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Patients Like Me
March 3, 2014

1. What is PLM? Why do patients join PLM? Does the platform work for any disease? What are reactions of physicians to PLM and other similar sites?

Patients Like Me (PLM) is an online community with over 80,000 patients. PLM organizes patients (consumers of the website) into communities based on diseases they are suffering from or have suffered from. It allows the patients to share information with and learn from other patients with the similar diseases. In 15 patient communities 19 diseases are discussed. But, PLM is not just a social networking site. Because of its origins, PLM is an open medical framework and runs as a large-scale research project. Because of their research they are able to share results quickly and decrease research costs.

Patients join PLM because it is viewed as a new wave in the health industry as "medicine without doctors." PLM allows patients to share personal experiences, find others like them and learn from each other. Patients relate better to each other than to their doctor and this type of platform has lead patients to direct quality-of-life improvements and increased confidence in dealing with diseases. Because of the community, patients have more success in choosing the right doctor, health care and medication.

The platform does not work for any disease. Currently, they are interested in creating a General Platform in response to the widespread requests for more than 1,000 diseases that they do not cover.

Physicians believe that a platform such as PLM offers a strong support system and provides valuable resources for patients to learn more about their diseases. Because

of this, patients allow doctors to better manage their time during office visits. But, physicians also recognize downsides to this type of platform. Doctors believe in scientific data and not hearsay information. Since they have no way to validate user data and understand that no one case is exactly the same they cannot use the information as an immediate cure for any patient. Doctors are also concerned about partial data for a patient's medical history that could potentially harm a patient for following online medical advice.

2. Evaluate the GP: YES, how does it ensure that it is as successful? Evaluate the GP: NO, how will PLM grow? Should PLM launch GP?

To ensure that the General Platform is successful, Patients Like Me must meet latent demand, increase enrollment on the site, and enhance commercial opportunities. PLM must prepare the structured new community with predetermined categories and format the communities for diseases already requested. By meeting the demand of these 1,000 requests they will most likely see a quick rise in acquired patients. By continuing to increase enrollment on the site their marketing costs to acquire more patients eventually will decrease because of earned media through word of mouth. Finally, by enhancing commercial opportunities through patient management, market research and medical research, they can continue to gain more revenue. By creating more opportunities for revenue they can better facilitate the communities with new and improved strategies to best help the patients. PLM must continue to uniquely brand itself against competitors that already have created similar communities and ensure that the customer experience will not be affected for those already part of the site.

If PLM is to grow without a GP it must continue to add other niche communities

as it has done in the past. By providing the service to more people with other diseases they will have a larger consumer base. Although this is not fitting for all 1,000 already requested diseases, they may continue to provide a unique service without placing themselves in a challenging environment against competitors. In addition, PLM should continue focusing its efforts in market and medical research while also adding more patient management options. By adding health insurers to their pool of revenue they can continue to support the site and more slowly add additional communities.

PLM should launch the GP. By providing an already demanded product with a secure brand they will more easily acquire new customers. This type of site seems to only get better through a larger community. Although there may be some smaller communities, the patients will most likely stay engaged because they are still receiving the same service, just on a larger scale. I also believe that the GP helps PLM create an even more unique niche by offering co-morbidity communities. They will be able to further their medical research by seeking new information in these communities. They will be able to add on more pharmaceutical companies and better respond to the questions proposed by health insurers.

3. What is the “Value to the Patients”? Look at Multiple Sclerosis (MS): What value did MS patients get from the PLM original site that they couldn’t get elsewhere? What social/emotional benefits? What informational/medical benefits? Now consider Type II Diabetes. What value will TIID get from GP? How can diseases be classified so that PLM can decide where the most “Value to the People” can be provided?

PLM offers “Value to the Patients” because of its information-sharing of health stories leading to collective wisdom that yields far better clinical insights than what a patient would learn from a doctor visit. PLM has given patients support to have hope and prompts them to try different techniques in dealing with their disease. PLM is different

from other social media health companies because of the depth of its data collected. What a patient may learn by using summary reports on PLM may lead them to starting a conversation with their physician and find better treatments faster. The people who use PLM are mostly critics and conversationalists because they update their communities with their health status and contribute to forums with personal reviews with doctors, drugs and more.

