

EFFECTIVE DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE B2B PHARMACEUTICAL SECTORS

Kick-start your digital marketing strategy with
this comprehensive digital roadmap



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INTRODUCTION



It's difficult to find innovative ways to reach your audience in the pharmaceutical sectors. COVID-19 cancelled face-to-face events in 2020 and affected other forms of traditional marketing leading to an increase in the use of digital marketing and digital tactics, meaning the digital marketplace has become even more crowded than ever.

But across the B2B and B2C sectors there are a range of digital marketing methods that can be adopted to reach your audience, and it's important you find the right method of digital marketing which entices your audience to realise your marketing objectives. The options available to digital marketers are far and wide...

Social media, for example, can be a great tool for marketing to the pharmaceutical sector when used correctly and can benefit both marketing and sales teams. Pay-per-click helps boost traffic to your website and increase sales and is a great way to get your organisation, message and products out there on a number of different platforms such as search engines and social media, where you only pay for each visit.

Email marketing – perhaps the oldest digital marketing method in B2B pharma – is still a great way of promoting a specific product or service as well as building relationships with new potential clients in the pharmaceutical sector, once you have access to email lists.

Blogs are also a useful tool for helping your website appear higher in search results to generate more visitors as well as keeping connected with your audience in the pharmaceutical sector. Blogs and content marketing work together, which is a great way of increasing sales and help stimulate interest in your brand – and it was probably the most widely used digital marketing method in 2020. There are many forms of content marketing, some already mentioned, but others include podcasts, videos and infographic content marketing which create communities for your audiences which we will run through in this digital roadmap. Online communities and networks also present the →

perfect setting for building relationships and brand awareness, with prospects, peers and patients.

So, where do we start?

This e-book will look at some of the more tactical elements of the digital marketing mix with actionable tips to get stuck into for each. But first, we will look at some of the more strategic elements of a digital marketing plan, concluding with some ideas on how to optimise the tactics you choose to get the most out of your digital activities. Each section will have bitesize content paragraphs with numbered checklists and points so you can skim each chapter.

We'll also signpost some similar content for further reading on *Orientation Marketing Insights* as we go. You can also use the links within the contents page to skip back and forth to and from chapter to chapter, as well as go back to the start at any point. And finally, we shall also be sending you further resources – such as some details about the 7Ps digital marketing mix and the steps to take to kick-start your digital marketing - via email to support the information within this e-book.

Grab a drink and lets deep dive into effective digital marketing in the B2B pharmaceutical sectors...



WHAT DOES A DIGITAL STRATEGY LOOK LIKE?



A pharmaceutical digital strategy: We know we need to have one, but why are we hesitant about creating one? The pharmaceutical industry has always lagged behind other industries when it comes to digital. This is the case across the value chain, R&D, distribution as well as for marketing and sales. Healthcare providers as well as drug development and medical device manufacturers, for B2C and B2B, are both to blame here. It's an industry-wide problem.

This creates an issue because digital is becoming more and more prominent in the lives of the customers of both B2B and B2C entities. And it's not a case of needing to be there on those digital channels to sell. Rather meeting the expectations of those customers on the channels they choose, and prefer, to use. This is what effective digital marketing entails.

To reiterate, [McKinsey](#) has identified five compelling reasons why pharmaceutical organisations must introduce (or reinvent) their digital marketing strategies before it is too late:

- Patient behaviour is changing
- Government agencies are moving surprisingly quickly
- Trial data is necessary but no longer sufficient
- Care is evolving
- Competition is faster and fiercer.

These reasons, however, are often known to pharmaceutical marketers. The challenge for those marketers comes from understanding digital strategy from a pharmaceutical standpoint, identifying the opportunities, and then taking the marketing of the pharmaceutical →

organisation in a different strategic direction.

Digital has already started to change how the pharmaceutical and healthcare industry operates. But since the industry is vast, with the organisations within large, there is much still left to do - especially within marketing and sales.

To answer the question often presented, a digital marketing strategy could look like a mobile-driven content programme or a shift to an always-open customer service channel via a website or Facebook Live Chat or even an ABM strategy to target the pharmaceutical organisations via social media and other digital communities that makes targeted networking possible.

Alternatively, a digital marketing strategy that might have been adopted in the last year due to the cancellation of events throughout the pharmaceutical and life science calendar is to focus on delivering digital material to delegates of those events which have been moved into virtual environments. The COVID-19 crisis has meant that most pharmaceutical organisations are required to move towards digital-only strategies - with some launching new business models - to survive and to reach their target audiences. Digital innovations, which were always there for adoption, are now being accessed to restructure portfolios, change business processes and collaborate in strategic alliances.

Many separate components exist within a pharmaceutical digital strategy. We'll present some relevant insights in this chapter of what a pharmaceutical digital (marketing) strategy might look like from a practical standpoint, where we'll also reference instances how these implications fit in within B2B and B2C pharmaceutical organisations to get the strategy off to the best start.

EMBRACING INNOVATIONS OUTSIDE OF THE SECTOR

The digital strategies which you see in the pharmaceutical sectors are largely down to innovations and digital developments originating outside of the sector. Our friends at Drug Discovery World accurately put it: "The innovations coming from outside the traditional healthcare industry span a wide spectrum of products and services, but all take advantage of advances in digital technologies and the ability to analyse and present large amounts of data in new ways. From new biosensor technologies and smart devices to portals and physician guidance →

tools, there are numerous exciting breakthroughs that allow enhanced self-monitoring capabilities and patient adherence – and ultimately superior clinical decision-making and treatment success.” Keep an eye outside of the pharmaceutical sectors for a head start with any potential digital strategy...

INVEST IN THE RIGHT DIGITAL TALENT

Many pharmaceutical organisations have started to build on their digital talent internally. Setting up digital leads and teams within divisions. Investing in the right digital talent is key to getting a digital strategy off the ground and working for the organisation. This trend needs to continue and higher management needs to continually invest in digital programmes by providing the talent, training, funding and resources for these teams to be able to scale. Internal talent needs to be able to also integrate with other departments, as well as with external providers should it be needed, and the method in which all parties need to be defined from the leadership team. If you are responsible for your digital strategy, befriend a senior sponsor from the leadership team - do not run such a programme without this buy-in.

EXPERIMENT

The sheer options available for a digital strategy could be part of the issue of slow adoption. A lack of prior knowledge with such programs within organisations, and generally a lack of experience, doesn't offer pharmaceutical professionals an obvious place to start. Any initiative needs a pilot period to determine if the market responds to the new strategy in the way that it imagined. If the strategy, perhaps a mobile-first approach to communications would increase the number of meetings with business professionals or would increase patient awareness for a disease, then the strategy can be rolled out fully. Even experienced digital strategists can't get it right every time, so there is a need for experimentation.

DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS AT FIRST, AND FROM THEN ONWARDS

There is one aspect of pharmaceutical organisations that remain consistent for everyone: Data is usually in abundance but although the data is there, with the potential to do more available, pharma is still →

stuck in the middle and not quite pushing forward to the next level. Some of this data will sit within commercial departments. This is data that needs to be accessed for a digital strategy to flourish. Prescribing behaviours or sales cycles lengths can all be found within this data, that can be the enabler for a new digital strategy during the early phases as well as on an ongoing basis. Once experimental programmes are off the ground, with their results harnessed in a way that the data can be used to drive future strategic digital decisions, the organisation will be far better placed to run more successful digital programmes.

FOCUS ON ONE STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The experimentation phases (which might be ongoing) will uncover suggestions as to what the digital strategy will entail. Live chat representatives or mobile-only communications... whatever the options, it's good to focus on one direction to take the strategy forward. Focus in this way will mean that the strategy can be funded appropriately and supported fully with buy-in from the leadership team as well as other departments who will play their part by contributions. If a particular digital strategy can meet a range of objectives, that also support the organisation's strengths (such as product and service offering or current customer base) then it makes sense to hone-in on such strategy that will likely increase the bottom-line.

THEN FOCUS ON THE EXPERIENCE

In an age where the number of channels is large, where we have to manage each channel a little differently to others, we forget about what is vitally important for any marketing initiative: Customer experience. In this respect, we focus on being on those channels rather than influencing the conversations on those channels. So, as well as focusing on a strategy, we should also be focusing on creating positive experiences. Finding relevant information about diabetes, strokes or coeliac disease is difficult because there are so many sources of information available within apps, websites and social media can't be easy and can only confuse.

A NEED FOR OMNICHANNEL

Interconnected channels are a must in a world where everyone can →

access information virtually everywhere. [Omnichannel marketing](#) in pharma is a reality. Patients and lab professionals will move between channels, from social media to apps or from media websites to physical events across continents, therefore, the relationships between these channels are hugely important for the marketers that are trying to influence them. A digital strategy must take into consideration the range of touchpoints with target audiences - whilst evaluating capacity to effectively manage the experience on each - and create an ecosystem of connected touchpoints. No message exists in isolation.

AIM FOR 24/7 AND AUTOMATION

Should a new digital marketing strategy be put in place, it should always be available, with tasks automated where possible. From pharmaceutical sales representatives to patient support teams, up-to-date and 24/7 care will become the norm. But this always-open perspective isn't just the case for service-based operations. Patients will want to monitor their health through the use of sensors and digital services to provide tailored care 24/7. Any strategy that is put in place can be launched with the view that the programme is tailored for the recipient, to benefit the recipient but also to provide new perspectives for the parent organisation.

REFRESH INFRASTRUCTURE

A new digital marketing strategy will bring with it a growing amount of additional management tasks which will require the organisation to review and refresh its digital and technological infrastructure. This will certainly be the case once the programme is up and running and with the amount of increased data flowing in from all directions. Traditional IT infrastructures that might already be in place - and have been for a long period - might be outdated and incapable of coping, resulting in slow processes and a lack of progress. Here, pharmaceutical organisations will need to work with new vendors and new platforms to make the strategy work, resulting in a more complex IT environment.

EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT

Customer management is the heart of any digital strategy within a marketing context. The aforementioned is determined by this single →

component. From the touchpoints to the organisational structures/processes, a pharmaceutical entity's digital and customer-centric strategy is solely based on the how effective that organisation is in managing its customers and consolidating the subsequent data this brings.

TRANSFORMATION: OPPORTUNITY RATHER A CHALLENGE

Christian Pawlu, Head of Divisional Strategy at Sandoz (Novartis), has previously said: "The companies that will be most successful are those that view this transformation as an opportunity rather than a challenge; and the leaders will be those who fully embrace the power of data and emerging digital technologies." There is potential across the breadth of a pharmaceutical organisation for digital transformation and to set up more effective strategies via the opportunities that digital offers. "We are looking at 'digital transformation' of the way we work. And we are investigating in 'digital enablement,' using existing technologies for incremental improvements in areas such as e-commerce."



CREATING A DIGITAL MARKETING PLAN



The pressures exerted on marketing teams encourages them to jump right in and start promoting the organisation via any digital means. Sometimes in ways that might not always be effective.

Often, our activities are determined by what we've always done in the past without knowing if what we are doing is making a difference and often, we act on dated assumptions the drive that work. Again, we could be more effective by doing things more strategically with some planning.

The digital marketing plan includes the budgets, channels and the ideas which will take the pharmaceutical organisation and its products and services forward. But do you think your plan could be better? Do you think the plan has been put together hurriedly with parts missing? Or, do you think it can be improved with structure and direction?

SOSTAC is a strategic marketing planning model that looks at six stages of the digital marketing plan: Situation analysis, objectives, strategy, tactics, actions and control.

There is a range of marketing planning templates and frameworks available to adopt, however, the SOSTAC model has emerged as one of the leading plan models due to its simplicity and practicality. Where marketers can move between stages and cross-reference whether the assertions and decisions made within each achieves the direction set out in the previous stage. Whether you're embarking on a digital marketing campaign or looking to plan your annual or even 3-5 month digital plan, SOSTAC can be used to determine whether your plan is likely to succeed as well as keep you on track during the execution of the plan.

We will go over all six elements of the plan in the context of a pharmaceutical organisation's digital marketing plan.

1. SITUATION ANALYSIS: EVALUATE CURRENT ACTIVITY AND PREVIOUS DIGITAL MARKETING PLANS (WHERE ARE YOU NOW?)

The first stage of the digital marketing planning process is a review of the current situation, and from a marketing perspective, an examination of the current (or previous) marketing plan and digital activities. Researching internal and external elements will give you an overview of the direction you can take your marketing plan within the current landscape.

This is perhaps the most important stage (that can take up to 50% of the planning process time), and some of the work carried out will not actually make it into the physical plan, rather inform the decisions made for the marketing plan. The choices you will make, specifically in terms of strategy and action planning, will be better as you are more realistic with your expectations in your current market position.

Devoting time to this stage of the pharmaceutical marketing plan will help make more informed decisions throughout the rest of the plan. There are a range of questions to ask yourself, and as part of your situation analysis (SWOT), ask yourself or your marketing team:

- What do our customers want?
- What opportunities and threats currently exist within the marketplace and the wider pharmaceutical sector?
- What are our competitors doing that we can do better or counter?
- What are the current trends within the market? What do we need to be doing and not doing?

2. OBJECTIVE SETTING: DETERMINE THE SPECIFIC GOALS OF THE DIGITAL MARKETING PLAN (WHERE DO YOU WANT TO BE?)

Once the current position is defined, it is then appropriate to determine the desired marketing position you wish to achieve for your pharmaceutical organisation. Setting such objectives gives you perspective and a target so that your marketing activities are focused and contribute towards the overall digital marketing and organisational objectives.

This stage will likely involve all of your marketing team, even board members and those responsible for allocating marketing budgets, where the aims of the entire digital marketing plan are set. The →

previous stage will determine what you are capable of achieving and good objectives are quantified with timescales.

- [Set SMART objectives](#)
- Align the marketing objectives with organisational objectives
- [Select KPIs.](#)

3. DETERMINE THE DIGITAL STRATEGY: SELECT ON THE PARTICULAR APPROACH TO THE MARKETING PROBLEM (HOW DO YOU GET THERE?)

The strategic planning stage determines direction, and within the digital marketing plan, summarises how the objectives set in stage two are fulfilled. A hugely important process of the plan that takes into account the two previous sections as it dictates how the organisation is going to shift its position.

Here, trends are responded to where a subsequent position within the market is determined, and subsequently, what digital marketing and communication strategies are adopted to support customer acquisition, conversion and retention.

In a nutshell, at least from a B2B pharmaceutical marketing perspective, how will leads or sales be delivered? Should your pharmaceutical organisation wish to expand into new territories, your [marketing strategy](#) should reflect this. Set up an internal marketing strategy meeting with all of the key stakeholders and discuss the following:

- Are we targeting a particular market segment?
- How will we position ourselves the market/market segment?
- What is our communications/content strategy?

4. DIGITAL TACTICAL IMPLICATIONS: SET OUT THE DETAILS OF THE PLAN, AND HOW TO ACHIEVE THE STRATEGY (HOW EXACTLY WILL WE GET THERE?)

The tactical stage of the planning process will show exactly how to implement the digital strategy determined in the previous section, which is generally more detailed than either of the other stages from →

a documentation perspective. Each touchpoint, from an initial advert to a landing page to email marketing workflows, to CRM management to supporting news articles and social media content, as well as digital advertising, for example, will be listed in this section.

This might support a content marketing strategy designed to educate a sub-section of a pharmaceutical vertical about solution alternatives, that positions your organisation as the cheaper, yet friendlier alternative to the market leader. Often, to determine the tactical direction, marketing teams (this perhaps more senior members) will need to lock themselves in a room, look at all of the available channels and tactics within the communications mix, and decide which to focus on that are more likely to achieve the strategy. Be ready to spend time scribbling on whiteboards...

In the end, the following will be required:

- A roadmap of [tactics and touchpoints](#)
- A review of your [media plan](#) and schedule
- A detailed gantt chart of all the channels you plan to use.

5. ACTION PLANNING: ENSURE THAT THE MARKETING PLAN CAN BE EXECUTED (WHO DOES WHAT AND WHEN?)

A digital marketing plan was always going to feature a section which would determine and state the details of the plan, specifically what exactly are marketing team members doing with their working hours and when? This will happen in the action planning section, which features the detailed working out of the tactics.

Each tactical digital channel, activity or medium is a mini-plan that needs to be managed, with the frequency of posting and specific actions of each channel taken into consideration. What actions need to be taken (daily, weekly, monthly)? What processes are required to make the tactics happen? What [marketing tools](#) are required?

Reading about this stage you are no doubt beginning to lose enthusiasm for your digital marketing plan, which would suggest why this part of the planning process is often the weakest for organisations. It often goes missed entirely. Always remember to allocate time and resources to your plan and conduct internal marketing to team members so that they are aware of the actions required of them to →

bring the plan to life:

- Allocate resources to specific individuals
- Create a marketing/content calendar with specified dates
- Conduct ongoing [internal marketing](#) and one-to-ones for motivation.

