

Impact of Social Media Promotion on Pharmaceutical Organizations

Samrat Kumar Mukherjee¹, Dr. Jitendra Kumar², Dr. Ajeya Jha³

¹Department of Management Studies, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology,
India, Orchid Id:0000-0002-8839-0140

² Department of Management Studies, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, India

³Department of Management Studies, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, India,
Orchid Id: 0000-0003-0491-5008

ABSTRACT

This research is intended to explain the transition that occurred due to the advent of social media marketing in the Indian Pharmaceutical Industry and also to examine the cause for the adoption of pharmaceutical social media promotion. Pharmaceutical producers and importers spend millions of rupees each year marketing pharmaceutical products, and these firms have now begun the promotion of pharmaceutical products the use of social media for the promotion of their brand. Social networking is undoubtedly going to modify the structure of the market. The value of social media has been recognized by many pharmaceutical firms such as Pactro, GSK, etc. (Beth SynderBulik, 2011), and thus a massive chunk of capital is involved, resulting in a large sharing network of customers, hospitals, healthcare websites, and pharmaceutical firms.

Keywords:Social Media Optimization, Direct-to-Consumer Pharmaceutical Advertising, India, SMAC Model, E-Patients, Pharma value chain.

1. INTRODUCTION

A main medium to promote a product in the industry has been social media. According to the Yral Social Media Study 2016[1], the number of active social media users in India increased by 15 percent from January 2015 to 136 million in 2016.

Social Media Promotion (SMP) is the "next huge thing" for certain marketers, a fleeting and effective instrument that must be taken advantage of while still in the spotlight. In 2014, 92 percent of marketers reported that social media promotion was essential for their business, according to Hubspot, with 80 percent showing that their activities improved traffic to their websites [2]. 97 percent of advertisers are actively interested with social media, according to Social Media Researcher, but 85 percent of participants are not sure what social media platforms are the easiest to use. According to some study "the drug industry allocated less than 4% of the more than \$4 billion it spent on direct-to-consumer advertising to internet outlets in 2008, and only a tiny fraction of that was for social networking sites." But this status does not tell the full information [3]. In US, 90 percent of people aged 18-24 trust medical data or participate in health practises on social media. A third of the adult US population does the same, according to a survey by Pew Research. SMP covers all practices in the marketing process related to the exchange of content, videos, images, reviews, recognition, expertise, etc. Companies are now marketing their individual goods, buyers are willing to exchange experiences and insights, and the interaction between business and consumers reaches beyond the horizon. In a study conducted by recent Harvard Business Review reports [5] that the advertising and promotion approach for pharmaceutical firms has long been to tap into the "right" primary opinion leaders (KOLs). They further note that social networks play a vital role in prescription decisions for doctors. A research reveals that since 2013, the total number of tweets by pharmaceutical industry has increased by 530

percent and the big pharma companies have increased their followers on Twitter by almost 300 percent. The industry still has a long way to go, though, keeping in mind the potential this medium has to offer[6].

Social media optimization (SMO) is one of SMP's main elements. SMO is a method for attracting new and unique users to a website, much the same as Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Most of these social media sites have their own built-in data analytics tools that allow companies to monitor the success of advertising campaigns and their participation. Via social media promotions, corporations target a variety of customers, including existing clients, prospective clients, current workers, potential employees, writers, bloggers, and the general public. Social media promotion at a strategic level entails overseeing the execution of a marketing strategy, monitoring, setting the reach and determining the optimal social media promotional strategy of an organization.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

IMS (2007) reported that pharmaceutical companies increasing their spending on promotion with the aid of various media such as detailing, internet, conferences, lectures, television, etc [7]. In addition, Ernst and Young predicted in 2009 that the Indian pharmaceutical industry has reached "Pharma 3.0" or one might claim that the age of health outcome [8]. McDaid and Park (2010) say that 90% netizens from India are looking for health-related information on internet, with around 70% looking for basic medicine-related information, with around 30% looking for specific medicine-related information [9]. This data contains input from patients, sharing of their views, etc. Therefore, businesses stand to receive crucial customer/patient input by merely listening to patient conversations on social networking platforms and participating whenever applicable [10]. Ms. GowreeGokhle, Partner and Co-head, Pharma Practice, referred to section 43A, section 72, section 72A, and section 79 of India's Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008 as a cyber-legislation of a country that may be deemed applicable in this case[11]. Both sections have their own benefits, as the liability for breach of secrecy and privacy is found in section 72. Both sections have their own benefits, as the liability for breach of secrecy and privacy is found in section 72. India has the Magic Remedies Act 1954, which has only one applicable provision, i.e. clause 4, on deceptive ads that gives a false perception, directly or indirectly, of the true existence of the drug or whether any false or misleading information is otherwise present [12].

