

Adding value ‘beyond the pill’

By Houda Kamoun Follot

‘Physicians see value in digital coverage of live events – 76% express interest in receiving email recaps of conferences they were unable to attend’



Pharma companies provide some of the most important products an HCP can have – the therapies that help the patients they serve. But simply offering those products is not enough.

In a competitive landscape, pharma companies need to offer added value ‘beyond the pill’. These are the elements that will attract physicians, engage them with content that is trustworthy and valuable, and build these relationships over time through personalised content that supports better practice.

That content includes the clinical news, data and breakthroughs that are often discussed at some of the industry’s most popular medical congresses, like ASCO, Society of Medical Oncology and more. Many pharma marketers invest in a presence at these congresses to get valuable face-time with HCP audiences and distribute their messages to a rapt audience.

Savvy marketers are finding ways to extend their investment through digital congress coverage that engages target HCPs well beyond the event itself, while offering valuable insights into target audiences’ attitudes and behaviours. It’s a powerful way for pharma brands to keep the conversation going throughout the year and stay at the top of key audiences’ minds.

Bring the congress to them

Physicians see value in digital coverage of live events – in fact, 76% of physicians express interest in receiving email recaps of conferences they were unable to attend. For over a decade, we’ve been engaging digitally with HCPs around the world through our clinical news and education site, Univadis. Congress coverage is an especially popular topic for our members in the EU5, yielding higher-than-average engagement rates compared to other topics:

- 13.9% increase in article views for coverage of a key cardiology congress
- 145% increase in article views for coverage of a key oncology congress
- A nearly 400% increase in article views for coverage of a key infectious disease congress.

Digital channels also help understand which topics an audience is most interested in, as well as which formats and which channels, that can help inform an overall multichannel marketing strategy.

Provide ongoing engagement and value

Recent data from a survey we did of our global HCP members on Univadis shows that the vast majority have three key expectations of the interactions they have with pharma: trustworthiness, relevance and simplicity, in that order of importance.

In terms of content, there is a gap between what HCPs want from pharma and what they receive. For example, our report shows that HCPs are receiving an overwhelming amount of prescription drug information from pharma, and not enough about medical news, education and patient materials they want.

In addition, we found that while a relatively small percentage of HCPs say they prefer to engage with pharma through in-person symposiums or a company’s congress booth, the top-ranked channel for these interactions is an online or virtual meeting like a webcast, webinar or congress.

Insights like these demonstrate that while HCPs still value personal channels, there is a clear role for digital to complement these face-to-face interactions as part of an effective HCP engagement strategy.

A real-world example

Digital experiences can enhance the live experience of congresses – allowing HCPs to spend more time with the content while offering pharma companies the opportunity to position their messages in the context of the latest news and breakthroughs in their therapeutic area.

For example, pharma-sponsored digital coverage of a well-respected congress held earlier this year included ten reports covering key congress content, as well as five customised video interviews (which typically yield double the amount of engagement of other channels) with clinical experts in the field.

This exclusive content was hosted and promoted through our Univadis platform, which attracts over three million HCPs around the world, localised for each geographic market. This ‘glocal’ approach allows for cost-effective deployment of these digital assets in different markets. In this particular case, the content was published in five languages across eight markets and promoted to HCPs in four key specialties through a mix of custom newsletters, banners, mobile push notifications, social media and more.

In addition to helping keep HCPs up-to-date with the latest advances in their area, the pharma client that sponsored this content was able to position itself as delivering high-value clinical content in formats that appeal to HCPs – content they can return to time and time again.

For more information on how pharma companies can take advantage of digital to extend their congress investment, go to <http://info-intl.apthushealth.com/econgresscoverage-aptus-health-int>

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