6. CONTROL: DECIDE ON THE APPROPRIATE METHODS TO EVALUATE THE DIGITAL PLAN AND PROCESS (HOW AND WHAT DO WE MONITOR?)

Finally, and to go full circle on the digital marketing plan, is the control stage. The control stage identifies what you need to measure and how often, and what needs to happen should you identify that the plan isn't working or if you are not on track to meet the KPIs set out in stage two of the plan. A key benefit of such reporting is to identify whether you are succeeding or not before it's too late, as well as arming you with the knowledge for next year's pharmaceutical digital marketing/campaign plan.

The majority of this process will look at your marketing metrics - such as website visitors, conversions and number of leads/sales generated - but it will also include reviewing internal workflows and how the team is performing as a unit. Each tactical element from stage four will need its own reporting system, as well as how each team member is performing.

Controlling the plan is essential, and like the previous section, this should not be ignored. Three key areas to plan:

- Reporting on KPIs
- Regular process reviews
- Gathering team feedback.

Creating a digital marketing plan is made easier when the structure has presented itself to you. The six-stage template we've presented is based on the SOSTAC marketing model developed by marketing strategist PR Smith and is considered one of the best models to follow for marketing planning in a number of situations.

The structure is simple and logical that derives from the situation →

analysis, which by its very definition, is the most important aspect (even if the majority of the findings are not required within the documentation of the marketing plan itself) that can inform accurate decision-making in terms of internal capability and external opportunities and threats. Follow its structure for your digital marketing plan.

Next, we'll review some common digital marketing tactics, methods and channels with actionable tips and best practice to start tweaking your digital marketing plan right away.



EMAIL MARKETING



Email marketing is one of the oldest tricks in the digital marketing playbook. We use it to promote company news, whitepapers, webinars, product launches and our presence at trade shows, both physical and virtual. And email marketing has always provided the benefit of directly measuring performance. Marketers can access feedback – whether the recipient opened the email or clicked on a specific link – for campaigns almost immediately.

But even as early as the 1990s, email marketing was being abused as the term spam was coined, similar to its physical mail equivalent junk mail. With the average user receiving upwards of 90 emails per day, email marketing would seem like a digital tactic of the past. But 86% of business professionals use email when communicating for business purposes and 58% of millennials say that email is their preferred way to be contacted by a brand.

B2B EMAIL MARKETING AND GDPR

New [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) recently came into force and was designed to protect personal information and increase the rights of individuals by giving them more control over their information. This generally means that organisations need to gain consent from a subscriber before that subscriber is sent marketing communications via email. Making email marketing a little more difficult than previously.

Should a subscriber choose to opt-out of email marketing communications, organisations would breach this new regulation if the opted-out subscriber is sent marketing communications after unsubscribing. The subscriber can also request that the data previously held is deleted from the organisation's database.

Organisations can still conduct email marketing, however, permission by the subscriber is needed (proof of opt-in is also required) →

who will also get the option to manage the type of content they receive from organisations at any time.

For those opted-in subscribers, there are three common types of emails that B2B marketers can use when sending email marketing communications. They are all relatively similar, but the objectives and projected outcomes are quite different, therefore the content is generally different.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING EMAILS

Improving B2B relationships is always a good idea and email marketing can be used to do just this. Emails might come in the form of surveys, welcome emails or simply in the form of a re-engagement email for a subscriber that has gone cold. The goal of the email might be to generate feedback to show that the subscriber is still willing to engage with your organisation and the content that is sent to that subscriber.

CONTENT EMAILS

This type of email doesn't look to sell the subscribers directly. The aim of the email is to signpost visitors to content, usually new. The content may take the form of a blog post, news article or case studies/product updates on the organisation's website, or even a newsletter. The goal of the email might simply be to generate some awareness about your organisation, its services or provide some information regarding a topic.

OFFERS EMAILS

This type of email is similar to the content emails but there is usually a transaction involved - most likely data in some form. Offers such as free downloadable whitepapers, webinars and audits can be attained by providing some information in return for the offer. The goal of such an email is to generate a lead from the subscriber list to then progress the subscriber through the buyer's journey, potentially towards a sale.

EMAIL MARKETING BEST PRACTICE TACTICS

Scour the internet and you'll find a large number of articles with tips on how to conduct email marketing. Some will provide tips on how to →

write subject lines and others will indicate what time is best to send those emails. Here are 10 B2B email marketing tactics for best practice on a more strategic level.

1. PERSONALISE EVERY EMAIL

Every email should include an element of personalisation. At the base level, including the subscriber's name and organisation/industry sector within the body/subject line can increase the overall engagement with the campaign. Make sure that the sender also clearly identifies themselves by including the name of the sender in the email body and at the top of the email. There are many levels of personalisation possible, which depends on the level of segmentation an organisation is willing to adopt...

2. SEGMENT SUBSCRIBERS

Email contacts, once subscribed, can be segmented to enable targeted and timely campaigns so that the chances of the contacts doing what you want them to do with your emails are higher. HubSpot provides a comprehensive list of segmentation categories – such as geography, persona, organisation type and industry – that can be used to segment lists and contact preferences. From re-engaging old contacts to rewarding active customers, there are many methods and many reasons to segment subscribers.

3. CONNECT YOUR EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BUYER'S JOURNEY

B2B marketers will know that a large percentage of a subscriber list or email contact currently subscribed will not ordinarily be ready to buy. Contacts will be situated within different stages of the buyer's journey, and therefore the content emailed to those subscribers need to be different. Apart from basic segmentation, email contacts and communications should also be connected to the buyer's journey. So content is always relevant and also sent out for a purpose: to progress that contact through the buyer's journey closer towards a sale, when that contact is ready for it.

4. YOU'RE ADDRESSING AN INDIVIDUAL, NOT A CROWD

I often find myself surprised upon reading marketing emails to find that the content, specifically the written copy within, is geared towards groups of people rather than an individual. My name might be included in the subject line, but the actual content doesn't feel like it's for me.

When writing campaign emails, always write the email like you're writing a personal email to a colleague or friend within your Gmail or Outlook account, not to a group of people. Write to that one person. The persona, decision-maker or someone on that chain of command himself that is part of the complex sales process. It will improve engagement.

5. AUTOMATE

Once subscribers are segmented, certain rules should be created within those segments, where once triggered by an activity, automated emails can be sent out to those subscribers. Email marketing is a prime method of qualifying and nurturing subscribers into leads and then sales, but to effectively do this automation software is required so that each email is relevant and timely.

6. FOLLOW UP ON EVERYTHING

Often, marketing emails aren't acted upon simply as they might have been delivered at a busy time in the recipient's calendar. Not because the content wasn't relevant. A short follow-up email, just to nudge someone, can transform the performance of a campaign. So, if an email doesn't get a response or if an event is triggered or if feedback is required, a short email can remind a subscriber to take action on a campaign that could reap huge rewards. Even sending follow-up emails to the "unread" has shown to increase the overall open rate by almost 50%.

7. CHOOSE A SIMPLE EMAIL DESIGN

Email design is one of the easiest elements of an email to get wrong, however, getting it right is easy. And the general rule is that an email design should actually have minimal design elements included. Avoid a complex email structure, keep images to a minimum and use HTML →

text/fonts (black). B2B marketers sometimes forget that their subscribers aren't B2C customers, where there is more focus on visual elements. Clarity should always be the focus of B2B emails.

8. AIM TO GET SUBSCRIBERS OUT OF THEIR EMAILS TO A WEB PAGE

"Treat your emails like a homepage." This quote completely summarises what B2B marketers need to do with emails, which is to grab attention and then divert that attention to a web page. Emails should be short and to the point and the CTAs should be clear, repeated if relevant. I haven't met anyone who works in marketing that likes to spend time within emails, so it's our jobs to adhere to this wish and move our subscribers away from those emails and on to web pages and websites.

9. GET INTO THE HABIT OF CLEANING LISTS

Designing emails for engagement is important, but if those emails aren't being delivered in the first instance then the design is irrelevant. Having a clean list increases deliverability, reduces bounce rates and gives the organisation increased data accuracy. Don't be afraid to remove inactive subscribers from your lists or asking them what content they want to receive. Keeping a list clean ensures that those we are speaking to are actually interested in hearing from us. If they are not interested in an organisation or its products, then there is no reason to keep that contact as a subscriber.

10. TEST EVERYTHING (SMALL TESTS ARE A GOOD START)

Testing is part of a marketer's everyday remit, as we scrutinise our own work and improve the performance of our campaigns. From content tests to visual tests, where the slightest of tweaks can improve open rates and click-through rates and can mean the difference between a good and bad email marketing campaign. The general rule is to pick one or two elements at a time to test and see how that improves performance, before moving on to tweak other elements of an email.



SOCIAL MEDIA



Social media is an important marketing channel to be making use of - especially if you are marketing to a B2B pharmaceutical audience.

People have a misconception about social media and think the channel is predominantly for the younger generation. A great deal of social media users are young, but there is also a large portion of people who use social media that are older. Ages generally vary between the different social media channels themselves.

According to HubSpot, 77.5% of Generation X use social media. These are often the demographics that pharmaceutical organisations are targeting - 40-54 years old, which we have determined that 77.5% of them are actively engaging on social media. Out of the whole population, 42% of people use social media and 54% of social browsers will use social media to research products.

Why would you want to use social media? What could it possibly do to help you with your objectives in marketing to pharmaceutical organisations? Well, social media can help you in many ways. You may think you already have loads of ways to market your organisation and don't need another.

Social media is a great way to share content with your audience. Use your posts and content to link to your website to get people looking at your website and web pages. If people like what they see on your post they might want to know more and are likely to follow the link to find out more about what you have to offer.

It is also a relaxed way to market yourself and become closer to your audience. As a PR tool, it cannot be substituted. Because social media is one of the more relaxed forms of marketing people are more likely to involve themselves in conversations which will help you build a strong and stable relationship with your customer.

As a company you want people to know who you are, you want people to be familiar with the brand and associate your company with your →

trade. Social media is a great way to get people familiar with your company and the way you work as a company.

You can use social media to get people familiar with your brand and identity. Social media will get people familiar with your company and help them relate certain topics to your audience. Because people are seeing your content often, they will subconsciously become familiar with your organisation and brand.

Becoming active on social media groups will help you create a connection with your audience. These groups will give you the opportunity to connect with people that will be interested in your industry. Using social media will allow you to position yourself as a thought leader in the industry.

Convinced that social media is an appropriate channel in reaching your pharmaceutical audience? Read on for some basic tips on how to use the channel better.

1. SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT PLANNING

Having a social media plan is essential to creating a successful marketing strategy. Make yourself familiar with the type of content you want to share with your audience. Post informative content that will be of interest of your audience so that they keep coming back.

2. GREAT SOCIAL CONTENT

The better your social content is the more likely you are to get good engagement. Make sure your social media is consistent with all the other marketing you do, making your marketing consistent will show you care about your image and will make people more likely to trust you. If you are going to spend time using social media, you are required to make regular posts on your social accounts. The content you post can take many forms, be it imagery, videos, graphics or how-to-guides. Just be sure to make sure it's valuable and informative content.

3. TRACK COMPETITORS

You need to know everything about what your competitors are doing. If they are doing something you generally want to be doing it bigger and better. Know everything your competitors are getting up to through →

social media - you should be familiar with the procedures they follow the processes they take this way you can always be one step ahead of the competition.

WHAT TYPE OF CONTENT SHOULD YOU BE POSTING?

It's important to remember that there are many different types of content you can use to help you create a stable and balanced social media presence.

Your top priority is engaging content you should aim to have at least 40% of your content to be engaging. This is the type of content that is going to catch the attention of your audience and pique their interest. With regards to engaging content, you would be looking at things such as quotes, motivational content and quizzes.

After this you want to look at promotional content about 30% of your social content should promoting the company. This doesn't have to be really intense marketing just subtle you don't want to overdo it. You can do this type of marketing through special offers, discounts and company news.

Try and make at least 20% of your content educational, pharmaceutical organisations like to show themselves as thought leaders in the industry and posting promotional content will show your audience that you know what you are talking about. This type of content can be in the form of lists, tips, infographics statistics and charts.

For the final 10%, we are looking at curated content. This type of content is original content that's not been seen before you only need a small percentage of this because it takes some time to create but will be worth it when your audience begins to engage with it. This type of content is original and should be brand specific.

Follow all of these tips to help you create a professional and effective social media presence.

1. CREATE PROFILES ON MULTIPLE PLATFORMS

There are so many social media platforms out there that you really don't need to be on all of them, the challenge is to find out what accounts you need this will rely largely on where your audience is and you should be where they are. For pharmaceutical organisations, this →

Is platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Social platforms such as Pinterest and TikTok are not a necessity for the pharmaceutical industry so to spend time trying to grow these accounts would be a waste of your marketing methods this is why it is important to know where your audience are.

2. POST CONTENT ON A DAILY BASIS

Persistence is key and in the social world things are very quickly forgotten about so in order to stay relevant you need to keep posting informative content. You should be looking to make at least one post a day. Making regular posts will show your audience that you care about them.

3. GIVE PEOPLE A REASON TO FOLLOW YOU

Make sure the content you are sharing with people is worthwhile. Use your content to show your audience that you know what you are talking about, your content can be used to help position yourself and company as thought leader show them you know what you are talking about this is going to make them more likely to trust your brand.

4. FORM RELATIONSHIPS WITH SOCIAL INFLUENCERS

Opinions matter, everyone cares about what other people think. Positioning yourself with influencers will help people feel like they can trust you. This is a very useful technique because you don't have to do anything. Influencers will share their opinions of your products and tell people what they think this is going to make it easier for your customers to trust your product.

5. ENCOURAGE USER-GENERATED CONTENT

Not all the content you post has to be generated in-house. You can use your followers to help you grow your own platform. Sharing the content your followers post shows you are actively engaged in the platform and will make people more likely to actively engage with your original content. In the U.S it has been shown that 88% of customers trust a product recommendation that comes from someone they know and →

a staggering 90% rate online recommendations from other users highly influential

6. MAKE SURE YOUR PROFILE IS FULL

Most of the time we would say quality over quantity for content but when it comes to populating your profile this isn't the case. You want to make sure your online profiles are as full as possible. If people want to contact you directly, they should be able to find that information on your social account. Having an empty account makes you appear untrustworthy you may appear like you have something to hide. The fuller your profile is the more inclined people will be to trust you.

7. CROSS PROMOTE ON OTHER CHANNELS

Use every piece of content you own. There is no point having three or more active social accounts if no one knows your there because then it is just a waste of time. Take a step back and look at your platforms on which do you have the highest following? Use this one to remind your visitors that you have other accounts they could support you on. Don't be shy to ask them to follow you, you don't have to be intense or demanding about it but asking them won't hurt. Use your bio if people visit your profile have it in your bio that you have other social accounts.

Another great place to market your social media presence is through your newsletter, website and email signatures. All of these are mediums that people are using all the time, every time you send an email your signature should be reminding them you have a social account your newsletter should be telling them if they want quick updates to go see your social media and your website should direct them to your social media if they want to be a little less formal.

8. CREATE TARGETED ADS

Social media allows us to create ads you may as well use this feature creating targeted ads allows you to boost your content that little bit further. Getting seen by those few extra people can make all the difference. Take advantage of these marketing features to target your interest groups.

9. STAGGER CONTENT

Remember you have people following all your social accounts so you might have the same person on both accounts this is why you want to try and be careful with the content you post. Don't put the same thing on every account because that might end up making you lose followers. Post different content on different platforms. You could even share one post this month on Facebook and then on LinkedIn next month if it's still relevant.

Getting started with your social media can be quite overwhelming, therefore, you should set goals and come up with a social media plan to help, for example, a goal could be to increase website traffic from social platforms. To do this you could post relevant educational content or post consistently so you are always showing up on someone's feed. You should set out a plan for this, a content calendar is a great way of planning social posts and the time they should go out.



WEBINARS



Webinars have been the linchpin for our clients' content marketing efforts for a number of years. But what once used to be a blue-ribbon product in our vendors' media planner has now become something of a commodity.

Certainly, as the rate for a webinar has been driven down by competition, which in some instances, has affected both the quality and quantity of leads/registrations/attendees for webinars. So, have webinars had their day? Absolutely not.

As part of a sustained, strategic lead nurture campaign they can still provide a great opportunity to generate leads and also provide a rare opportunity to engage with your prospects rather than just talk at them. Here are 10 tips to increase ROI with your webinar campaigns.

1. LEAD TIME - AIM FOR 6 WEEKS

A common pitfall is to commit to a webinar with limited time to generate awareness/registrants and ensure the webinar is well organised. We recommend six weeks as an optimum time from registration to broadcast date. We have all-too-often been in a position where a client confidently states they can deliver a webinar in four weeks, only to be hampered by illness or having to prioritise other projects, significantly effecting the webinar's overall success.