Companies have to build a business model to incorporate social networks with their promotional campaigns. D'Andrea et al. (2012) have suggested a social networks-based promotional model (SNeM2S) [6]. The following measures are included in the model:

- The option of possible social networks to be used (Fig.1);
 - Establishing a financial strategy (regarding the recruiting of social media brand managers or consultants);
 - Changing organizational structure for the operation of the company's social network (this could include incorporating a social media unit to an existing promotional department or establishing a separate unit of social media);
 - Target market(s) selection;
 - Selection of the advertised goods, programmes, brand(s) or business messages;
 - Social networking campaign success metrics, such as appraisal, data analytics, etc.

Fig.1 SNem²S Structure



In 2014 almost 4 out of 5 of company executives mentioned social media as an important part of their company [13] Industry retailers saw a 133 percent rise in their due to sales social media promotion. [4] The Like other sectors, with the incorporation of SMP, the pharmaceutical industry is changing their marketing strategy.

Face book	Twitter	YouTube
Astrazeneca	Astrazeneca	Astrazeneca
GSK	GSK	Eli Lilly
J&J	J&J	GSK
Merck	Merck	J&J
Novartis	Pfizer	Merck
LinkedIn	Flickr	Google+
Astrazeneca	GSK	Pfizer
Novartis	Novartis	Roche
Pfizer		
Roche		

Source: Pharma and Healthcare Social Media wiki:
<http://www.doseofdigital.com/healthcare-pharma-social-media-wiki/>.

Table: 1. List of Companies Using Social Media Sites

They provide data on new medicines, educate and establish partnerships with patients and healthcare professionals. Direct-to-Consumer Pharmaceutical Advertisement (DTCPA) is not allowed by many nations [7] The U.S. and New Zealand are the only countries that allow DTCPA to include product claims.[8] SMP is also one of the significant outlets for pharmaceutical marketers to meet their product claims stakeholder.



Fig.2 Advantages of SMP

Advantages of SMP (Fig.2):

Preserve vibrant visibility – Companies need to remain in the limelight if consumers want to notice them and purchase the goods promoted. Social media promotional services help to secure a continuous and diverse identity for the company in a more individual and engaging manner.

Successful engagement with Consumers – It is possible to interact with customers in a specific way by making them know like they are engaging with one of their mates. This improves customer’s brand loyalty and confidence and therefore there is a chance of customer referral.

Exposure and brand establishing-It has more than 800 million daily followers, social media is a strong brand building tool. The easiest way to develop our identity and raise visibility is to feature a product on social media platforms. Social media supports the organization to provide more exposure. It boosts the business's reputation and sustain a dialogue with prospective clients.

Evaluating authority- Social networking is one of the budget means of creating authority by posting high-quality information, interacting with customers, evaluating customer opinions, and so on, which can help maximize the number of your existing customers automatically.

Quality traffic- With the growth in the number of supporters and followers of organizations, influence of the organizations are increasing and people are beginning to exchange information, blog posts and videos of organizations. If the sharing of content grows, company website will start attracting more visitor, resulting growth in revenue.

Gain competitive advantage –SMP is the perfect way to achieve a strategic edge over rivals.

Table:2.Percentage of consumers viewing health information through social media	
Consumers view	%
Health -related consumer reviews	42
Friend's/ family health experiences	32
Other patients' experiences with their disease	29
Health-related videos/ images posted by patients	24
n = 1, 060	
Source: PWC Health Research Institute social media consumer survey, 2012	

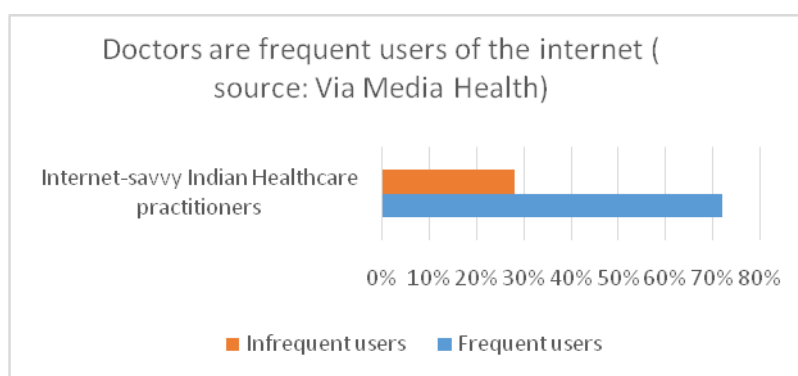


Fig: 3. Doctors are frequent users of internet

Recently, the USFDA released several recommendations on its webpage for the pharmaceutical industry's use of social media. The guidelines are intended to allow biotech and pharmaceutical companies to participate in social media interactions more openly (USFDA 2014)[14]. Patient education via social media is an incentive for the pharmaceutical industry to build confidence in the business and to raise customer perception when choosing a medication. Customers learn information about health, illnesses and recovery in this manner. It is easy to find details on any drug on multiple social media platforms.

