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Medical Affairs Goes Social

Medical affairs can't ignore social media as key channels for engaging healthcare professionals



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Medical affairs can't ignore social media as key channels for engaging healthcare professionals (HCPs)

By Jeremy Williams

Some medical affairs teams, but far from all, are active social media engagers, with initiatives focused in four key areas:

Social listening

Simply defined, go to where your audience is, learn what they are saying. But there are subtleties. HCPs use many platforms to communicate with each other. While Twitter and LinkedIn are known to all, some are country-specific, like WeChat in China, and some are subject-specific, like Clubhouse. Different congresses may lean toward one platform. Tease out those subtleties.

Social media amplification

Using social media to amplify existing HCP events, like symposia, is a great first step for Medical Affairs teams - capitalize on existing in-person events and piggyback your message onto the event's social media traffic.

Independent social media events

Create your own engagements on your own schedule and chosen platform. Our recent Twitter livestream launch deconstructed the typical congress symposium and reconstructed it on social media. There were five events, five topics, and five presenters over five nights. Each lasted 15 minutes and resulted in 62,000 live views and 1.8 million replay views. And none of this was tied to a traditional event.

Digital opinion leaders (DOLs)

Social media has bred a whole new flavor of KIL. Every specialty has DOLs now, HCPs who widely share their views or insights online with pre-engaged peers, usually via social media.

We worked with one DOL to develop a tweetorial, a Twitter conversation that allows the DOL to build a narrative on a specific topic. The DOL told the treatment story in a series of 11 tweets. The tweets included disease-specific hashtags, tags to colleagues and experts, polling, links to unbranded disease-state materials and PubMed, congress abstracts, and published articles.

Within 24 hours, the tweets had over 200 likes, 46 retweets, three quote retweets, a reach of more than 22,000, and an impact of more than 86,000.

Building successful relationships and content with DOLs gives you access to the DOLs' pre-engaged audiences that can't be had elsewhere.

From our pharma experience, we estimate only 20% of Medical Affairs teams are currently engaging digital opinion leaders and implementing independent social media events to engage HCPs. However, audiences, respected voices, and channels are changing. So must Medical Affairs. ●





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