Once a webinar time and date is set and has been promoted it's very difficult to start moving the schedule around. Always allow enough time to do your webinar justice. A poorly executed webinar can do more damage than good.

2. CHOOSE THE TOPIC WITH CARE

Always ensure that the topic of your webinar reflects a problem or opportunity your prospects commonly face or offers insight into →

potential solutions to your prospects' problem or opportunity.

Rarely is a product or service focused webinar popular with the pharmaceutical community. You'll have an opportunity to engage your prospects with "decision" focused content (a more advanced stage within the science buyer's journey), but that time is not now. If you can offer genuinely valuable advice to your prospects, they will register for your webinar and return for more if you deliver on your promise.

3. USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROMOTE YOUR WEBINAR

A common mistake with webinar registration marketing is leaving the promotion to the vendor, which means only their community may be aware of the webinar. Ensure you utilise your own databases and channels to promote the webinar. If you have social media channels such as Twitter or a LinkedIn page, ensure these channels are utilised for promotion. Similarly, if you have product experts or key opinion makers within your organisation, use them.

4. USE EMAIL AND DISPLAY TO PROMOTE YOUR WEBINAR

Another method of increasing awareness of your webinar is utilising email marketing campaigns and digital display campaigns via third parties. This can be especially useful if the third party can target the section of their audience who would be interested in the topics covered in your webinar.

5. SET SMART OBJECTIVES

Also, ensure you clearly define who you are trying to reach with your webinar. Keep in mind company type, job function/title and location. It's no good generating 500 registrants if a large percentage of them are not relevant to you.

If you have agreed on KPIs (or SMART objectives) with your webinar provider, ensure that they take into account registrant relevance and also that any registration targets include a caveat relating to the number or percentage of registrants generated by the vendor. If you have generated 60% of registrations through your own (or third-party marketing), was this in line with expectations?

6. SEND REMINDERS

As mentioned above, ensure you allow enough lead time to generate sufficient leads, and rectify any poor initial take-up by adapting your marketing message.

Be sure to send sufficient reminders and follow-up emails tailored to those that have registered and those that might not have but could be persuaded to. A way of increasing registrations is to offer a secondary related piece of content to those who attend the live event.

7. TIMING/LENGTH OF WEBINAR - APPROX 1 HOUR

Other important factors to consider when planning your webinar is how long the webinar will last (we recommend no longer than an hour, including introduction and Q&A) and also the time of the live webinar.

If you are looking to target Asia-based prospects, it is of little use broadcasting a webinar at a time which is impractical for them to attend. With a pre-recorded webinar you can broadcast in different time zones and host separate live Q&A's afterwards, which can address questions which may have factors related to location.

8. FOLLOW UP

If you've delivered a successful webinar you may strike lucky and have a number of sales-ready leads to pass on to the sales team, however, it's more likely that your prospects will need further engagement/nurturing so ensure you have a follow-up plan in place. Create different workflows to engage with prospects based on their behaviours around the webinar:

1. If they attended have a piece of related content ready to follow up with.
2. If they registered but didn't attend send the prospect an on-demand link.
3. If they engaged with the webinar promotion activity but didn't register, is there another topic they might be interested in?

Strike while the iron is hot. You should follow up with prospects no later than a week after the live webinar.

9. REPURPOSE - GET MORE FROM YOUR INVESTMENT

You will have no doubt invested a lot of resource into your successful webinar, so ensure you stand to gain as much ROI as possible. Make sure an on-demand version is available in your content library (and negotiate as much on-demand marketing with the vendor as possible when agreeing on the webinar). Also, engage a writer to transcribe the content into a whitepaper or infographic, this means you'll essentially have a second piece of valuable content to offer prospects at no additional cost.

10. EVALUATE

It's imperative you are aware of what your prospects do next, and whether or not attending the webinar eventually translates into sales. Ensure you engage with your sales teams to track the initial source of any sale so you can tailor future webinar topics and vendors around what works, and not what you assume worked. Webinars are a fantastic B2B marketing channel. If you are not already conducting webinars, you are missing out - they have definitely not had their day. We work with many vendors and many clients to promote and run webinars, and the results are consistently positive.



VIRTUAL EVENTS (PART 1: TYPES)



COVID-19 has disrupted the events calendar in the pharmaceutical sectors quite severely. Many of the trade shows and conferences we would normally attend during a calendar year have been cancelled or postponed and due to be reviewed in 2021.

These events are important for the livelihood of all of the organisations – big and small – throughout the pharmaceutical supply chain. They are the meeting places for executives within the sectors to conduct business in a number of ways, which includes the marketing of products and services.

And there is no doubt business will have been affected because of these cancellations and postponements. But it is not all doom and gloom. Event, trade show organisers and B2B marketers around the world have devised new ways to run events so that delegates can attend (and generate business) from the safety of their own homes. Introducing virtual events.

Virtual events are growing in popularity, especially as the world continues to deal with the effects of COVID-19. A virtual event, also known as an online or digital event, just like webinars from the previous chapter, is an interactive gathering that happens on the internet. Unlike physical events, virtual events are not restricted to a single location. A remote attendee can join and participate from anywhere in the world.

Depending on the objectives of your virtual event presence, there are a number of event types and formats which could be suitable to promote your organisation, products and services. We'll explore virtual events across two chapters; Part 1 will review the event types and Part 2 will list the promotional methods for those virtual events. This chapter →

includes common event types widely seen across the B2B pharmaceutical and life science sectors.

You will likely be familiar to some of the event types, but only now considering exhibiting within one or running an event yourself. Some may be relevant to your marketing objectives, and some not so. However, it is useful to be aware of each virtual event type to strategically inform your new look digital marketing plan. This list can be used to help you and your organisation decide on which type of virtual event to host yourself, or to use to decide on which virtual event within the pharmaceutical show calendar is best suited for your goals.

1. DIGITAL WORKSHOPS

A digital workshop will consist of a presentation with PPT slides as supporting material for the presenter. The presenter might ask questions to the listeners and answers will be provided either in a chat box or during after the meeting/call. Some workshops will require the delegate to prepare some work before the workshop to give the delegate a foundation that the presenter will build on during the workshop. During this highly engaging and intimate virtual event format, questions can either be saved till the end or asked during the workshop.

2. VIRTUAL MEETUPS

Virtual meetups are becoming popular in the pharmaceutical industries as COVID-19 has made it increasingly difficult to do things that in the past would have been easy. Meeting up for coffee is not easy at present. Rather than go to a coffee shop or another office, we can use our laptops to virtually meet face-to-face. You can host a virtual meet up with multiple people, and the set-up is normally quick and easy with the right technology. Granted, this is not the same as meeting in person, but it is still possible to talk and this is something people will make use of when communicating over different regions after we come out of lockdown.

Virtual meetups are particularly important at the moment. But go back a few months and virtual meetups had their benefits in the pharmaceutical and life science sectors – COVID 19 is simply adding more features to those meetups.

3. VIRTUAL CAFES

Digital cafes are normally meetings between no more than fifteen people and are informal venues where people can come together, drink coffee and engage in discussions. All that is needed is a laptop, smartphone or tablet and a problem you need help with! These sessions are for delegates to casually grab a drink and engage in discussions. There might be a short presentation or workshop on topical issues also included, which would be recommended if you are looking to run one.

4. FORUMS

A forum is an online message board; discussion sites where people can have conversations in the form of messages. Forums differ to chat rooms because the messages are normally longer than it would be in a chat room - those are normally short and snippy like the length of a text whereas forums include more detailed paragraphs. Pharmaceutical marketers can use forums to talk about like-minded topics set by admins or delegates. There are many benefits to online forums, and you are almost guaranteed to have read one. These are a great way to get involved with discussions and share experiences, improve communication with your audience and position yourself as a thought leader.

5. LIVE DEMONSTRATIONS/STREAMS

Live streams are a great way to get people together and showcase products and services to large audiences. Conducting live streams can help you grow your audience which will provide access to consumers who would not have thought to get involved previously. Live streaming is cheap, and great for demo/training because it offers the opportunity to do so with a large audience.

6. VIRTUAL REALITY

A nice alternative to a face-to-face meeting. As it's not possible to meet in person at the moment virtual reality is a good way for people to still attend events and feel like they are there via a headset without actually being there. In the B2B life science/pharma supply chain and →

manufacturing environments we operate within, what we really want to do is showcase our service offering, machinery and manufacturing capabilities. By using VR - and creating virtual environments like your manufacturing premises and labs - you can take delegates right into the heart of your offering for a few minutes just by putting on a headset and the cost isn't as great as what it once was.

7. WEBINARS, PODCASTS AND ROUNDTABLES

As content options, webinars (as mentioned in the previous chapter) and podcasts are possibly amongst the strongest B2B pharmaceutical marketers have in 2020. The main difference between the two is webinars are multimedia, meaning they contain both audio and video, while podcasts normally include only audio. Webinars and podcasts are usually live virtual events executed online and is an educational or instructive session that includes audio and visual communication between a speaker and attendees.

Demand for such live events can be high, and as the episodes are usually recorded, they can also be released after the event and made available for a specified period of time. These are becoming an increasingly important part of your media plan as at the moment it is hard for pharmaceutical marketers to rely on print because you do not know if magazines are reaching their intended recipients in the office.

8. SUMMITS, CONGRESSES AND CONFERENCES

A summit is called when there is a problem that needs to be fixed and normally concluded when a solution is found. They are designed as a platform to bring people together and attract stakeholders that can develop future high-level strategies and address crucial problems. A conference is smaller in scale to a congress designed for a discussion, fact-finding, problem-solving and consultation.

Virtual conferences will feature guest speakers and offer the opportunity for one-to-one engagements that can offer new ways of operating and helping pharmaceutical organisations adopt more productive working procedures. The benefit of these types of virtual events is flexibility, as these will not have been planned originally in such format. They can be set up quickly and hosted online via video conferencing technology, and the main aims of the event can still be →

fully achieved in a digital-only format.

9. EXHIBITIONS AND TRADE SHOWS

Exhibitions and trade shows used to be a significant part of your marketing plan and budget. Trade shows and events were the “place to be” simply because everyone in the industry would be present. Last year, Vitafoods Europe Expo had around 24,000 delegates in attendance - a staggering amount of people to be in one place and a world away from the distancing measures in place at present.

As you would expect, lots of events had to be cancelled or attendance dramatically reduced or converted into virtual events. So far, the feedback is positive, with the big events utilising many of the formats – such as virtual meetings, VR and live demos – are being combined to replicate the atmosphere of the physical shows.

10. HYBRID EVENTS

A hybrid event is a tradeshow, conference, seminar, workshop or other meetings (many from the list in this chapter) that combines a virtual based-event with a physical/in-person event. A hybrid event is an event that takes place in a physical venue, while also being attended by a live and interactive audience online. You may have attended a few hybrid events yourself, as these events have become common over the past few years with more digital features being added as we become more familiar with the associated technologies.

With the growing popularity and cost-effectiveness of virtual events, hybrid events have become a popular way of increasing participation in traditional events at a relatively low cost. As things will slowly get back to normal, we can expect hybrid events to become the norm.

Executives and professionals throughout the life pharmaceutical sectors will have already experimented with a range of virtual event types for the majority of 2020. When face-to-face events becomes an option once again, the combination of the two is likely to feature prominently as those executives will want to get back into physical event environments but keep to specific distances. Keep hybrid events on your roadmap for 2021 and beyond...



VIRTUAL EVENTS (PART 2: PROMOTION)



By now, we have established the landscape we are operating within virtual events - but do we know how to promote ourselves and our events? We're aware of how we got here and now that we are here, what virtual events entail for pharmaceutical marketers to be successful and demonstrate ROI looking to produce as many opportunities are possible for follow up conversations away from the virtual event.

A previous chapter looked at the types of virtual event available to the digital marketer, in this chapter we'll go to the virtual event and review the tactics and the strategic actions that direct the promotion of the virtual event presence to influence our objectives.

Some of the tactics might be relevant, with some not so, with others worthy of reviewing and combining with another. Every organisation and virtual event are different. But to gain traction pre, during and post-event, the more you do the better your event outcomes. In this chapter, we offer 11 ideas (via digital) to do just that.

1. CREATE A DEDICATED WEBSITE CONTENT/WEBSITE SECTION

Everyone visiting your organisation's (main) website will need to know about your virtual event or your virtual event presence just, just like you would promote physical events initially. Creating a dedicated area or page on your website, signposted via appropriately positioned CTAs and banners, will inform your visitors of this area. The section itself should promote the content - along with a little about your →

pharmaceutical organisation - and activities taking place at the virtual event. Use the section as a teaser with the aim of assisting those visitors to hand over their details for something so you can conduct email marketing on the run-up to the event, as well as during.

2. USE REGISTRATION/LANDING PAGES

Registration and landing pages will allow the capture of contact details of the visitor in order to engage in a two-way dialogue. Building up a mailing list of subscribers interested in the event will enable you to increase your engagement levels during the virtual event when the various event-based content becomes available. Building waiting lists for this content, or even an early-bird list who can access snippets of this content also eases the pressures for pharmaceutical marketers to demonstrate ROI. These are still the same leads that you would develop at the event itself so they are still fully attributable to the virtual event - without the event content, no leads would have been generated.

3. BUILD AN APP OR CAMPAIGN SITE

To go one step further would be to create a stand-alone campaign site for the event or series of virtual events you are exhibiting at or running. Campaign websites can be created without large resources and would be the home for all event-based information. With the rest of 2020 looking to be mostly virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic, rest assured this is an investment worth making. Once the website is fully integrated with a marketing automation system, meetings can be booked automatically, content can be accessed (and tracked) anytime and email marketing jobs could be triggered. You could go a step further again and commission an app that would achieve the above but would be more accessible from a mobile context.

4. CONDUCT REGULAR EMAIL MARKETING

As a B2B pharmaceutical marketer, it will be obvious to you that email marketing will form the majority of your event tactics, certainly from an engagement perspective once you have prospects on your mailing list. It's possibly the most effective channel for event promotion - physical and virtual. Your virtual event-based email marketing strategy will include save the date emails, reminder emails, content notification →

emails and well as agenda-based emails to current subscribers that might not have signed up via the event landing page itself. Create as many of these emails as possible; and send out as many as possible.

5. CONSIDER FEEDBACK LOOPS

I like to think of survey and feedback as loops: a system in which some portion of the system's output is used as input for future operations. In practical terms, according to TechTarget: "In customer experience, a customer feedback loop refers to a business strategy where product developers use customer opinion to determine future actions." This is along the lines of what we are looking to achieve. By publishing a system that allows your users to give feedback on content, you are able to quickly segment and serve more relevant content to that user, as well as better serve content in the future. So, in the context of virtual events, we can generate feedback from subscribers and website visitors on which events are more popular and what sort of event-based content is most wanted. Asking what delegates want from the event is likely to get a response that forms the beginning of the conversation. With the loop mentality in place, depending on the answers, those prospects are then placed into segmented lists to market to more effectively. If you do anything, ask questions.

6. COMPETITIONS/CONTESTS

Asking for feedback is an efficient method of generating engagement with your organisation, just like contents and competitions are. I wouldn't run an exhibitor booth without a competition of some sort in a physical event environment - neither would I in a virtual event. Even in a pharmaceutical virtual event, this sort of thing is worth doing as it draws attention to the exhibitor and its booth, as well as open conversations with the organisation that can turn into future subscribers of your content, leads and potential sales prospects.

7. CREATE A VIDEO PREVIEW (AND OTHER EVENT VIDEOS)

We've discussed videos at length at on Orientation Marketing Insights over the last few years... so there's no need to ponder the benefits of videos here; you already know its effect. You will likely be creating videos as part of the content which you will promote during the event →

itself, that is likely to be available after the event. Use some of this content to create teaser videos that provide enough information for the user to find out more. A short story that encompasses your organisation, its message, the virtual event (or event series) and subsequent content is enough. Keep it short and focus on the visual elements.

8. INTERACTIVE CONTENT

The virtual event, in some respect, loses the interactive nature of physical events. And creating content that sits within PPT slides and PDF documents is fine, but it just doesn't quite make the impression with users as it would as a physical booklet or brochure within a physical environment. So you need to get creative with your content. Content that requires the participants' active engagement — more than simply reading or watching, similar to contests. Infographics, games, videos... you know the content types. Explore what works for your organisation and commission the creation of interactive content to make your booth stand out. This is the sort of content you can use throughout your virtual event calendar for the year.

9. ARRANGE A KEYNOTE SLOT

No virtual event presence is complete without a keynote slot. Keynotes generate huge interest at events; keynotes may well be the first event area delegates go to see what's going on. Therefore, as an exhibitor, you also need to be on this list. It's likely your pharmaceutical organisation will have subject matter experts that can deliver a relevant discussion. If not, find a special guest that can speak on behalf of your organisation that can also promote the keynote (and your organisation) on his or her own channels. Communicate with your speakers early on regarding how they can help promote your organisation at the event. If you're working on a limited budget, these tactics are especially important. Again, these are likely to be pre-recorded or live presentations from the home desk which you can repurpose.