By using the social media landscape in India for its brand of flu vaccine, Sanofi has proven to be one of India's early entrants. They developed the 'Mothers against Flu' programme, targeting 'DigiMoms' or mothers who use social networking sites on a daily basis. This helped them define their flu vaccine and create a target audience. The initiative was initiated on Facebook and a variety of surveys, quizzes and forums focused on the issue of common flu and flu vaccination were coordinated via this website. To date, the campaign has generated over 12,000 likes, with more than 3,000 likes in the first month alone [20].

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is focused on exploratory research. The details used in this study is secondary in nature. The research was planned to capture the following SMP attributes: advantages, potential policy, target group, usage of capital and effects.

4. CHANGES IN INDIAN PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

1) Shift in Indian Health Practitioners 'view

These young doctors; who are younger than the age of 30; have different mindsets in the comprehension. Consequently, they accept social media ads better than most.

2) Online Connectivity Rises

Social media has been a central influencer and platform for the interaction of patients and health professionals. Digital media helps spread knowledge about illnesses, provides doctors with eCME, provides one-to-one contact between doctors and patients, and spans a wide geographical region.

3) Resource minimization for preservation of information

Social networking has managed to lower information storing costs.

4) Market Policy Transition

Because of the latest pricing policies and other regulatory hurdles, the Indian pharmaceutical market is currently experiencing sluggish expansion. In the long run, though, making a minor improvement in the way they do business today will negate the impact. From now on, in order to be in the top 10 global markets, both Indian and international businesses working in India will have to formulate effective strategies.

Any of these methods may be as follows: [15]



In addition, new innovations called SMAC (Fig.4) are expected to play a key role in solving these challenges: social networking, mobile computing, analytics and cloud computing, enhancing operating efficiencies and amplifying the efficiency of pharmaceutical firms. [16]

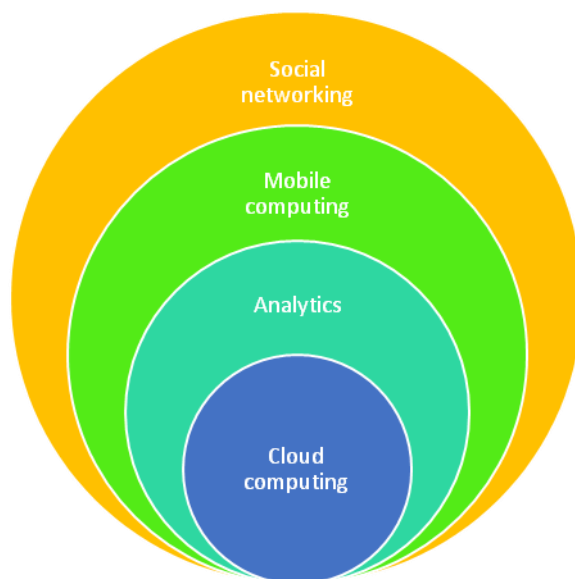


Fig.4 SMAC

Each of these innovations has a specific effect, complementing each other in order to accelerate the transition of industry. Innovation, customer support and connectivity can be mutually benefitted by these developments.

5) E-Patient Emergence -

Patients in India are already looking to get knowledge about the prescription medication on the internet and social media. The introduction of e-patients is pushing physicians and the pharmaceutical industry to shift their approach to patient relationship building. Such messages are also only limited to the search and exchange of information. Patients also use social media to check the cost of care and to complain about treatment-related insurance coverage.

6) Value chain Holistic Pharma-

A traditional supply chain (Fig.5) for pharmaceutical products begins with raw material procurement and finishes with post-market monitoring. Social networking synchronises all these stages which results in consumers being able to profit sustainably. [17]

