

“Omnichannel”: it’s time to move on from just pairing tactics with channels

Top six factors to consider when delivering omnichannel strategy and marketing

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The buzz word “omnichannel”, some love it, some hate it, but really when you strip it back, isn’t it just connected communications? Some people are daunted, others frustrated – either by the apparent desert of insight or by one’s own organizational infrastructure unable to cope with the unstoppable march of technological progress.

KISS (keep it simple, stupid), while patronizing, is a useful reminder to us all; however, too frequently, the solution to the omnichannel planning effort is matching a laundry list of tactics with channels we believe our audiences regularly use.

Having worked with many healthcare organizations to evolve their approach to digital communications, we have discovered some consistent insights that shine through. Here are the six top factors we believe pharmaceutical and biomedical organizations should consider when delivering omnichannel strategy and marketing:

1. Beware of your bias

It is important to spend time to fully develop an in-depth understanding of your intended target audience (including their current attitudes and behaviors, how and when and in what format they prefer to receive information). Too often audience research is not undertaken at all, and the team’s own assumptions and biases end up replacing real customer insights.

2. Remember to work smart, not hard

It is the classic 80:20 rule, where 80% of the engagement will come through 20% of the work. Omnichannel does not mean you have to do something with every channel. It means targeting the right communications, to the right audience through the channel likely to have the most impact. There is no need to be hugely diverse with tactics and risk overloading healthcare professionals at too many touchpoints. Let’s avoid duplicated efforts, do less and make sure your targeted messages are consistent and crystal clear.

3. It pays to pay

To achieve increased engagement, recognize that organic is ambitious and will yield limited engagement, and that there is a need for paid targeted marketing or outreach. Too often, media budgets are deemed “nice-to-haves”.

4. Measure it to manage it

Do not be afraid to fully examine the metrics and learn where spending marketing budgets are, and are not, working. Basing marketing on assumptions is not enough; you need the real-time performance evidence to move the needle – as long as you are ready to change your favorite tactics if they are not performing!

5. Real data lead to smarter decisions

Stick with it, stay on course, and avoid being reactive, as healthcare professionals do not change their behavior quickly. Capture real-world data, in real time, and not just from the experts, so you can adapt and refine your communication efforts and spend. Real-world data can inform programs that will resonate with your audience and allow true strategic decision-making.

6. Get the team onboard

Get alignment or do not bother. Ensure the whole team understands the process diagram via internal comms and education. Organizations need to bring all team members along the journey too and understand what is going to excite them to deploy the plan. (This is particularly true of IT/Systems teams, who are frequently informed, rather than consulted.)

So, omnichannel marketing should be easy now, right? It is no illusion that there is a profound amount of thinking and work that goes into designing meaningful content and building a measurement framework, but without grounding the marketing strategies with solid customer insights, you cannot expect behavior to change or a desired action. Ask yourself, do you know how long a video should be for a knowledge-hungry, time-poor healthcare professional? And where and when they are likely to watch it? Data and information are key.

Here to help

If you want to further explore the themes in this piece or have a marketing challenge you want to discuss, please get in touch.



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