10. PARTNER WITH A COMPLIMENTING (AND NON-COMPETING) ORGANISATION

Sometimes, two is better than one. You are not alone in this new →

environment of virtual events, shows and meetings. Thousands of companies like yours, from industry sectors like yours, will have to change their marketing plans and invest within more virtual events than ever. Perhaps you lack resources, expertise and funding or even technical expertise? Consider teaming up with a non-rival organisation to share the heavy-lifting, as well as the leads generated? Also, sometimes, a joint exhibit is better than no exhibit at all. Three things to consider when choosing partners for a virtual event: Content and value to the audience, similar audience or ideal customer profile, and rapport and professionalism.

11. UTILISE SPONSORSHIP/ADVERTISING OPTIONS FROM EVENT ORGANISATIONS AND RELATED MEDIA

Possibly the event-based tactics which will demonstrate the most return is the option which might not be considered due to its up-front cost. Some of the publishers we work with offer a range of solutions - such as dedicated e-blasts, directory listings and native-sponsored content, amongst a range of other solutions which we could provide (get in touch for full list) - to help promote your organisation and its virtual event presence and content. 10,000s of pharmaceutical professionals can be accessed, by job title or organisation type, with your message put right in front of them via a trusted brand. Not everyday pharmaceutical organisations can achieve this.



SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION



Search engine optimisation (SEO) is the process of optimising websites and its content to bring more opportunities to the website via Google and other search engines.

The associated benefits include generating more traffic, converting more visitors by attracting more relevant traffic, boosting awareness of the brand, service expertise and products and well as drive sales offline and online.

But the benefits occur only if web pages appear on the first page of Google's search results. Reaching these positions, however, is not often considered a priority for pharmaceutical and life science marketers. Of course, scientists and those working in science organisations will use journals and other traditional research-based channels for information. These are trusted channels which science professionals have always used. But they will also, due to their curious nature, explore other channels for accessing information and search engines like Google will often top of that list.

Pharmaceutical marketing professionals are quickly realising that a whole world of opportunity exists away from traditional methods, with SEO (and a wider content marketing strategy) being one of the key avenues in this sector. Before you do anything, look at the keywords you would like to target (what you think your target audience might use to find your web pages), what your website is actually targeting as well as what keywords your website is ranking for before we jump into some pharma SEO tips and strategies...

SEO is considered a difficult and complex task. For the most part, this is true. But what is also true is that pharmaceutical digital marketers can look to gradually work on their SEO efforts to increase the number of organic visitors to the website over time. And SEO takes time. Just be →

aware that results will also take time which means you will have to continually work on SEO tasks, but know that the results will materialise.

Consider the SEO tips, strategies and areas to focus your efforts that follow to start improving your rankings on Google and other search engines to generate more qualified website traffic.

1. MOBILE-FIRST INDEXING

Mobile-first indexing took priority in 2018 and since then it has been a focus for every website looking to attract more organic visitors. Since 9/10 of us use smartphones, it's an absolute must to ensure mobile usability and consider adopting AMP (accelerated mobile pages) which strips down other content to show content immediately upon the page load. Being rich with high-quality content, AMP version compatibility is also must for any website to survive in this competitive era. If you do anything for 2020, ensure that your website is mobile-friendly.

(1) Google's free mobile-friendly test will review your website within a few seconds and will provide accurate tips - often technical that will require a developer - for your own website. There is a good chance that you are already optimising for mobile, but if not, a (2) look at your website and it's user experience design - a redesign might be calling. Simple website designs that load quickly are always good in Google's eyes and will almost always translate well on mobile.

2. PREPARE FOR VOICE (FOR NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING)

Voice search is a speech recognition technology that provides customers with the ability to search with their voice. The technology involved is still in an immature state, and even though we use might Google's Voice Assistant, Apple's Siri or Amazon's Alexa and we see more and more product offerings for the technology, we still might not be totally convinced. But that doesn't mean in 5-10 years time (or even sooner) things will not change as the technology advances further. This is why it's sensible to prepare this SEO consideration within pharma, especially since mobile is so dominant. Other sectors understand this and are making the necessary preparations.

To prepare for voice, consider natural language processing when creating content. (1) Write in a conversational tone in the way that →

people (especially your customers) speak and (2) include long-tail keywords and questions within the content itself. Know your keywords and then frame your content in this manner so you are providing information for real pharma SEO queries.

3. INCLUDE VIDEO ON PAGES

Just like mobile, which has been featured on lists such as this one for some time, online videos are still worthy of their status as a major SEO consideration to boost rankings. And every video you create - once optimised for SEO with the appropriate descriptions, transcripts, tags and titles - has the ability to generate its own traffic to your website, not to mention boost the overall rankings of that website in the process. If you do not have videos, link to or embed other videos from YouTube for relevancy. Did you also know that video featured snippets are going to feature more in the featured snippets sections on SERPs?

4. RICH CONTENT FOR THAT FEATURED SNIPPET

The ultimate aim for each piece of pharmaceutical content is Google's featured snippet - the content box which appears before the usual list of pages on a SERP. Google sees this as the most appropriate answer for the search query out of all of its indexed pages and will provide the content of that page in a summary (often bulleted) text. As you can imagine, being top of the page brings with it maximum visibility.

Backlinko suggests that 40% of Google's Home (a voice-enabled device) results come from the featured snippet, so it's something to consider when writing and optimising content. The key here (apart from writing informative content) is to ensure you're answering your audience's potential questions. (1) Focus each individual piece of content on long-tail keywords, (2) write with clear numbered, bulleted or headlined text and of course (3) write with natural language processing in mind.

5. ENSURE YOUR CONTENT IS USEFUL

Since the dawn of digital, SEO practitioners have been suggesting that the most important SEO factor is to ensure that content is of high →

quality and is highly useful for readers. I would have to agree, certainly in pharma. Each piece of content requires research to ensure that content is accurate and up-to-date, as well as helpful for readers. Writing your content isn't a task to be completed quickly over your lunch break; it requires long periods of time, even days, to ensure it hits the sweet spot and performs for your website long term.

Content means more than just a blog post. [Pharmaceutical content](#) covers video, app notes, podcasts, live chat, case studies, whitepapers and infographics, amongst anything else that appears on your website or on the internet so you have options to reach your science audience. Make certain that the content grabs users within the first few seconds, and then ensure that the main body provides an abundance of useful information presented in an engaging format that can open up further pageviews or even discussions with your organisation. We have previously compiled a list of [science content marketing challenges](#) (with solutions) which you may find useful when looking to create more content.

6. TARGET SEARCH INTENT

Each search on Google has its own level of intent. Perhaps a particular search consists of casually looking something up or to compare that something with something else or even to buy that something. Whatever that something is, there needs to be a page appearing on Google for that type of search intent. Pharma is a crowded space, but if you're appearing on the first page for each of these searches for your product or service, you are likely to generate more organic visitors. Visitors who are looking for exactly what you provide.

This is by no means an easy task. But once you know your audience (and have created your own buyer personas) you can segregate your buyers into three buyer journey stages: awareness, consideration and decision. Each stage takes into account the user's frame of mind when searching for something, which you can tailor your content and keywords towards.

7. BACKLINKS ARE (STILL) HUGELY IMPORTANT

Backlinks to websites can generate traffic, build credibility and rank →

your website higher on search engines, as these links hint at Google about your website's importance. When writing, sharing and distributing content, always keep one eye on the number of backlinks that could be generated from that piece of content. (1) Assess your distribution strategy and (2) identify the gaps where your content could fill, (3) always looking for that opportunity to generate a link back to one of your web pages.

The Orientation Marketing website is a small site featuring a limited amount of service-based pages, as well as a blog that's updated once a week. In August through October, we embarked on a small-scale (when we had free time away from client work!) backlink building campaign with the aim of increasing the number of links pointing back to various pages of the website. Alongside, we also improved upon the internal linking throughout the blog, resulting in a 404% year-on-year growth for organic visits from the period of November, demonstrated in the leap in impressions for the last three months as the domain authority increased.

Although this was achieved in the B2B pharma marketing space, pharma organisations in all verticals, both B2B and B2C, compete within the same arena with the same set of factors with a buyer persona who is looking for information to complete tasks on search engines. Highly quality backlinks from high authority domains do the world of good for your organic visibility.

8. CHECK YOUR ON-PAGE SEO

We will see in point nine that Google has evolved and ranks websites on more factors other than on-page factors. But that doesn't mean that pharma marketers, or any marketer for that matter, should discount on-page SEO elements. Ensure that the page is appropriately set up. If your page isn't optimised appropriately, then Google may not know exactly what your page entails.

(1) Include keywords in your URL but (2) keep that URL relatively short. (3) Front-load your keywords into all titles, descriptions and in the body so that Google can clearly see the focus of the page and (4) ensure the chosen keywords are appropriately tagged within these titles with the H1, H2, H3 and H4 tags where appropriate. (5) Your page really needs to have (on average) at least 800 words to have the depth Google would consider as informative.

9. FOCUS ON BUILDING YOUR EXPERTISE, AUTHORITY AND TRUST (EAT)

As Google has become older and wiser, it now looks to rank web pages based on the overall authority of the domain, rather than just how informative the actual web page is. This is to crack down on those trying to manipulate some of the more historic SEO signals such as on-page SEO (even though it shouldn't be ignored). So, to counter this for pharmaceutical SEO, (1) look to build your brand with accurate and detailed content, on your website and on other websites. (2) Build on this further with other thought leadership style content, such as guest contributions and speaking opportunities.

Organisations in the healthcare space, for example, have reportedly struggled here as information may be inaccurate and Google is looking for sites to prove their overall EAT. So, rather than think short-term always think long-term with your SEO efforts - this is a prerequisite in the pharma sectors. Your aim is to tell Google in as many ways as possible that your organisation (and website) is an expert, is authoritative and is trustworthy and you can do this with thought leadership and content/inbound marketing outlook that points back to your primary domain.

10. DON'T FORGET VISUAL

You're making life easier for your potential audience by providing an image that summarises content which the audience can quickly digest, in turn, telling Google that your content is more relevant than a competing post without an image.

Some key aspects with regards to visual search: (1) Include a descriptive alt text within the image, (2) optimise the image size, titles and file names and (3) see high-quality images that, if possible, are unique. Internet users are becoming more and more visual users; adopt this trend within your content campaigns - (4) even submit those images within the sitemap of your website (popular CMS providers will do this by default) to ensure your images get impressions even if your web page isn't visited.



INBOUND MARKETING



In order to attract customers, marketers must provide something the customer can take pleasure in watching or reading or listening to. If possible, something they love. This is where Inbound Marketing comes into play. Referring to HubSpot, who coined the term inbound marketing, inbound marketing is a "holistic, data-driven approach to marketing that attracts individuals to your brand and converts them into lasting customers."

Inbound marketing is a different strategic mindset to traditional marketing methods because it's a more economically efficient way to create the experience that people are looking for instead of paying to interrupt one. Think blogging, landing pages and follow-up emails...

So rather than adopting traditional marketing methods, inbound marketing adopts blogging, search engine marketing and social media. It takes a more customer-centric approach and works on attraction, essentially, allowing your customers to come to you on their terms, and not irritating those customers.

The fundamentals of inbound marketing, the key underlying factors that meant that inbound marketing was truly inbound, however, has now changed. No longer can an organisation publish a remarkable piece of content and expect it to generate a large amount of organic traffic, at least not immediately.

We're often advised that SEO, content and, generally speaking, most marketing initiatives take time to flourish and produce the results required. (Like anything in life, like going to the gym where you won't expect to see any real gains in the first few weeks.) Things take time; patience is a requirement.

Let's look at some key areas and tips that could be considered for the →

pharmaceutical digital marketer's inbound marketing agenda.

SALES FUNNEL MENTALITY IS NO LONGER APPROPRIATE

For years, visualising the buyer's journey as a funnel was the standard approach. Prospects would work their way down a predetermined sequence of interactions that would look to make a sale at the end. If that sale wouldn't happen, the prospect is usually abandoned.

Now we've found ourselves moving away from this mentality and sales and marketing's role within the funnel model. Trust is low, and choice is high. Within the B2B pharma, decision making happens over varying periods of time and can consist of a number of individuals, making word of mouth and continuity an influential factor.

Traditional sales funnels cannot accommodate for this which means it's more relevant to treat the customer journey as an ongoing process, or as HubSpot would coin, a "flywheel" that's always turning in a circular motion and generating momentum. In other words, always generating content to engage with that prospect.

DON'T BE FIXATED ON DATA (AT LEAST NOT AT THE BEGINNING)

Sales funnels provide data throughout all stages of the buyer's journey. They give marketing and sales teams statistics to be able to report on campaigns, which are then used as a base for making decisions for future campaigns. But this is data that isn't always accurate or representative of what has or hasn't happened within that buyer's journey phase.

An inbound marketing program, unlike a pay-per-click campaign, does not have a definitive time period to showcase results. The inbound marketing methodology focuses on the relationship between the organisation and its prospects or customers over a period of time, but how do you measure relationships?

Of course, once web pages have ranked, distribution channels have grown, relationships have been built and leads have been generated from voluntary action taken, then it is possible to report on activity. But until a high number of content is created and published, the data will mean nothing.

AVOID CATEGORISATION: INBOUND AND OUTBOUND CHANNELS NOW WORK HAND-IN-HAND

A common misconception of inbound marketing now is that outbound tactics, such as pay-per-click, email marketing and outbound calls, aren't relevant and don't fit the methodology. Maybe this was the case ten years ago. But inbound marketing concerns providing an answer to a question or a solution to a problem, regardless of how it is provided.

A follow-up call to enquire whether a download was useful or a text ad on Google Search to an optimised blog post is considered as best practice for inbound marketing, as opposed to cold calling or product-focused pop-up ads. Interruption is what inbound marketing avoids, rather than direct marketing methods because some prospects may wish to be contacted on those "traditional" channels.

CURATION, SYNDICATION AND GUEST CONTRIBUTIONS

Whilst it is true that inbound marketing, specifically content creation, is time-consuming, it is possible (recommended, even) that inbound professionals harness the power of others and their content. A great area to start an inbound strategy is to look at your current content and then build.

Guest posting is an effective method of content creation. A brand will receive content to publish from an external contributor who will request something in return, usually a link to a website or a mention of their product/service. It's a win-win for both parties, and it also demonstrates real authority on the subject and the organisation's credibility within the industry. Similar benefits are also realised by curating or syndicating (with permission) others' content and should also be considered within a content/inbound marketing strategy.

1. GET INTO THE HABIT OF VARYING CONTENT FORMS (ON VARYING PLATFORMS)

The most common method of generating content is in the form of written blog posts. But with search engines becoming increasingly abundant with blog posts and other articles, the time to start out using varying content forms for differentiation is now.

Pharmaceutical marketing methods are mostly traditional by nature, →



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PUTTING THE SCIENCE INTO MARKETING

but organisations can successfully differentiate from one and other by altering the content it publishes. Webinars, live videos, interactive demos or even content geared around quizzes and competitions can be used to alternate with written and long-form content, for example.

Of course, content forms are dependent on the prospect and where that prospect is situated on the buyer's journey but there is a clear opportunity here with content in this industry. It is highly recommended to assess your customer profile through buyer personas to understand what content is relevant.

2. STIMULATE CONVERSATION, AND MAKE THE CONVERSATION HAPPEN ON OWNED PLATFORMS

Conversational marketing involves real-time interaction with those who come into contact with an organisation's digital presences. Live chat features and chatbots are increasingly becoming more popular as users favour approaching organisations this way rather than calling (only to be put on hold) or emailing (and waiting days for a reply). They can also build subscribers faster than other methods.

As a pharmaceutical marketer, the key is to realise where your target audiences are spending their time. But generally, within B2B markets, live chat has proved immensely valuable on owned channels and websites as prospects look to engage with organisations for information without delay. The more personalised through human touch, the better.

3. SET UP A CONTENT PRODUCTION PROGRAMME

By now, I'm sure we're all aware of the benefits of inbound marketing, which is why many marketers want to begin running inbound campaigns in pharma. The issue is, of course, that inbound is dependent on content. That is, content being readily available to set up an inbound campaign as well as an ongoing stream of new content to keep building a subscribed audience from those visitors. But content isn't easy to come by in this sector.

Content is the driving force for inbound marketing campaigns - it's the primary reason a user would come to a website, engage with web pages and then take action on those pages. Once a conversion has been attributed, and the user has subscribed to a mail list, content →

is then required to build a rapport with that user via email on an on-going basis. To succeed with inbound in 2020, pharma marketers must set up a [content creation/production programme](#) to ensure that relevant content is constantly produced and sourced from the relevant departments to feed the inbound campaign. Investing in this content is always a good idea because all of the content you will create can be repurposed and used over and over.

