

MARKETING: SOCIAL MEDIA

TO TWITTER AND

BEYOND

Pharmaceutical marketing will include social media, but the verdict is still out on its ultimate impact on stakeholders.



Marc Ferrara

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*"We foresee that social media will become a significant channel in the marketing mix for pharmaceutical and biotechnology organizations."*

or several years there has been much debate regarding whether pharma companies should even use social media as a means to communicate with its consumers. Our experts project that social media will move beyond Twitter and support many functions within marketing strategies, thus securing a permanent place in the industry's marketing channels.

Unquestionably the role of social media in healthcare has its place, says Mike Kurstein, president of StrikeForce Communications.

"In many ways it may offer significant long-term opportunities to generate a dialogue and provide relevant and motivating content for patients and their caregivers," he says. "However, used incorrectly, social media also brings about many risks, including losing control of the brand story and tarnishing the reputation of pharmaceutical companies as intervening in sacred spaces for commercial purposes."

The time has come to have less chatter about the channel and put more focus on the idea and messaging, Mr. Kurstein says.

"Brand managers want to communicate with key stakeholders with the fundamental strategy, but the role of social media, if any, should develop naturally," he says. "Only with time and careful consideration will we come to realize the full potential of social media, as well as its implications and effectiveness." Elizabeth Estes, executive VP, chief strategy officer, GA Communication Group, believes the natural flow of social media in the industry will take the shape of more niche and targeted groups, including expanded disease communities.

"Patients now own the media and will increasingly share their experiences, both good and bad," Ms. Estes says. "Although the

Investment in Social Media

- 51% reported less than 5% of the budget was allocated to social media channels.
- 22% reported 5% to 10% of the budget was allocated to social media channels.
- 9% reported 11% to 20% of the budget was allocated to social media channels.
- 2% reported more than 20% of the budget was allocated to social media channels.
- 16% reported they didn't know what the budget allocation was.

Source: Cegedim Relationship Management. For more information, visit [cegedim.com](http://cegedim.com).

Social Media Use

Cegedim Relationship Management recently conducted an opinion survey among decision makers in the pharmaceutical industry regarding current trends and issues, including the use of social media. Below are some of the findings:

- 59% of respondents reported using social media for marketing.
- 34% of respondents reported using social media for PR.
- 27% of respondents reported using social media for internal communications.
- 14% of respondents reported using social media for CRM.
- 11% of respondents reported using social media for human resources.
- 2% of respondents reported using social media for other functions.
- 3% of respondents reported they were not using social media.

A BREAKDOWN OF PHARMA SOCIAL MEDIA