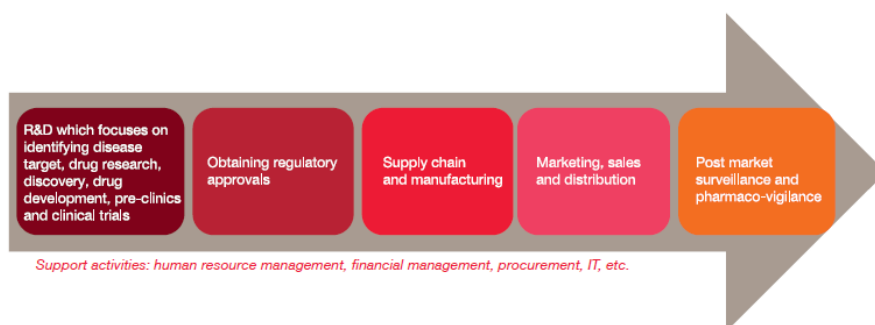


Fig.5: Pharma value chain

5. CONCLUSION

Social media has become a part of our everyday life and has been used for various uses by a large population worldwide. It is often used by many companies for the purpose of advertisement. The new age in the pharmaceutical market is knocking at the door. The triangular partnership is hitting new heights between physicians, pharmaceutical firms and patients. Online medical consulting is becoming widespread, according to a study published in The Times of India (2014), of which new choices such as online appointments, video calls with doctors, and social media expertise are at the highest level [18]. "As quoted by Inde Gene Lifesystems CEO Manish Gupta, "For pharma/medical companies, social media has become a

medium that they cannot afford to skip, provided that many patients are going via the Internet these days to recognize their symptoms and the condition they (or their family members) experience before visiting a doctor. In order to properly connect consumers and healthcare professionals (doctors) with their products and services, the pharmacy industry must follow a 360-degree strategy. Such media can be used as a portal for doctors' knowledge. These knowledge can be used by pharmaceutical marketers to obtain further insight into the needs of consumers and physicians. This will encourage them to present their items in a different way and sustain consumer loyalty. In a fruitful and rewarding manner, they can even include data required for both doctors and patients. There might be some negative aspects of SMP but physicians can identify and promote the positive aspects of it [19]. By acquiring business and customer perspectives, social media will make the Indian pharmaceutical industry's consumer-centered paradigm stronger. Thus, social media should be embraced and made part of their marketing campaign by pharmaceutical firms while conforming to the regulatory requirements in place.

References

1. <http://static.bestmediainfo.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/social-media-report,2016.pdf>
2. J. DeMers, The top 10 benefits of social media marketing. Forbes. com, 11, 2014.
3. J.A. Greene, & A.S. Kesselheim, Pharmaceutical marketing and the new social media. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 363(22), 2010, 2087-2089.
4. L.G. Miller & N.A. Christakis, Tapping the power of social networks. *Harvard Business Review online*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2011/09/tapping-the-power-of-social-networks>, 2011.
5. K.D, Social Media and the Pharmaceutical Industry. <https://www.alphamuseinc.com>, 2019.
6. A. D'Andrea, F. Ferri, & P. Grifoni, SNeM2S: a social network model for marketing strategies. *International journal of e-business development*, 2(3), 2012, 103-110.
7. B. Dean, Consumers Using Social Media To Get Medical Information Says New Report. <http://www.scoop.it>, 2014.
8. P. Gupta, & A. Udupa, Social media marketing by pharmaceutical industry: perception and attitudes of key stakeholders. *Business and economics Journal*, 2011.
9. Pharma marketing blog, <http://pharmamkting.blogs pot.in.>, 2015.
10. S.G. Morgan, Direct-to-consumer advertising and expenditures on prescription drugs: a comparison of experiences in the United States and Canada. *Open Medicine*, 1(1), 2007, e37.
11. G.A. Abel, R.T. Penson, S. Joffe, L. Schapira, B.A. Chabner, & T.J. Lynch Jr, Direct-to-Consumer Advertising in Oncology. *The Oncologist*, 11(2), 2006, 217-226.
12. S. Fox , The engaged e-patient population. *Pew Internet and American Life Project*, [<http://www.pewinternet.org/>], 2008.
13. Anušić, 7 Social Media Hacks: A Cheat Sheet for Pharma Marketing. <https://www.mediatoolkit.com>, 2020.
14. D. Chindarkar, Digital dose exploring real time in Indian pharma, [<http://archive.expresspharmaonline.com>], 2015.
15. D. McDaid and A. Park, Online Health: Untangling the Web. <http://www.bupa.com/>, 2011.
16. B. Grant, Digitas Health Finds Pharma Companies Lag on Social .Retrieved from <http://www.emarketer.com/>, 2013.
17. USFDA .Fulfilling Regulatory Requirements for Postmarketing Submissions of Interactive Promotional Media for Prescription Human and Animal Drugs and Biologics. <http://www.fda.gov/>. 2014.
18. V. Roychowdhury, The social media super market:Pharma still plays safe. <http://www.expresspharmaonline.com>, 2014.
19. S.K. Mukherjee, J. Kumar, A.K. Jha, & J.R. Rani, Role of social media promotion of prescription drugs on patient belief-system and behaviour. *International Journal of e-Collaboration (IJeC)*, 15(2), 2019, 23-43.
20. S. Shetty and R.Modi, Changing landscape of the Indian pharma industry.<https://www.pwc.in>, 2013.