4. TRACK THE RIGHT METRICS

Being scientific in nature, we tend to analyse campaigns and performance on a micro-level. As inbound marketing campaigns take a while - sometimes between 6-12 months - to come to fruition, not seeing a return early on can put pharma marketers off inbound. But you would be stopping at a time when results are likely around the corner.

This said, we should always be measuring - just the right metrics. HubSpot's State of Inbound 2020 report looked at the metrics which content marketers track the most (below). They include the most common metrics that track inbound marketing campaigns, and it's certainly worth tracking a few of these (not all) to ensure your pharma inbound campaigns are taking shape as they should. Every organisation and marketer is different, but should you want a steer on this, I would suggest that you track the number of website visits as a priority (determining where they are coming from) and then the website/landing page conversion as a secondary metric.

5. OPTIMISE FOR THAT CONVERSION RATE

We always want to demonstrate success or failure in our inbound campaigns to be able to fix or build on what we are doing and drive the ROI for those activities. Bringing people to the website is great, but inbound is also about building an audience of subscribers via email that can turn into clients and customers. These conversions, initially, can take the form of subscriptions, newsletter signups, contact us submissions or via downloadable/gated content offers. Virtually anything whereby a website user can provide an email address to receive more from your organisation.

Every web page should have at least one form on them to encourage →

A conversion there and then. If you can't include a form - homepages often do not have forms, for example - be sure to include a CTA to a page with a form. Limit the number of barriers (and pages) for a conversion and always thank the users for submitting their details on the form after a conversion via an iframe message or thank you page. More on this later in the bonus section of this e-book.

6. CREATE LOTS OF EMAILS

Your inbound campaigns will likely include basic email marketing, more likely newsletters delivered at scheduled intervals as well as nurturing email workflows that are triggered off downloadable content. This is a great start and you will soon see your email lists and email engagement rates grow. But there are many more emails which you can send to your email subscribers based on triggers. The chart below from Marketing Sherpa comes from a research study in 2013 that asks marketers "What type of automated, event-triggered, lifecycle email messages does your organisation deploy?" that still provides some good ideas for B2B email marketing.

First, realise that the types of emails you can send fall into 3 categories: Content, Offers and Relationship-building (as mentioned earlier in this e-book). Second, look at your email lists/CRM to find those that are engaged and those that are not and decide on the content that would interest these groups in relation to the 3 email categories. You want to be experimenting with these emails, setting up triggers and creating lists within your inbound marketing automation software. What you might end up with is review emails, similar content emails based on behavioural data, thank you emails, checking-in emails and any email you feel which your subscriber will value or will help you determine if that subscriber is suitable for your products and services. The more pre-written emails and templates, as well as workflow triggers you have, the more likely your emails will be opened, read and acted upon.

7. BUILD AN ONLINE COMMUNITY JUST LIKE REAL COMMUNITIES

Online communities and networks present the perfect setting for building relationships and brand awareness. (Your virtual event options apply.) And inbound marketing is about relationships - the B2B pharmaceutical sectors are, although large, still quite tight-knit and →

word spreads quickly. Your inbound strategy can sit right in the middle of this community, especially if you have a sub-community set up yourself.

Turn to your media partners and other industry influencers to help promote you and your brand so that your customers can see your popularity within your specific vertical and marketplace. We all like to feel part of communities that offer mutual benefits, such as personal development support and opportunities for social interaction. Inbound can offer all of this, and although the prospect of creating online communities is difficult, always have the mindset of doing so with your content and your promotions and look to engage and drive conversations - your subscribers and other prospects will certainly appreciate it now to replace real communities during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Consider starting with surveys and interviews to generate feedback and to demonstrate their value in your community. Inviting others to contribute to your blog is also a great opener, as that person is likely to become more known in the sector through your community channels.



CONTENT MARKETING



Content marketing is the building of a narrative that looks to speak to target audiences, segments and personas to achieve organisational or marketing goals. It seeks to capture attention, engage with prospects and build relationships to bring those prospects closer to the organisation and its offering. Content is a hugely important element of the digital marketing plan; without it, no plan can actually come to life.

In pharma, the sales process often starts with content, or a relationship may have started with some form of content. Great pharmaceutical content marketing follows a set of connected principles which we will focus on this chapter. We have produced a separate PDF guide for content marketing strategies, types and tactics – which we share with our clients - that provides in-depth guidance which you can access for free [here](#). This chapter will cover content marketing briefly and will offer some underlying traits of B2B pharmaceutical content.

Scour the internet and you will find several articles that explore the principles of content marketing: that content marketing should have personality and that it is authoritative and that it should include a CTA, not to mention an informative title. The following are content principles specific to pharmaceutical content on a strategic level.

1. SOLUTION-BASED RATHER THAN PRODUCT-BASED

Pharmaceutical marketing has traditionally followed an outbound approach – advertising and trade shows – which usually involves publishing messages to promote the organisation and the organisation's products and services. Content marketing, especially in its more contemporary “inbound” format, seeks to educate rather than sell. This inbound marketing approach brings with it a range of [advantages for pharma](#).

A pharmaceutical content marketer will understand that – even though there will be times where organisation and product-specific content will be required, usually during the latter stages of the buyer's journey – delivering content is focused on serving the reader and providing suggestions and solutions to problems. The key idea is to help people when they most need it, that builds trust to the point where that person develops into a prospect and later willingly learns about an organisation and what it does.

This solution-based approach to content looks to develop relationships, and just like the buyer's journey itself, relationships take time to prosper. But at the decision-making stage, if an organisation already has relationships with those prospects, it will have more of a chance of converting them into customers because of the trust it has developed earlier on in the buyer's journey, as we will look at next...

2. TAILORED TO SPECIFIC BUYER JOURNEY STAGES

Today's buyers embark on a journey of educating themselves long before they make a purchasing decision. The more complex and costly the product or service, more scrutiny will exist during the buyer's journey, which as a process, is therefore longer. The purchasing process within the B2B pharma supply chain is no different and there are no quick wins with pharma content marketing; you may not see direct bottom-line results in the first 6-12 months.

During this process, consumers require content to help with that purchasing decision. The purchasing process, commonly referred to as the buyer's journey for inbound and content marketers, loosely consists of three stages, which can also be considered as customer touchpoints. Here, content is required to help the consumer move from one to stage to the next, more advanced stage of the journey.

Content needs to cater to each of the three journey stages, offering audiences information related to common questions asked during each of the stages. By creating content for each phase, varying the tactics, we are essentially increasing the number of prospects entering the funnel at varying stages of the journey, which we are clearly able to attribute. The content typically becomes more organisation/product-focused as the buyer progresses through the journey. Its length often increases as the journey also progresses and as the prospect displays more buying intent.

3. LONG-FORM AND IN-DEPTH

Pharma marketing brings with it a [range of distinct challenges](#). It will come as no surprise to you that the pharma professional is a highly specialised individual. He or she is educated, highly meticulous and able to make informed decisions based on independent research. Therefore, the content for which he or she seeks is in-depth and comprehensive. Content will need to be detailed to rightly inform prospects of the complex pharma supply chain solutions in question.

It is often suggested, for example, that web pages need approximately 1,600 words to have a chance of ranking highly on search engines but the average content length (according to Content Media) in pharma and healthcare is just over 600 words. Whilst this SEO observation is certainly true, especially if your top of the funnel content aims to attract organic visitors, this might not necessarily be the main reason to produce long-form content. Long-form content is also likely to provide more value and improve engagement, keeping visitors on the site longer, building trust and improving the chances of conversion in the process.

Pharmaceutical professionals require information to make informed decisions. To position your organisation as a leader and as reputable, do not fall down in the content length department as it affects many elements. Long-form content will gain higher visibility, which is more likely to be shared and generate better reader value, which in turn will increase conversions and prospects.

4. TARGETED AT SPECIFIC JOB FUNCTIONS AND TITLES

Additional complexity is added to the already complex pharma buyer's journey as this prospecting process, on a case-by-case basis, comprises of several decision-makers, professionals and influencers. There are often a number of individuals within a business decision-making unit. It is therefore important, to realise the maximum number of lead-to-customer conversions, that pharma content penetrates each of the decision-making unit's – each job title and/or job function - members.

[Account-based marketing](#), commonly referred to as relationship marketing and key account marketing, is a strategic approach to identifying, marketing to and building relationships with a target prospect or organisation. In B2B pharma, ABM has emerged as a highly effective marketing strategy where personalised content is created →

specifically for individual people or job titles/functions within targeted organisations. Pharma content that is personal - highly relevant and delivered at the right time in the right place - has a great chance of long-term success.

5. CONTENT IS PRODUCED IN ACCORDANCE WITH A LONG-TERM PLAN

Content marketing fails when individual content pieces do not form as part of a wider, long-term content or marketing plan. Organisations that invest in creating content for the sake of having content achieve little. Of course, specific content pieces can have smaller short-term goals, but those goals need to contribute to an overarching strategic focus.

A long-term content plan, after current or previous content has been audited, with objectives set for the content plan, is more likely to demonstrate higher ROI. In most content marketing plans, this is usually brand awareness or the number of leads generated. When setting out on a content marketing plan, after defining what you want to achieve, set out some base objectives.

No pharma content published within the media or on corporate websites will be published on an ad hoc basis. The only exception is when an organisation shares breaking news that wasn't part of the original marketing plan, such as a consolidation or the purchase of new premises or a new hire, which can provide instant publicity to the organisation.

6. ALWAYS MEASURE

Pharmaceutical content is measured. There is no getting around this - every content project we work on for every client we have is measured. The objectives are set for a reason: To have a direction to aim for and to identify whether we are on course to reach that destination within the given time period.

This content can be measured in line with a number of criteria, and for each criteria, a set of metrics can be established to control the measurement criteria. If web traffic is the measurement criteria, the metrics will be available from Google Analytics (or your marketing automation platform) and will come in the form of pageviews and →

sessions, and as you go deeper into the metrics, acquisition and channel types.

Each aspect of your content marketing plan will require measurement, not only to signal if the plan and individual content tactics and initiatives within the plan is on track and working, but to also accurately determine the ROI for the overall plan. If it is documented it can be measured, and if it's measured only then can there be growth.



WEBSITES (USER EXPERIENCE)



The pharmaceutical and life science industries, from a digital marketing perspective, and as we've already established, has often found itself lagging behind other industries. This is the case with websites in general in this respect.

The industry has been slow to adopt new digital techniques and trends. But the pharmaceutical and life science professional is evolving, and the website user experience, to effectively speak to that professional, is becoming hugely important in an ever-increasing competitive world. The corporate science website is now a key channel.

Now it's time to design for the user and look to build trust with that website user. To do this, we look at the pharmaceutical and life science website in the context of three key elements which form to create the optimal website user experience:

- Look: Credibility, trust and consistency.
- Feel: Interaction and reaction.
- Usability: Functionality, individuality and predictability.

You have on average 10 seconds to impress your website visitors. Not a second can be wasted, unfortunately. In the quest to create a great website experience - by addressing its look, feel and usability - here are 9 website elements that can be tweaked immediately improve the pharmaceutical website's user experience and keep that user engaged with content for longer.

1. IMPROVE LOAD TIME

Slow loading websites and web pages are the web's biggest sin. It's the first element of your website a visitor interacts with and is the first →

chance to create that seamless user experience. Optimal page load time is between 1.5 to 3 seconds – anything higher puts your conversions at risk because people will not stay around to wait for content to load. Google states that 53% of users will leave your science website if it takes longer than 3 seconds to load. If your site is slow: Reduce content, optimise images, enable browser caching or increase your server/hosting capacity.

2. IDENTIFY YOUR 404S

It is likely your website has been live for a number of years and during this time it is also likely that your organisation has created web pages for webinars, news and other events that have now expired. If these pages were simply deleted after the event, it is likely that referring links will point to a broken 404 page. 404 pages are not a great example of good user experience. Identify your 404s and set up redirects to other pages on your science website (or create a 404 page that provides a multitude of options to get back on track) so that user journeys on your website do not come to a halt.

3. ENSURE THE SITE IS RESPONSIVE

Once again, a highly obvious recommendation but there are still science websites that are not mobile responsive. These poorly designed websites do not provide an optimal user experience and InVision state that 85% think that an organisation's website should provide a better experience on mobile than on desktop. Of course, we operate within B2B markets where the majority of our visitors will come from desktop. But this is no excuse with 2020 on the horizon. Your science website should operate effectively across mobile and tablet devices, if not, a redesign is in order.

4. SIMPLIFY THE NAVIGATION

The bounce rate on your homepage is a great indication of how well your science website and subsequent content is structured. If the bounce rate is high (50% and upwards), it may be time to rethink your navigation. Often, website visitors find an organisation's website complicated to navigate, resulting in a bounce and that visitor never returning. To avoid this, look to make your navigational options as →

simple as possible and avoid cramming long lists of pages on to menus. Categorise the content on your science website and offer them on sections of the website in different ways to help ensure a positive user experience.

5. MAKE ALL WRITTEN CONTENT DIGESTIBLE

All website text should be easy to navigate, read and understand. Regardless of the subject area, this is actually easy to achieve just by editing the presentation of current content. Crazy Egg state that increasing white space on a page increases user attention by 20%. If your science website text does not sit on a white background, change it as soon as possible. Also, be sure to use titles and subtitles for your text sections and break up the paragraphs into short sections. Bullet points are also your friend, along with any presentation styles that present information to visitors quickly and efficiently.

6. KEEP WEB PAGE DESIGNS CONSISTENT

Once website visitors have familiarised themselves with your unique method of content presentation, any other presentation forms (that conflict) will have an adverse effect on the user experience. You do not want website visitors to question whether they are still on your science website after clicking through to a different section. Ensure your pages are all designed to follow a common pattern. Templates are often used to keep pages consistent; just make sure these templates are also consistent with your brand guidelines.

7. HYPERLINKS

Hyperlinks are another website element I often see science websites getting wrong. Of course, it is necessary to include similar content on web pages. Should a visitor want to find out more about a particular topic, he or she can do so easily by clicking on links without searching for it. But ensure that the hyperlinked text is clearly identifiable – underlined or via blue text is the most common approach that users will understand.

It is also best practice that most hyperlinks open in new tabs so the visitor can keep reading the original content, this is certainly the case →

on blog pages where links are common and especially if the link points away from your website to another. Where the link can open within the same tab (and potentially disrupt the current experience) is if the links are at the bottom of the page or if the user has followed a direct action to progress the experience with your organisation and website (such as clicking through to the contact details page), and are, of course, pointing to other pages on your science website.

8. SECURITY

Every website, regardless of whether the website is brochureware or e-commerce by nature, needs to be secure. A secure website will almost certainly safeguard an exceptional browsing experience for the user - no visitor should be invited to a website that isn't secure. Attaining a security seal is also advisable, from the SSL certificate to the payment assurances on key conversion pages to the opt-in forms in terms of GDPR. DesignAdvisor found that 20% say that security concerns are the main reason they don't buy and take action from mobile or e-commerce websites.

9. DON'T MAKE ME THINK!

This is the title of Steve Krug's famous book on web usability and human-computer interaction. If you have not read the book, make reading it the final task (or even the first, before you implement the tips) on this list. The premise is simple: A good website should let users accomplish their intended tasks as easily and directly as possible without deliberation. Nothing on your science website should need explaining (despite the complexity of your organisation's products and services), everything should be intuitive. If elements of the website appear complex or confusing to you as the administrator of the website, it needs revising, as your users will experience more confusion than you will.



DIGITAL DISPLAY ADVERTISING



Digital display and banner advertising is one of the most common forms of digital advertising within the science and pharma publishing industry. They play an important role in the revenue streams for those publishers. However, the effectiveness of banner advertising in general has long come under fire from all corners of the internet.

A Think with Google study found that the average click-through rate of display ads across all formats and placements is 0.6%. Other studies have determined that average click-through rates are lower again, generally concluding that most people do not click on banners ads. This isn't the only issue.

Statista suggests that 41% of respondents from a survey on the use of ad blocking software in the UK (2018) said they use an ad blocker. Meaning that a little under half of the population in the UK won't even see the ad to be able to click. This is worrying signs for advertisers and publishers where it would seem that banner advertising is not effective, nor is it feasible. But with a strategic approach, this isn't always the case.

It is best to adopt digital display and banner advertising as a marketing tactic within a wider digital campaign. Banner ads that have no relevance to the user, that appear randomly and are intrusive, are completely irrelevant to the user and will not get clicks. This is predominantly the reason why banner advertising statistics are low.

If banner ads are used strategically, as part of a wider campaign, then they can demonstrate results for the advertiser/marketer. And if those advertisers keep a close eye on their digital display and banner advertising placements, particularly avoiding placing banners in areas where the advert hinders the user's website experience, the overall banner advert will be more successful.

