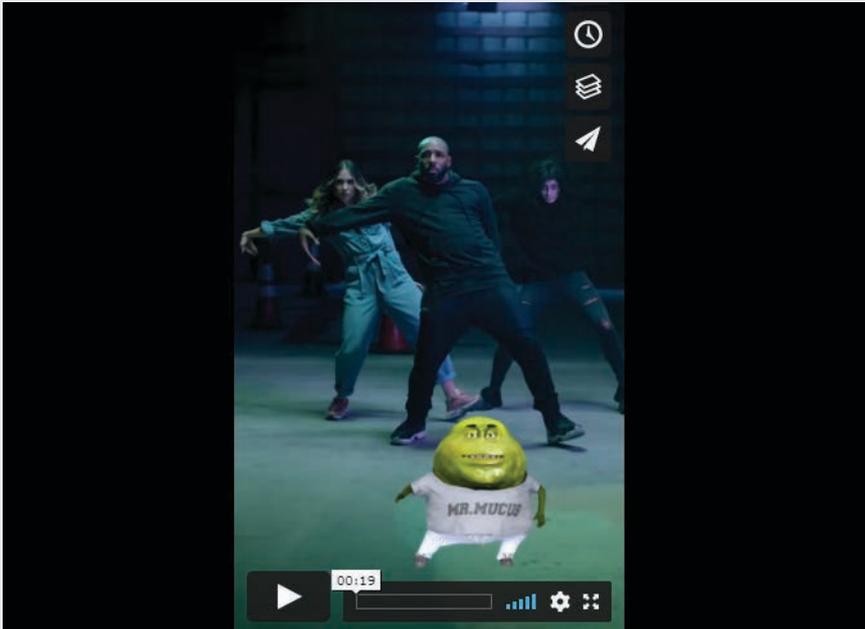
Hubspot's ultimate hashtag guide for 2022 recommends that businesses narrow their focus.

A recent Novartis campaign (image opposite) uses creative and branded campaign hashtags specific to the post, including #NovartisInSociety, #ReimaginingMedicine, #Inspired, #Curious and #Unbossed

TikTok tends to cater to Generation Z, and is where you'll find the most branded hashtag challenges.

When Mucinex, a US over-the-counter cold and flu medicine sought to promote its Nightshift product line, they partnered with TikTok to create a 360-degree campaign that leveraged native user behaviour.

Together, they also launched TikTok's first ever branded effect while the brand's mascot, Mr. Mucus engaged in a dance challenge that went viral. Half a million creators joined in 9 days and total views were 5.8B.



Mucinex's #BeatTheZombieFunk wildly successful 2020 branded hashtag challenge

6. Use video in social media

Video is captivating, connective, and continues to gain momentum in marketing. Video content has a high engagement rate for physicians and patients alike.

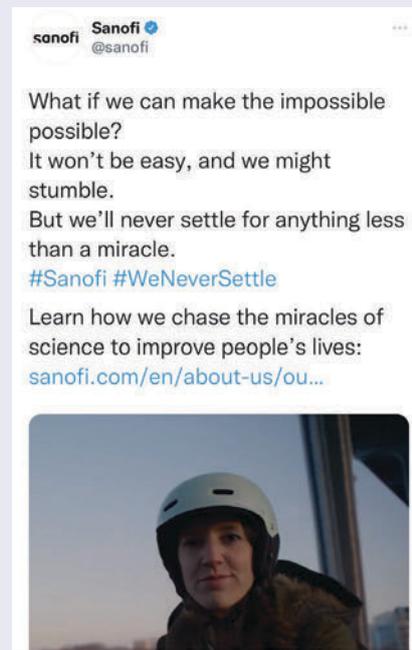
“In fact, physicians themselves spend around three hours a week watching videos, and they prefer videos to reading medical publications or listening to rehashed data. Additionally, 49% of physicians who watch online videos state that it influences their clinical decision.” (Kubbco, 2021).

Also, pharmaceutical companies typically have longer timescales and larger budgets with which to create high-quality videos.

Here on Twitter, Sanofi shares a YouTube video posted on 16th February 2022. Their YouTube channel has 26.5K subscribers to date. This channel is essential for

video publishing as it's the 2nd most visited website after Google.

It has 761 views currently, and their twitter post emphasises their mission of 'chasing the miracles of science to improve people's lives. Again, their content concentrates on people, science, and success.



7. Leverage your employees on social

Research shows that 72% of people feel more connected to brands when brand employees share on social media.

This doesn't mean that employees need to use their personal profiles for work. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram all now allow employees to set up work profiles.

Companies can also utilise the stories, bios, quotes and images of employees on their branded social media profiles.

Below, Sanofi uses employee bios in video format to highlight the journey of two female scientists at Sanofi, and shares it on Twitter.



Sanofi's International Day of Women post

Pharmaceutical companies tell stories about their employees, they put the most diverse employees front and centre, they talk about people not chemicals, and they use emotive imagery, video and text to communicate their love of mankind. Any questions?

Visit Pfizer's Facebook page solely devoted to careers. It has 243K followers. Promoting careers emphasises the human side of your company, builds your team, achieves brand awareness, and attracts talent.

8. Utilise social listening

Pharma leverages research all the time. Social media is no different. Social listening provides valuable insight into your target market.

It informs campaigns with data including what people are talking about, which hashtags they are using, what critics and competitors are saying, what different audiences care about, and what doesn't seem to bother them or attract their attention.

Social listening tools enable real-time data through customised dashboards to monitor brands, products, reputations, side effects, and more.

This data can be more valuable than traditional market research, as public sentiment can change minute by minute.



Image Credit: Talkwalker

9. Embrace influencer marketing

Much like partnerships with agencies that lend a hand to your target audience and patient communities who support each other, influencer marketing via social media helps create positive associations with your brand, increase awareness and inform purchasing decisions.

To raise public confidence in the Covid-19 vaccine, several US presidents expressed their interest in receiving it. The below tweet of President elect Joe Biden went viral, receiving over 350K engagements.



Former US presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton also published similar posts endorsing the vaccine.

Conclusion

In short, social media for pharma in 2022 is achievable. Yes, you need to hire talented, emotionally intelligent writers who can communicate your company tone.

Yes, you need a social media team with experience and the right martech. And the rules need to be followed strictly regarding regulations, as penalties can be steep.

But this is an industry that deals in calculated risk every day. Social media can be done by any pharma company relatively painlessly, cost-effectively, and well. No more excuses.

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