For example, MS Patients can network with each other and offer emotional stability and unique advice. This feature cannot be found with the multiple doctors a MS patient sees. PLM offers advice for managing prescription side effects from people who have real-life experiences. They can easily get a summary report about drugs and learn about the typical dosage or why a patient stopped taking a drug. Through a connected community and real-world knowledge, a MS patient may have an easier time dealing with a difficult disease and may decrease their personal insurance costs because of better health decisions.

In addition, Type II Diabetes patients may gain value from the evolving General Platform in other ways. For example, TIID patients may choose the right drug earlier on in treatment and decrease how much they eventually spend on drugs. Also, through the GP, a patient may discover similar people with co-morbidities. Many TIID patients also suffer from heart disease yet the information on dealing with these two diseases at the same time may be severely limited in other formats.

Diseases can be classified in order to provide the most "Value to the People" by categorizing the many diseases into categories. These categories would be: chronic illness, mental illness, infections, one-time medical issues and pregnancy-related issues.

In addition, many diseases are measured in the same metrics or use the same medications for treatment, and have high co-morbidity rates. By analyzing and understanding these features of the many different diseases, consumers of PLM will be able to contribute in the best way for all members to find useful information.

4. What is the current “Value to Brand (PLM)”? What is the business model? What impact will the GP have on future revenue stream?

The current “Value to Brand” for PLM is the ability to crowd-source with patient health data in order to find research breakthroughs. When patients provide otherwise private medical data, research is sped up and better treatments are found in record time. In addition, there is potential to detect treatment-related adverse events and signals of associated side effects early on.

The current business model of PLM makes money through selling patient information in a de-identified and aggregated format to its partners such as pharmaceutical companies, health plan providers, non-profit organizations and universities. PLM does not charge its members and does not offer advertising on the site. The majority of the revenue is made by selling information to the pharmaceutical companies in outcome studies and marketing research services. PLM also recruits for clinical research trials.

The GP will impact future revenue stream because the new customer acquisition expenses may increase. With their established communities they spend no money to acquire members and only \$5-\$20 for other less established communities. With the GP, their cost may rise to close to \$40. This is how much it cost them to create a new community in the past. In addition, the GP will allow PLM to expand its revenue model to new pharmaceutical clients for the diseases they will eventually cover.

5. What is a “platform”? If PLM is going to enter the Patient Management business, does engagement and number of members matter? Market research business? Medical research business? Why/Why not?

A “platform” is a resource for a consumer to connect with similar people, engage with them on a variety of topics and feel better-informed using each other to learn.

Patient management offers an opportunity for PLM because the patients’ health depends on the drugs and the non-medical and social factors. Because of this, the number of members and engagement matters. The greater number of patients on PLM leads to a better community to meet the social needs of a support system and for PLM to be a success. When patients are more engaged they will offer the side effects and other experiences they are having with certain drugs. If PLM could show that engagement with its site leads to better patient compliance with the treatments, it can motivate pharmaceutical companies and insurers to pay more for the site to stay active because it will reduce the insurance costs of the members.

If they enter the Market Research business, engagement and the number of members, matters. Market research services account for 40% of their current revenue. PLM helps pharmaceutical companies track awareness, usage, and perception of their drugs. If PLM does not have a large number of patients that are actively engaged in sharing this information, they cannot sell it to the companies.

If they enter the Medical Research business, engagement and the number of members, matters. PLM makes over 50% of their current revenue from outcome studies that help clients understand real-world safety and efficacy of the drugs. PLM has also had much success through their crowdsourcing methods that lead to research breakthroughs. They are able to easily share results right away and save millions of research dollars with

their grassroots, patient-driven trials. Without a large number of members or engaged members, they would not be able to crowd source the information efficiently enough to lead to research results.

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