Banner ads still have a role to play for the pharmaceutical marketer in the science sectors and the contract manufacturing organisation.

In this chapter, we will assume that banner ads are placed on a publisher within the pharmaceutical and life sciences sectors' website, where we know the audience. Rather than via Google's Display Network or via social media where the banner ad's impressions can come from unknown users, potentially irrelevant to the sectors we operate within.

Digital display and banner advertising do have the potential to send traffic to a website, and when the placement is done correctly, the likelihood of that visitor being interested in your products and services is high. Of course, the likelihood of the banner generating vast amounts of traffic in the first place is low. But when you consider banner advertising as part of a wider ecosystem of marketing tactics, banner ads can contribute to other marketing objectives as well as traffic generation.

Banner advertising also contributes to building brand awareness. An advertiser could run a banner ad on a publisher's website, and also commission an article on the website, buy an email broadcast to the publisher's list as well as carry out an A4 spread in the publisher's physical magazine. This way the message is spread across a number of channels and has the ability to stick, where the banner ad itself also has the ability to generate an (albeit slightly) higher click-through rate as the content is already familiar.

Banner advertising can also increase the conversion rate of an overall marketing campaign by adopting banner ads for retargeting.

Retargeting is a tactic where the ads are targeted to visitors based on previous actions. Retargeting tags users by including a pixel within the target web page or email, which sets a cookie in the user's browser. This ad targeting method is perfectly suited for social media and the Google Display Network.

For the majority of websites and campaigns, only 2% of traffic converts on the first visit. But retargeting campaigns, such as retargeting banner ads, can increase this rate by reminding users about a product or service. To demonstrate this, a study found that retargeting banner ads are 70% more likely to complete the original desired action.

STEPS TO ENSURE AN EFFECTIVE BANNER AD

There is a time and a place for banner advertising. If you have discovered that time and place, there are also a number of factors to consider when designing a banner to have the best possible chance of success. Here are 7 steps to follow:

1. REMAIN ON-BRAND

A banner ad should always be consistent with the brand that is being advertised. Brand awareness is just as important as generating interest, therefore, the advert should have the same look and feel of the advertiser's website design, for example. From the visual style to the tone of the copy used within the ad, everything needs to remain "on brand" and should include your logo. A banner ad is just like any other marketing material from an organisation.

2. BE AWARE OF YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Of course, the banner ad needs to incorporate the brand for which it is promoting and should look to stand out. However, advertisers need to respect the fact that the visitor has willingly visited the publisher's website, and therefore, albeit the ad needs to stand out, it also needs to have some consistency with the publisher's website from a visual perspective.

3. MAINTAIN HIERARCHY

The effectiveness of a banner advert mostly relies on the ad itself. The ad, from top to bottom, follows a sequential hierarchy that starts with the brand logo, followed by a heading and a subheading, followed by a call-to-action (CTA). It's also advisable that the ad includes a visual element to support the copy and draw attention to the banner, maybe using an image related to the product, service, brand or target segment. Often, this is a lot to include within a standard 300x250px banner and advertisers should also ensure that the banner itself isn't confusing or crowded.

4. TEXT READABILITY AND CLARITY

The text on the page should be instantly readable, just like the 7 steps within this chapter all have subtitles for signposting (and would have if they sat on a web page). On the banner, this means that the font should be standard and font size to fit according to the space on the banner. The banner ad will have a second or so to communicate the message to the site visitor and should be short and instantly digestible.

5. CTA IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT

The CTA is possibly the most important element of the banner ad as it prompts the user to act on the message within the banner ad. Every banner ad should have one, even if the primary objective of the banner ad is to generate awareness. A good CTA creates urgency, is direct and seeks to reduce friction for the site visitor. The CTA button should be distinct and recognisable and not too small that it could be ignored.

6. CONSIDER ANIMATION

For website visitors to notice banner ads it is imperative that the banners jump out from the rest of the content of the web page. Animation is a great way to generate attention as well as demonstrate the products or service you are promoting. Here, we are not talking about autoplay videos, rather a banner consisting of a small number of transitional elements. Static banner ads work by themselves, but an animated banner ad just might improve the click-through rates ever so slightly, just be sure not to distract the user from the message.

7. CREATE A SPECIFIC LANDING PAGE FOR EACH BANNER

As with any digital advertisement, there should be a landing page created for that ad. The landing page should be specific to the ad, that is specific to the web page that is specific for the site's core demographic. Even if the goal of the banner is to generate brand awareness, the banner will fail if the user is only directed to the homepage as there would be no real means to measure a simple conversion from then onwards. Always create a landing page, again, with a call to action.



BUILDING AN AUDIENCE AND GENERATING LEADS



In this chapter, as we'll move forward from the tactics/channels themselves, we'll detail the steps required to build an audience and generate leads consisting of B2B pharma professionals

Building a B2B audience/lead generation in the pharmaceutical sectors is often an end product of the digital marketing plan. As a tactic, it's now highly common. Especially since COVID-19 has restricted pharma organisations to digital-only touchpoints with their audiences, and this adds to the already challenging environment a B2B pharmaceutical marketer finds himself or herself in when a programme is defined by the content it produces.

As an agency, we spend most of our time helping clients build their audiences and generating leads for their sales departments. As we have crossed our 5th-year anniversary in operation, we've also developed an idea of how to do that with the most effect. We will share our process in this chapter via 10 steps.

1. DEFINE THE AUDIENCE FROM THE OUTSET

Before setting out, it's imperative that you know the audience you want to attract, as well as the audience which you currently have for your current content. Understanding who we're trying to bring to the content and campaigns which we will create will determine the content and campaigns themselves, using current content/audiences as a guide.

This early work consists of identifying the [market segment\(s\)](#) which →

You are looking to target as your customer base, as well as creating a buyer persona(s) for the individual job titles/roles within the organisations which you will aim to reach. In the B2B pharma and related industries, due to its complexities, it's more important than ever to segment audiences to create stronger marketing campaigns to see results - in this case, a growing audience.

2. ASSIGN A BUDGET TO THE PROGRAMME

Once you have identified the target audience, it's then worth understanding how much budget you have at your disposal to craft the content-based campaign. Knowing how much budget you can assign to the campaign early on will mean that you can effectively allocate spend to all of the areas of the campaign from the outset. Doing this ensures that you can develop a holistic view of the campaign, and where each budget is assigned, to gauge whether there are any shortcomings before any work has started.

3. REGULARLY PUBLISH CONTENT WITHIN A SERIES (IN THE SAME FORMAT CONSISTENTLY)

Commit to creating content and deliver it to a schedule. Every publisher and creator of content will know that one of the sure-fire methods of building an audience is to post topical content consistently. Doing so will motivate your audience to come back again to read, watch or listen to similar content. Creating such programmes, often within a series, is the most important element for building audiences; without it, your audience has nothing to engage with and come back to engage with again. Two (or three) pieces of linked content always helps bring readers back also.

This is often a major hurdle for B2B organisations, especially after the content programme has started where the organisation always has a deadline for content looming. Ensure you have a structured content production programme that can consistently deliver the content you require to reach your audience, at regular fixed intervals. Keeping the format the same - the content type as well as the structure - will provide your audience with content they feel comfortable with, which they can also anticipate and subscribe to.

4. IN ADDITION, REPURPOSE CONTENT AND VARY TACTICS TO ATTRACT NEW AUDIENCE MEMBERS

If podcasts are your main form of content, prioritise the creation of future podcasts on a regular basis - publish them on the same day each week/month if possible. Should you have additional resource to repurpose the podcast episodes into additional formats, you could build your audience even further via other channels and tactics.

A 30-minute podcast will likely have enough content to serve four new thought leadership articles on your blog, all of which can be shared on your social channels etc. If you see these thought leadership articles building up, you could take 8 of them - where the topics complement each other - and create a downloadable e-book to promote via LinkedIn or a specific publisher in the pharma space. Whitepapers are huge investments for any organisation, not only in pharma, so why not review the paper and pinpoint all of the various content pieces you can source from it to use elsewhere? Rest assured, this isn't a case of old pills in new bottles.

5. CREATE A SPECIFIC CHANNEL FOR THE CONTENT

Your favourite TV series might be available on Netflix, just like your favourite podcast series might be available on Spotify. Each time you want to watch/listen, you know exactly where to go. B2B pharma content also requires a specific channel that features the core content so that your audience knows exactly where to find your content and future content.

YouTube, for example, will allow subscriptions to channels which will send emails to subscribers of new videos without the user having to configure. Since B2B pharma organisation might create text-based content, it is more often than not that the content will sit on the company website, or a campaign website designed specifically for that content such it need to sit separately (with its own identity). Building a home for the content is essential if you want to keep users coming back for more.

6. CREATE A SUB-BRAND FOR THE CHANNEL/CONTENT SERIES

Branding is predominantly about trust. For audiences to trust your content and channel, the message must be consistent... which leads →

to branding and the potential of a sub-brand to help build the audience. By creating a sub-brand for your content series or programme, you are establishing a common identity that can help integrate everything associated with the content. A sub-brand, with its own identity, look and feel and tone may be the breath of fresh air your content needs to boost audience numbers. Whilst this may not always be necessary, or even possible, it's worthy of consideration as they have been successful throughout many other sectors.

7. ALLOW MULTIPLE SUBSCRIPTION OPTIONS VIA EMAIL

If your organisation produces a range of content and topics, allow your users to choose specifically what content they would like to receive via email. If you can, also give them an option on email frequency, which will be considered B2B email marketing best practice in pharma. By doing this, you may limit the number of future emails sent, but the number of people signing up will increase because the subscriber is able to pick a topic that is relevant for their particular needs and avoid unnecessary ones.

What do your website visitors and prospects want that you can offer? Apart from sending regular content, include an incentive for subscribers that is emailed to them upon sign-up such as partner discounts or competition entries or exclusive content. Your email list is a big part of your audience and it is particularly important as you know exactly who they are by name. Where possible, get the consent of the audience you are looking to reach and gain, or at a minimum, approach your audiences in a non-intrusive way.

8. INVITE GUEST CONTRIBUTORS AND ENSURE PROMOTION VIA THIRD-PARTIES

Guest contributions and collaborations are highly common (as well as highly valuable) in B2B pharma. Gaining multiple perspectives on a topic or problem can help the audience members form their own conclusions and solutions. Guest posting is an effective method of content creation where a brand will receive content to publish from an external contributor who will request something in return, usually a link to a website or a mention of their product/service. It's a win-win for both parties, and it also demonstrates real authority on the subject →

and the organisation's credibility within the industry - a helping hand when looking to draw professional visitors to something.

Similar benefits are also realised by curating or syndicating (with permission) others' content and should also be considered within an audience-building campaign. In addition, including third parties within the content creation process often means that the third party will promote on their own channels, build your audience for you in the process. Also, be sure to promote your content and channel via paid programmes offered by third-party vendors - you will see your audience quickly develop in this way. We work with hundreds of vendors in this area and would highly recommend doing so if you would like to see immediate results.

9. PROMOTE VIA OWNED CHANNELS (AND USE FORMS/LANDING PAGES)

You may have audiences to your website's content without even knowing it (apart what shows up in Google Analytics). Although this is fine (even desirable) it is in your best interests to know who those people are visiting your website and reading your content. This is where forms and landing pages become useful: They capture website visitors so you can attribute an audience member by name and email, who can be contacted in future (via a marketing automation system) where new content is delivered to keep that audience member coming back for more content. Anonymous visitors are fine, but known visitors are the goal when building a B2B audience.

10. SET UP A MARKETING AUTOMATION SYSTEM TO MANAGE THE AUDIENCE

At the very least, a CRM/Marketing Automation software is required to effectively build and manage your audiences. Then, depending on the specific activities and tactics, a wide range of other software, once fully integrated, can supercharge the way pharma organisations attract, connect and convert its audiences further down the line. But this system does need to be set up from the offset and considered within the budget.

Marketing automation (or inbound marketing) platforms have become increasingly popular in the last five or so years, with their ability to →

help marketing departments effectively market on multiple channels online and automate repetitive tasks such as delivering new content episodes to the audience you are building. Key features include the ability to generate leads via forms and landing pages, communicate with those prospects via automated email marketing campaigns and then report on the status of those prospects within the CRM. Popular marketing automation technologies include HubSpot, Marketo and [SharpSpring](#).



TECHNOLOGY STACK



Behind the personalised emails, downloadable content and location-enabled media is usually a suite of interchanging, complex technologies.

Marketing technology reached new heights in 2015. Martech Magazine found that 51% of organisations use 21 or more marketing-technology solutions. Since then, the sheer amount of technologies available has grown and grown.

These technologies combine to form a stack that marketers use to efficiently and effectively execute digital marketing activities across channels. This stack will include all the technologies you might use on a day-to-day basis, but you may not see them as an integrated toolbox, rather stand-alone tools. There might also be some essential technologies missing from your current stack which could greatly benefit your marketing campaigns.

This chapter will look at marketing-technology categories, that will be required to run your digital marketing strategy, and how these technologies can share common features and how they can be better grouped into a manageable stack.

1. CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM) SYSTEM

At the heart of any B2B pharma marketing, sales or business development activity is a CRM. A CRM system manages an organisation's customers/clients, prospect and contacts to improve relationships for customer retention and drive sales growth. Modern CRM systems, often integrated with other technologies, use data analysis about the contact's previous interactions - such as previous calls, meeting and website actions/movements - with an organisation.

Every B2B pharma organisation will have a CRM system, and quite frankly, it cannot operate without one. But organisations will often use a CRM simply to store large quantities of data that cannot be used for any commercial gain. Managed effectively, CRM systems can uncover opportunities to cross-sell and better serve clients and prospects which can provide cost savings with increased revenue. Some of the most popular CRM systems include Salesforce, Pipedrive and Microsoft Dynamics but there are many CRM options available depending on specific needs. Without a CRM, a marketing campaign will have no hope of succeeding.

2. CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMS)

With a CRM in place, the organisation requires a website and all websites sit on a primary technology foundation in the form of a CMS (content management system). A CMS is a software application used to manage the creation and modification of digital content on that website.

Successful digital campaigns, using content such as blog posts, news articles, product/service summaries and case studies from that website, require organisations to not only understand behavioural data about the content but also personal data specifically about who is engaging with that content. Therefore, a CMS must be fully integrated with a CRM system. Popular CMS platforms include WordPress, Squarespace and Sitecore, and many of these systems offer website design and build features.

3. MARKETING AUTOMATION PLATFORM

With a CRM and CMS in place, it's now essential to connect the platforms so when a piece of content from the website is distributed to its audiences, it can be tracked back to a contact within the CRM, or a new contact within the CRM can be created automatically via a form. The missing piece here is the marketing automation platform, which can often emerge as missing in the pharma marketing-technology stack due to the complex nature of the technology. Now is the time to change if this is the case because they are becoming easier to understand and use.

Marketing automation (or inbound marketing) platforms have →

Become increasingly popular in the last five or so years, with their ability to help marketing departments effectively market on multiple channels online and automate repetitive tasks. Key features include the ability to generate leads via forms and landing pages, communicate with those prospects via automated email marketing campaigns and then report on the status of those prospects within the CRM. Marketing automation platforms also offer basic analytics packages that can track such campaigns on a basic level, generally to score the leads generated. Popular marketing automation technologies include HubSpot, Marketo and SharpSpring, our chosen system.

4. ANALYTICS

As previously mentioned, your CMS and marketing automation technologies will have built-in analytics software that can tell you a little about what is happening on your website and how your marketing campaigns are performing. But for the most, they won't tell you enough, and you could access a world of additional data that could help shape your campaigns or improve performance. Therefore, you will need an analytics package to add to your pharma marketing-technology stack.

Google Analytics is the leader, and since it and its suite of other tools such as Google Search Console, Google Trends and other in the wider Google Marketing Platform are all free, it's suggested that you do not look elsewhere. As a summary, Google Analytics tracks and reports on website traffic and dives deeper into activity such as pages per session, session duration and bounce rate along with the sources of the traffic, along with a host of other features. It pays to know what's happening on your website so you can focus your efforts on areas that are working, addressing those which aren't quite as so in the process.

5. INTELLIGENCE

So, we know how our website and web pages are performing. We also have an idea about the campaigns that have been working previously. But what we don't have is data on external factors that can direct and shape the campaigns we undertake. Intelligence platforms and technologies, that integrate with current technology stacks, provide this information helping you make choices on those campaigns.

Should you be looking to embark on search engine optimisation campaigns on an on-going basis, investing in SEMrush which identifies market trends and industry best practices would be a suitable intelligence option. Should you want to identify your prospects' technology choices you might invest in Datanyze or if you want to keep an eye on your clients' and competitors' website traffic volumes, referral sources and website "stickiness" you may want to invest in SimilarWeb. There are many of such intelligence and marketing tools, and many of them offer free versions of those products and/or browser extensions so you can start using some of those features. If you conduct digital campaigns of any sort, you will require at least one of them.

