

Marketing in an Era of Consumer Choice

Content strategy is key to new media opportunity



Raquel Krouse

Interpublic Group's Emerging Media Lab, said in today's digital age, consumers experience media in many different ways.

Digital marketing is growing so quickly, it is impossible to keep up, Raquel Krouse told attendees at the recent DTC in the Era of Consumer Choice Conference. New-media spaces, such as social media, mobile marketing and video game advertisements, have created many new opportunities for pharmaceutical marketers.

Krouse, vice president and a director of healthcare at

"It all starts with the content strategy... and it needs to be a structured process. A lot of emerging media is trial and error right now," Krouse said. Krouse said some pharma companies have begun to venture into these new territories, such as Johnson & Johnson with its ADHD Moms Facebook group and GlaxoSmithKline with its SMS campaign for pharmacy assistants. However, with the growth of the digital market, online ad spending isn't fully reflective of its use. She predicted that "online spending will continue to grow in this economy because it is measurable and accountable. It allows for better targeting. ... It's [also] interactive and engaging, and it allows marketers to reach prospects through [the brand's] entire lifecycle."

Improving DTC to improve health outcomes



Hugh O'Neill

"done justice to the value of branded pharmaceuticals," he said. He does not fault the concept of DTC itself, but rather much of the content that consumers see. He pointed out

There is a diminishing appreciation of the value of branded pharmaceuticals due to skepticism of the value of DTC marketing, Sanofi-Aventis' Hugh O'Neill said at the conference. The vice president and head of market access and business development said he understands this skepticism. I don't think most DTC marketing – at least in the television realm – has

that when DTC is done well and used appropriately, it "can have a significant and positive influence."

O'Neill stated that DTC played a "significant role in promoting the trend [of the] informed, empowered consumer." Citing RAND Health study data, O'Neill noted that patients are not receiving the care that they should be. DTC has help fill a void for them. Consumers are looking for factual information, so provide them with the evidence in your claims, O'Neill said. Responsible DTC encourages patients to be proactive about managing their health, so he advised making DTC more constructive by contributing to a single, focused goal of improving the health outcomes for patients.

Cutting back on healthcare spending



Keli Walbert

and consumers – and that the impact will linger into early 2009 as many companies adjust last June's forecasts to reflect the economic crisis.

"The Wall Street debacle didn't happen until September /October," she pointed out. "So in the first quarter,

Keli Walbert, a former Abbott Labs marketer who was named vice president of integrated marketing at the American Medical Association (AMA), noted that marketers typically cannot control external economic factors, yet need to develop marketing plans with these factors in mind. She noted that the global economic crisis will affect millions of patients

we can expect that there is going to be another economic breathtaking because [companies] are going to re-forecast the marketplace and there's going to be lots of announcements about new economic targets as the realities of what's happened on Wall Street kind of roll through."

While consumer concerns about affording healthcare is nothing new, Walbert cited IMS Health data that showed the number of prescription drug fills dropped by 4% in the second quarter of 2008, the first time in 12 years (when IMS began tracking such data). Also, "48% of Americans are cutting back on healthcare spending because of fears about the economy, and 22% said they were reducing their spending on prescription drugs, which is going to affect the TRx," she added.