6. SALES ENABLEMENT

Stepping out of the traditional marketing team and into the sales team... where a CRM system along with technology that can help nurture and qualify leads is already in place. But the sales representative might need his or her own specific technologies to effectively close prospects and make sales, that also need to be integrated with other marketing technologies so that the wider commercial team can have visibility of progress.

Again, at this top layer on our technology stack, many different types of technologies and resources are available. Sales representatives might require LeadForensics which tells them exactly who has been on the organisation's website and they may also want RingDNA to help them with their outbound calls and voice communications, along with a sales-specific productivity platform in Yesware.

7. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Multiple campaigns and marketing initiatives, as well as managing the above technologies, can be time-consuming and therefore managing them in an effective manner is a must. Project management is the practice of initiating, planning, executing, controlling and closing the work of a team to achieve specific goals and meet specific success criteria at the specified time. Fortunately, there are technologies available also that can integrate with the above to make this happen.

Project management technologies, ranging from time management (Asana, Todoist) to team collaboration (Trello, Slack) to document →

management (Google Docs, Dropbox), can be adopted to tie up all of your marketing campaign initiatives, as well as the marketing technologies within your stack. It's worth looking at how efficient you are with your time to help determine what project management tools you require to stay on track and hit your various performance objectives.

CAVEAT: MARKETING TECHNOLOGY IS A MINEFIELD!

The [Martech 5000](#) embodies what the marketing technology landscape looks like for pharmaceutical marketers and demonstrates the vast amount of technological choice available. But don't let this scare you, many of these providers offer similar solutions and you can soon narrow down those most suitable to your needs.

Again, many of these providers offer free trials and stripped-down versions of their products so you can test them out. Don't be afraid to do this with all the components of the pharmaceutical marketing-technology stack so you can find out which technologies and tools are best suited for your marketing campaigns, organisational objectives and internal processes. Based on the choice, we appreciate that this might take some time but these are tools that, once in your marketing toolbox, will provide a range of outright benefits to your operations. Look at all seven categories of the marketing-technology stack in this chapter, starting at the bottom of the stack, and assess where you and your organisations currently stand.



HOW TO BUILD TRUST ONLINE



Trust is the pillar of all business relationships when it comes to digital. As buyers of products, we only need to look at our own browsing and buying behaviours to identify the factors that diminish trust. When our trust needs are not met, we often look elsewhere for other suppliers.

In the B2B sectors we operate within, the focus is generally on building trust offline via face-to-face conversations. But trust can also be earned online where it is often sought before a buying cycle begins; and it's now more important than ever to earn that trust on websites in such challenging environments.

The Nielsen Norman Group (NNG) have developed a [pyramid of trust](#), adapted from Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, highlighting the basic trust needs that need to be met before being able to progress a relationship.

They state that "establishing trust, whether with a stranger or with a website, is gradual: as the relationship progresses, scepticism is overcome, the comfort level increases and new demands can be made. The relationship evolves through different stages of commitment, each built on top of the previous ones."

In the B2B pharmaceutical setting, where the purchase is often made offline, a visitor will make repeat website visits and consume various pieces of content over a period of time before this purchase. Specific trust cues will come into play during varying stages of this buyer's journey.

NNN identify that website–visitor relationships progress through five levels of commitment, starting from the bottom, where each higher level requires the lower levels to be satisfied. The levels are as follows, along with the needs of the visitor at each level.

LEVEL 1. BASELINE RELEVANCE AND TRUST THAT NEEDS CAN BE MET

Could this site help me accomplish my goal? Is it credible and can I depend on this information? Does it seem to have my best interests at heart?

LEVEL 2. INTEREST AND PREFERENCE OVER OTHER OPTIONS

Do I choose to use this site for this task? Is it better than other options?

LEVEL 3. TRUST WITH PERSONAL INFORMATION

Is this site's offering valuable enough to justify the time and effort to register? Do I trust the site with my personal information?

LEVEL 4. TRUST WITH SENSITIVE/FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Do I trust this site to securely use and store my sensitive data? Is it worth the risk?

LEVEL 5. WILLINGNESS TO COMMIT TO AN ONGOING RELATIONSHIP

Am I comfortable enough to establish a continuous connection with this site?

WAYS TO EARN TRUST ON WEBSITES

As digital marketers, to be able to progress a website visitor through to a conversion, it is imperative that we address each hierarchical level and reduce friction at each stage with trust cues.

Like every organisation, website, customer, buyer's journey and objectives are different, it's probable that the tips below appear within different levels of the pyramid of trust for different people. The tips could relate to the top levels of the pyramid on some websites, and on the bottom for others.

However, this list of 19 actions follows a linear order and will loosely follow the pyramid upwards as we move towards building basic trust and then building on that gained trust with a view of developing the website–visitor relationship further.

1. ENSURE THE WEBSITE IS HTTPS SECURE

The first chance a website has to earn trust is within its URL. Regardless of the content on the website, a website visitor will want to ensure that the website is secure. Most website providers offer HyperText Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS) websites, but some still fall short at this very first hurdle. This sign of site security comes in the form of a HTTPS rather than a HTTP URL and is made obvious by the padlock to the left of the URL. If your website isn't HTTPS secure, consider switching over - 50% of the web is now encrypted with HTTPS sites.

2. USE HIGH-QUALITY IMAGES

Websites with low-quality, poorly sized or generic stock images do themselves disfavour. Almost instantly, the perception of the brand is lowered and the quality of the product or service then comes into question. High-quality imagery, however, is one of the easiest things you can include on your website. With the multitude of free stock images and image editing programs available, this can be achieved most of the time for virtually no cost.

3. AVOID COLLOQUIALISMS AND JARGON IN WEBSITE COPY

Technical and scientific websites are often at fault here, where content contains complex and confusing terminology. However, we work with complex topics given the very nature of the industry, therefore, sometimes complex topics and jargon are unavoidable. But if a simpler word or sentence works just as well as a complex one, consider using it. Do not forget that the industry is a global one, and although websites translate easily into other languages, it is always worth keeping things simple so your audiences spanning different continents can understand you at all times. In the bid for confidence and trust, as well as avoiding industry speak and jargon, if possible, also omit a colloquial and casual tone to stay professional.

4. CONSISTENCY OF BRAND AND MESSAGE

Arguably the most important aspect of branded communications is consistency. Brand marketing requires a set of guidelines, that consists of the language style, tone of voice, image style, colour palettes and core messages which all need to be kept consistent throughout the →

website. Any discrepancies in these core elements signal a change in personality, and that is something marketers want to avoid when trust is the objective. Do not let your website and content stray from your brand guidelines.

5. PROMOTE TESTIMONIALS AND CASE STUDIES

One of the strongest ways of gaining trust, certainly from a B2B perspective, is to promote content highlighting current and/or past customers. They act as social proof that demonstrates that you can, have and will deliver on the promises made regarding your products or services. Third-party review sites, such as Trustpilot and Google Reviews, also play an important role in building trust – once reviews are gained on these platforms, they can also be used on the website.

6. CERTIFICATIONS AND AWARDS

Similarly, websites can also earn trust by showcasing industry partners, relevant accreditations, certifications and awards. Even if your organisation has been featured on a reputable third-party website, there will be opportunities and pages for you to demonstrate this. Any logo related to best practice or achievements can build trust in an instance.

7. MAKE YOUR SHORTCOMINGS KNOWN

As a supplier of a product or service, it is likely your offering isn't perfect and falls short in some areas. A survey by G2 and Heinze Marketing established that as much as 40% of B2B buyers say negative reviews help build credibility for a product. Admitting your shortcomings portrays honesty and goes a long way in the quest to build trust with website audiences. If you feel that such a tactic is counter-intuitive, begin by simply excluding from your website anything that has been exaggerated or which is salesy in nature.

8. EDUCATE RATHER THAN SELL

Organisations and digital marketers have realised that website visitors engage more with educational content than they do with promotional content. Consider the website a hub of resources for your target audience to come and learn about a given topic – you will build huge →

trust in the process. Here's where the [inbound marketing methodology](#) becomes important, creating helpful and useful content that pulls your visitors in, rather than pushing promotional content out.

9. INCLUDE YOUR CLIENTS OR YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE IN YOUR CONTENT

Sometimes, for a number of reasons, published content isn't suitable for target audiences. For content to absolutely resonate with audiences, and build trust in the process, it's highly useful to include your target audiences within the content itself. This could mean that the narrative is centred around a character similar to the target audience, and therefore the website visitor, or it could mean that certain content is geared specifically for an individual or individual organisation. This sort of strategy can build huge trust with the visitor, albeit, one visitor at a time.

10. PRESENT ADDITIONAL BUSINESS INFORMATION

Without being over-promotional, offer some content about your organisation so that visitors can develop an understanding about you. The "about" page can be invaluable in that it gives website visitors a snapshot of the business values, how long you've been operating, its stakeholders and how the organisation works, amongst plenty of other information you feel might build trust. By providing this information, in a concise way, website visitors are able to gauge what things are like in your organisation and can begin building that report that is essential for relationship building.

11. PERSONALISATION

Personalisation is a growing area of interest for marketers. It has been proven to increase key site objectives, such as engagements and conversions. Personalisation achieves this because it increases trust between the website visitor and the website as content becomes more relevant for that visitor. Websites, just like email marketing, can address a visitor by name which achieves basic personalisation from an identity perspective. They can also, with a sophisticated CRM, become insight-driven and present content relative to the behaviours of the visitor →

and also predict future actions. Some will feel this is a little creepy, but others will see it as a genuine attempt to understand the website visitor and build a one-to-one relationship.

12. MAKE YOUR TEAM MEMBERS KNOWN

In the quest to make everything more personal to the visitor, it's also a good idea to make your team members known to website visitors. In B2B pharma, where personal relationships are appreciated, there is no substitute for putting a face to an organisation. Ensure you have a "meet the team" page, regardless of your organisation size - populate the page with key and client facing people if your organisation is large. Also, consider using the faces of your staff on key pages for familiarity, with the blog, services and contact page all great locations.

13. KEEP THE DESIGN MODERN

This goes without saying in 2019, but it's surprising how many websites in the science industries fall short of a clean, modern and responsive website. A modern design looks professional and gives the website an air of legitimacy in the eyes of the visitor that can establish trust before the content is actually engaged with. If an organisation cares about the look and feel and user experience of its website, then it will also care about its products and services, and therefore, its customers. A streamlined, clear and well-signposted website that isn't cluttered will immediately build trust at all levels of the hierarchy of trust.

14. BRING SOCIAL MEDIA INTO THE FOLD

For B2B organisations, I think social media is underrated and sometimes underused. Generally, it gives business professionals another channel (usually a more relaxed one) to connect with stakeholders and can be one of the best trust-building tools available. Not only is it a channel that can offer direct support, but social content is also a great form of word of mouth PR. Social share buttons and social feeds let visitors know you are active on those social platforms and open for business, and it also gives them an indicator of others who engage with you.

15. KEEP THE SITE UP-TO-DATE

Abandoned news and blog pages, expired offers and out-of-date business information all signal that the organisation is closed or on the verge of being closed. This is one of the easiest elements to trip over as a busy marketing schedule can often push the task of updating a website down to the bottom of the list. In an age of trust, this isn't good. Aim to publish one new piece of content each week - monthly if you are really stretched - (not just for the search engine benefits) to show visitors you have real people on the other end of the site.

16. ELIMINATE BROKEN LINKS

Large scale websites will have hundreds of web pages but as the years go by, some content becomes outdated, irrelevant and sometimes incorrect. 404 pages usually replace those pages that are taken down but still found by website visitors, which although follows best practice, does little to build trust. Eliminate broken links with a link checker and set up redirects so that you are not wasting your website visitors' time and jeopardising trust.

17. LIMIT THE NUMBER OF ADS (OR OTHER DISTRACTIONS)

Ads on websites are necessary for both the organisation and the visitor. They are present in all other walks of life and will always play a part in the digital communications mix. However, and as [Google](#) identified a few years back which lead to significant algorithm changes, websites have abused digital ads to the point where ad blockers have been adopted by users to stop them. Websites should limit the number of ads on a site and avoid overwhelming the visitor with disrupting content – it will do the opposite of building trust. Always keep ads, whether they are your own or for a third party, to a minimum.

18. MAKE IT EASY TO GET IN TOUCH

It's common for website visitors to have a query regarding the content they have found, this is certainly the case if that visitor is in a buying cycle or moving into one following the browsing phase. The websites that make it easy to contact the organisation, often via a multitude of ways such as call or chat, will present itself as trustworthy and →

seemingly not shying away from enquiries. Make it easy to get in touch with you and offer multiple ways to do so.

19. DISPLAY OTHER GUARANTEES AND DISCLOSURES

Hidden terms are one of the biggest trust breakers off and on websites. Being open about all information, including what you will do with the information of others, is essential as it looks like you are hiding nothing. This is certainly the case when visitors sign up for newsletters and other email content. Costs and other specific “fine print” information should also be displayed prominently. If you can offer guarantees and other satisfaction assurances, do so. If you have an e-commerce website, include payment logos and other secure checkout accreditations on relevant pages. As the visitor progresses towards the top of the trust hierarchy, trust cues as such as very closely related to higher conversions.

TRUST IS YOUR GREATEST ASSET

In an industry where business decisions are often made because of personal relationships, trust can be an organisation’s greatest asset. The website, therefore, plays a large role in this trust-building journey. Once trust is gained, it usually results in more traffic, higher pages-per-session, lower bounce rate, more subscribers, higher conversations and more leads.

The tips above all help to building trust on your website to improve the above metrics at varying levels of the trust hierarchy. Use NNG's trust hierarchy to identify the specific levels of trust on your website, identify which tip(s) sit at each level and then make the necessary changes for each.

These suggestions all follow the same principle: They put the website visitor first. When we don't trust an organisation or a person, it is generally because they put their own interests first. Don't step into this trap. Helping website visitors builds trust, and if you can help your website visitors, you will put yourself in a great place to be considered as a trustworthy supplier to build a relationship with and to do business with.



HOW TO INCREASE AVERAGE TIME ON PAGE



Keeping website visitors engaged is a crucial element of any digital marketing, website, content or inbound plan. But the metric that measures this engagement isn't always accurate.

Google Analytics reports by determining the "Average time on page" and the "Average session duration" which refer to the actual time that a website visitor spends on a page and on a website on the whole. Even though measuring such time is a hugely important consideration for any website or website manager, it brings with it an array of problems because the metrics themselves are ambiguous.

"AVERAGE" METRICS AND THEIR SHORTCOMINGS

The (main) problem with these metrics is that they are based on averages of other averages of a variety of pages containing different content and goals, from different traffic sources.

Within each default channel group – such as Organic, Social, Paid, Direct, Referral etc. – are breakdowns within each grouping. For Organic, you can narrow down the data from the various search engines and then you can access that specific search engine by region. You can also do a similar analysis for the other channels and what you will see is that the averages for each channel differ quite dramatically. Often, there are no trends.

Which is why it's sensible to drill down into each channel grouping to determine where the traffic is coming from, which source is generating the traffic with the greatest time, where the leads are coming from →

and whether there are any campaigns currently targeting those channels and focus there.

The general rule with such analytics, certainly those you see on standard dashboards, is that numbers don't always tell the whole story (even though we want them to). Sometimes these metrics can also be influenced by a number of activities that may not relate to actual engagement: they shouldn't all be treated equally to make decisions regarding engagement.

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT AND TIME ON PAGE

A Content Marketing Benchmark [report](#) indicated that the average session duration (again, as an indicator) for websites in the Medical Devices & Pharma industry is 2:16sec., with Hospital & Healthcare in front at 3:38sec. The good news is that if we compare by industry, the sectors we operate within are already on the healthy end of the scale.

Regardless of the algorithms Google Analytics use to determine the metrics, these are the metrics we are served. And if the metric is high then it is likely that the visitor found the content useful, enjoyed being on the website and will be back. High average session duration are an indicator of quality and relevance.

Here are tweaks and methods of increasing average time on page and session duration.

1. VISUAL DESIGN

The amount of behavioural and psychological reasons for a site to be visual are in abundance. In simplistic terms, sites that look good perform better than those that don't. From the website's theme to its image style, the design of a website is the first port of call when embarking on an optimisation task such as this one.

A clean user interface gives the visitor the opportunity to browse without distractions, making it easier to navigate to the appropriate areas of the website. Every site should be also aesthetically pleasing and consistent with the organisation's brand guidelines. If a website doesn't have a modern look and feel, site visitors will drop off even before any content is discovered. Review your website experience (from the previous chapter on website user experience) against your →

competitors and consider engaging a designer to assess if your site needs a refresh.

2. CLEAR HIERARCHY AND STRUCTURE

Similarly, websites or web pages should always follow a structure so that discovering and consuming its content is quick and easy.

Removing clutter is a simple solution to allow visitors to focus and get engrossed within a topic or content. If that visitor already knows what information he or she is looking for, it shouldn't be hard to find it on the website. Perhaps surprisingly, site visitors are more likely to stay around if there is less content available because focusing is easier.

3. CRAFT USER JOURNEYS

Understanding a buyer's journey is essential to any marketer looking to create content that will directly influence prospects on a website.

During the three stages of the buyer's journey (awareness, consideration and decision) a website visitor is generally looking for a particular [type of content](#).

Therefore, each type of content should be available on websites with user journeys crafted so that visitors can access that content, and then find out more via similar content that aims to progress that visitor along the buyer's journey. Mapping a typical user journey is essential in this sense to craft a path for the visitor to take, building a natural progression through site pages. Begin by researching and creating your buyer personas.

4. CONTENT SHOULD BE WRITTEN FOR MAXIMUM READABILITY

Even with attention spans ever-decreasing, it's surprising to see the amount of poorly written and presented content on corporate websites going into 2019. But the steps required to change this is relatively straightforward. Written content should always educate, as well as entertain. The structure of any piece of writing should follow a logical storytelling order with a beginning, middle and an end and should resonate with the target audiences at all times. The chosen font should be easy to read, with short sentences and paragraphs creating plenty of white space, accompanied by headings signposting each section.

5. INTERNAL LINKING

Linking pages to similar pages is an easy technique to decrease bounce rate and keep visitors on a website for longer. A webpage should have a defined path for visitors to navigate to other pages as standard. But it's also advisable that a webpage provides users with additional actions and suggestions as the content on the current page can be expanded upon or might have raised more questions that the visitor needs answering. Internal linking also has SEO value, as you are essentially informing search engines that website pages are important, and that they exist in the first place.

6. ENGAGEMENT TRIGGERS

Similar to content suggestions, certain functionality on websites can keep visitors on a website for longer. Such as a second layer of content additional to the core content. Page animations, social media integrations, quizzes or videos – any opportunity to engage a visitor by asking them to look, click or slide is good. It's human nature to want to see, touch and feel; to interact, but we won't interact with something that isn't there. These tend to be more visual than the base content, but not too distracting so that the base content is obscured in any way.

7. SHOW CREDIBILITY AT EVERY POSSIBILITY

In B2B pharma, competition is high. Prospects will be browsing websites, collecting information about suitability by constantly asking themselves: "Why should I work with this organisation over another organisation?" or "Why should I buy?" The website's role in this instance is to build trust - social proof is a great way of doing this.

The content served can achieve this and by providing answers to satisfy these questions, the website visitor can feel reassured and prompted to browse further. Testimonials, case studies, logo walls and client reviews demonstrate credibility, with staff bios and blog contributions further demonstrating expertise. Showcasing awards and other achievements and milestones achieves the same aim – this is content that can sit throughout all pages of a website. Find out more on how to build trust on your website.

8. LIVE CHAT OR CHATBOT?

Chat features have received a mix reception of the years. Previously, such a feature was considered costly, ineffective and sometimes even damaging for a brand. However, a new breed of B2B buyer is emerging and an ICMI study demonstrates that this buyer is favouring live chat to engage with sellers during the buying process, with 42% of customers preferring live chat compared to 23% for email.

Of course, a live chat or chatbot can begin a conversation between buyer and seller that can last from anywhere from 2-10 minutes, which can significantly increase session duration.

9. PERSONALISATION AND SMART CONTENT

Personalisation, although a simple concept – providing tailored content to site visitors – isn't always easy to implement. It concerns technical complexities as well as implications relating to fully understanding the individual motivations of site visitors. GDPR has made it even more complex because the driver of personalisation is data.

Without data, or the consent for using the data, personalisation cannot be achieved in the B2B world. Still, personalisation is possible with the appropriate systems and processes, and if done correctly, can increase the average time on page as the content served would be highly relevant for that visitor.

A website can remember the page a visitor has accessed, and based on the data and the personalisation criteria/rules, it can serve similar or different content for the next visit. This is the most complex method on this list and should be dealt with caution. But those that get it correct can experience huge rewards, namely in the form of increased website conversions.



HOW TO INCREASE FORM CONVERSIONS



In this final bonus chapter, we'll look at some optimisations that will contribute towards your overall website, landing page and digital marketing campaign ROI: Boosting form conversions and generate more marketing leads via your website.

We use forms to allow our readers to subscribe to more content or we offer access to other in-depth content which usually sits off the website (such as this very e-book). We see this as a win-win. In return for some basic contact details (usually a name and an email address), we provide free content which we research, write and publish via our team. And it's the most common content model on the internet, and for the marketer, the process is often measured via the number of or percentage of form submissions. As a content marketer, KPIs can be set against these form conversions.

Whether you conduct content marketing campaigns or paid media campaigns pointing towards landing pages - and look to generate leads/contacts via forms on websites - there are a variety of ways of optimising those forms and pages to increase conversions.

So, if generating website leads is your goal, read on and implement some of the methods of increasing form conversions in this chapter. Being a marketer is difficult. You're judged on your contributions towards the organisation's performance. But it's not all doom and gloom. Because if we can demonstrate that we are generating leads (on top of everything else we do) then we are heading in the right direction, showing that our activities contribute towards the bottom line.

This is why we need to be increasing the number of form conversions. Here are methods of doing so.

1. INCLUDE MULTIPLE FORMS/METHODS OF CONVERSION ON A PAGE

The easiest way to increase form conversions (or at least the number of leads) is to include as many forms and methods of conversion on the page as possible. We're not looking to distract the reader by trying to get them to hand over their details, we're talking about subtly offering multiple methods of converting. Review your pages and assess where you can include forms, CTAs and links to pages with other forms.

Remember that as a marketer, you'd prefer the website visitor to convert on the current page (increasing the number of leads generated) rather than click-through to another page (increasing the number of pages per visit). Consider the offers on the page and structure your CTAs accordingly - complex forms are better at the bottom of the page, with simple forms better suited for the top. Consider the three-stage buyer's journey and create forms for each stage and aim to capture that website visitor at the right time for them. The chart below provides a guideline for the placements of the CTAs and suggest that simple content offering (awareness stage) CTAs should sit towards the top of the page and complex content offering (decision stage) CTAs should site towards the bottom of the page.

2. INCLUDE AS FEW FIELDS AS POSSIBLE

Many web pages are decreasing their chances of conversions because of forms being too long and asking for too many, often unnecessary, details. Long web forms might make sense because you are collecting specific details, but do you need those details? If a conversion is the goal, I'd be reluctant to include non-essential form fields, especially those that do not help get the job done in the first place. Look at your form fields and (1) decide if the fields you currently have are essential to your data and processes, (2) remove any confusing fields, and (3) review the additional fields you have as required.

HubSpot conducted research on 40,000+ landing pages to determine the effect form fields has on conversions. They found that the sweet spot for the number of fields on a form is 3-5, anything more and the →

conversion rate drops. Let's not make it harder to generate leads by making it harder for our users to submit the relevant details and access content/get in touch with you.

3. INFORM ON WHAT TO EXPECT BEFORE SUBMISSION

Make the value proposition clear on the form so the user knows that there is no doubt in their minds that submitting their details is the right thing to do. Don't forget, asking someone to fill out a form is a tall order. Communicate value upfront and make it clear that what you offering is highly valuable. List the benefits or the features of the offer and provide imagery and additional social proof - such as testimonials - where you can. The form itself might be short and sweet, but the content which surrounds the form, essentially promoting the form, can be detailed and in abundance.

4. INCLUDE A USER/SUBSCRIBER FOLLOW COUNT

A popular tweak on landing pages, buttons and forms is to include the number of previous submissions on the forms, or the number of downloads or subscribers. This sort of social proofing - which can be done subtly - shows the user that people have already used the form and submitted their details to the organisation, meaning that others are most likely to follow suit. Social proof suggests that people will conform to the actions of others under the assumption that those actions are reflective of the correct behaviour. Can you show how many people have signed up for your webinar or how many people are signed up to receive your newsletter? It will help improve your conversions.

5. FORGET ABOUT HYPE-BASED COPY

Whilst it is essential to include positive action-based verbs in the copy of a form, never forget that your audiences are fully aware of the tactics and snake oil copywriting that you might see on some of the less-trustworthy forms. Add this to the industry we operate within, which includes an intelligent bunch of people, the idea of including hype-based titles and sentences is ludicrous. Avoid at all costs as it will harm your conversions.

Use the present tense to convey the CTA happening in the moment →

(right now) and present the benefits in an active voice (subject + verb + object) and take away any dishonest, fluffy hype-related jargon. Do not try to over-sell the form as you will be doing more harm than good.

6. GIVE USERS A CHOICE

Simplicity is important in web design but as consumers we all like choice. Too much choice, however, discourages action. If your organisation produces a range of content and topics, allow your users to choose specifically what content they would like to receive. By doing this, you may limit the number of future sent emails, but the number of people signing up will increase because the subscriber can pick a topic that is relevant for their particular needs and avoid unnecessary ones. If you can, also give them an option on email frequency. Choice is good, and offer it where possible - be sure to limit that choice.

7. ADD FURTHER INCENTIVES

One of the oldest tricks in the marketing book is to add further incentives to offers to increase the chances of a purchase. This is the same online. Along with signing up for a newsletter, can you offer a free e-book? Or along with signing up for an e-book, can you offer a free consultation? Or along with signing up for a free consultation, can you register the user into a competition? Ecwid demonstrates that offering an incentive, such as a chance of winning something, increases the chances of getting a conversion by 15 times. The options are endless, and it could tip the balance for conversions.

At the point of conversion, your user will be asking themselves: "What's in it for me?" The more things we can offer them, the more reasons they will find to convert and submit their details on the form. Even the incentive of missing out on something only available for a limited time could be enough for some users.

8. ADDRESS THE OBJECTIONS

Before we take any sort of action - paying for something or handing over personal data - there is friction. Look to your own behaviours at this point to fully understand what happens. Look to create a list of all the objections associated with the form submission and include those →

within the copy of your form, or in the body of the text on the page.

Common ways to address objections is to explain the problems the submission will solve or show the experience of your brand to appear trustworthy or even include why you are better than your competitor on the page. Seek external input, do user testing and ask your customers to figure out what all they might be concerned about. If your users worry about being emailed too often, inform them of email frequency, or if they are unsure about your data policy, remind them that their information is safe with you.

9. MAKE THE CTA BUTTON STAND OUT

The CTA button is just as important as the copy on the form or the placement of the sign-up form. CTA buttons should be unmissable as it is the conversion trigger - without it the conversation cannot happen. Create urgency with your CTA copy and use a colour that stands out, keeping in-line with your brand guidelines. Explore the psychology of colours - red is usually a good choice as it stands out and is also exciting and warm that evokes strong emotions. But test this for your website and audience, making sure that the colour is in-line with your website look and feel. (The last thing we want is to harm conversions by having a visually unappealing form/ button.)

According to [Midas Media](#), use a white font and a coloured button (orange, red, blue, or green) with white or grey surrounding the button, keeping your CTA button copy between 2-4 words. Other studies into buttons and button colours also identify the same top four colours, albeit in a slightly different order.

10. INCLUDE A PRIVACY POLICY/DISCLAIMER

During the moment when a user is about to submit their data on one of your forms, trust is in the balance. As a digital marketer, your job is to build trust with that user from the first moment and demonstrate your trustworthiness. Including a short statement about your privacy policy/disclaimer, or a sentence about how users can unsubscribe anytime/that details are fully protected is a great way of gaining this trust and therefore converting. Just a one-liner beneath the form/CTA button is enough to tick a box in the user's mind that the data they submit is safe with you and that you can be trusted.

11. PRE-POPULATE FORM FIELDS

Pre-populating your website forms, should you already have the user's details and cookie consent in your CRM, is a great way to increase form conversions. It significantly reduces the steps a user needs to take down to just clicking on the CTA button to submit. I'm not aware of any evidence to suggest that this is bad practice providing you have already acquired the consent of the individual which you have in the CRM as otherwise your forms will not know of the user to pre-populate. Also, in the process, you are creating a better browsing experience for that user.

According to [WordStream](#), SaaS brand IronMountain tested this approach and found it increased the number of B2B leads by 140%. Even if pre-populating form fields increased conversions by half of the figure in this test, any marketer would implement this tweak. We do it on most of our forms and would recommend to others that you do the same.

12. KEEP EVERYTHING SIMPLE

Hick's law, often cited in web design circles, describes the time it takes for a person to make a decision. The law states that by increasing the number of choices, the decision time will also increase logarithmically. So, the more choices the users are presented with, the longer it takes to process that information, thus delaying the conversions on the forms on your pages and harming conversions. Too much information and options on website forms decrease the submissions on the form.

Combat this by stripping down the number of decisions that need to be made on the forms, limiting the choices in the process, and increasing the conversions on your forms. Make your pages and forms easy to use; simple is better. Distractions such as CAPTCHAS are bad and anything unnecessary is best taken off the form.



CONCLUSION



Are you interacting with the people that buy your products and services online? The answer is likely to be yes, meaning that you need a digital strategy to effectively communicate with those people. Listen to these people. To these patients, physicians, providers and pharmaceutical professionals. Listen to your employees. Your pharmaceutical digital strategy and subsequent tactics will have its origins here which will provide the platform for a successful strategy.

But be advised: You will encounter obstacles. The obstacles that the technologies themselves create will be your first hurdle, potentially followed by legal and ethical related hurdles that you will no doubt already be used to. Embracing this change is why many of us are hesitant about moving forward with a new digital strategy – perhaps due to the amount of information and channels features within this e-book, you have every right to feel overwhelmed.

But it does get easier, and the principles can be used across other channels and via other tactics.

The website is a great start. Every web page you have should have at least one form to encourage conversion. If you can't include a form - homepages open do not have forms, for example - be sure to include a CTA to a page with a form. Limit the number of barriers (and pages) for a conversion and always thank the users for submitting their details on the form after a conversion via an iframe message or thank you page.

Remember that your pharmaceutical-based website is there to inform your users about your products and services; your organisation's website is not there for you as an internal team member of that organisation. Simplicity is key.

Spend time understanding your users and define a purpose for the website. These users will appreciate quality, but they are also impatient and prone to scanning pages and content. They also want control and will follow their intuition. With this said, always design with those users in mind. In our cases, the science professional is busy, but also very →

attentive to detail. So this is potentially a difficult task.

Jump into your Google Analytics account and investigate your average time on page and bounce rate, before moving on to landing pages and behaviour flows. The clues are there as to whether your science website provides an effective user experience via its content. Content is very much essential for the pharma marketer when communicating to the scientific audience. Also, keep up to date with Google's updates at all times. The pool of potential prospects that can find you via this channel is far greater than social and email, for example. Once your website is optimised, look at some of your subsequent channels.

There is no doubt that email marketing, certainly as a mass media channel, has lost its effectiveness. With new GDPR implications changing the way organisations access and store data, it does appear that email marketing is getting increasingly more difficult. But this is the case with any marketing channel within any marketing campaign. As ever, campaign and marketing managers must become smarter by understanding their buyers and their behaviours, as well as what the technologies and new software programmes can do for the organisation and its buyers.

A digital strategy will, however, always provide better communication channels (for patients and pharmaceutical professionals), providing services as well as healthcare products via better, not to mention more ethical, sales practices. We're making things easier for our audiences via mobile solutions, personalised product recommendations and better customer service offerings during an era where digital is taking priority. Now is the time to focus on effective B2B digital marketing in the pharmaceutical sectors.



ABOUT ORIENTATION MARKETING



You need to know where to find your potential customers, talk to them in a language that resonates and know what motivates them to take action....

This requires a multi-layered approach consisting of the most suitable channels, utilising all the tools available to you from content marketing to lead nurturing. The process of turning strangers into leads and then into customers requires campaigns and touchpoints that go beyond most traditional marketing and advertising initiatives.

Orientation Marketing is a life science and pharmaceutical marketing agency operating within specialist B2B scientific sectors.

We help food, ingredients, nutraceutical, packaging, medical technology, contract manufacturing, development and research organisations uncover opportunities to become more visible, increase engagement and generate more leads.

We can help you uncover the opportunities to increase awareness with the appropriate audiences. You'll enjoy full support when it comes to media planning and buying and content creation as we take away the demand generation work away from you. We will ensure that you get the most value from your marketing budget and the best positions possible across a range of media.

With offices in the UK and North America, the agency is in its fifth year of operation. Some of the organisations we work with include Benecol, Vectura, Catalent, Ashland, Cambrex, Dow, Associates of Cape Cod Int., Eppendorf, Abcam, Peak Scientific, Schott and Roquette.

Please get in touch should you like to explore our digital marketing services to help you become more visible, increase engagement and generate more leads in the scientific and technical sectors.

For more, visit [Orientation Marketing Insights](#).



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