

STUDY ON DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES AT THE PHARMACEUTICAL SECTOR

Hasan Almsalla¹, Dr. Umesh Chandra²

¹MBA Student, Jain (Deemed -to -be) University, Bangalore.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, Jain (Deemed -to -be) University, Bangalore.

Email: ¹hasan.alsalla@outlook.com, ²c.umesh@jainuniversity.ac.in

Abstract—The current paper is designed to explore the high influence of digital marketing on the pharmaceutical sector and how people could cope with such developments. The industry works under intense regulation, making it essential that your pharmaceutical marketing strategies along with advertising campaigns, comply with the rules and regulations of the industry. The new technologies are already helping the companies in the race of reaching more customers, and numerous corporations around the world are starting to utilize social media accounts and take advantage of its viral spread all over the globe. Pharmaceutical digital marketing, however, offers vast opportunities for all companies to promote their brands and products to the right audience, from physicians to patients. Digital marketing is a developmental stage in the pharmaceutical industry in the sense that pharmaceutical companies are using technology-based programs to assist patients to learn more about their conditions and to help them monitor their health. It may also be useful to provide the physicians with an insight into the health of the patient and the possible side effects of any product. For years, pharmaceutical industries have been trying to keep up with the fast pace of technology. Yet, pharmaceutical industries are still unclear as to how new digital technologies will have an impact on drug development and commercialization.

Keywords—Digital Marketing, Drug Development, Pharmaceutical Sector, Social Media Accounts, Strategies, Techniques.

INTRODUCTION

The future of the pharmaceutical industry is being sparkling and shining especially with the existence of technologies that lead to more innovation in this particular sector and how adaptable it is. The new technologies are already helping the companies in the race of reaching more customers. Several companies are starting to utilize social media accounts and take advantage of its viral spread all over the globe to build awareness, create interaction to stay engage with the patient, gather useful data, and help improve brand acceptance and make their image more attractive and social.

It is difficult to lead pharmaceutical marketing initiatives and to be a market leader is a significant challenge, especially given the industry's rules and regulations. The pharmaceutical industry operates under strict rules and regulations, Pharmaceutical digital marketing, on the other hand, provides immense capacity for healthcare organizations to promote their brand and products to the right audience, ranging from companies to doctors to patients. They can build a competitive and legal pharma marketing strategy by utilizing multiple channels and techniques. There are five pharmaceutical digital marketing channels to improve marketing for pharmaceutical products and services.

1. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Pharmaceutical companies tend to build their websites for information, interaction, transaction, feedback, trust, and credibility. SEO is a fundamental part of digital marketing for increasing the quality and quantity of traffic of the website, so most pharmaceutical websites make sure to be in a high rank of the search engine or on the top 10 of the search engine results. So to allow people, doctors, and users who are looking for specific data about a particular product or service to catch the right data, search engines need help to figure out which URLs are more trustworthy to create ranking by using referrals from others is a good sign, title tags and meta descriptions, keyword-rich URL provides search engines with more descriptive information about the content, Images, videos all help to rank well in search engines.

2. Content Marketing

The practice of creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain the audience. Content can be anything like documents, pictures, videos, and other types. In the pharma sector, industries utilize a variety of specialist data, such as Material Safety Data Sheet MSDS files, customer instructions, and healthcare professional booklet on how to prescribe brand items. Those variants of data are closely interrelated to pharma manufacturing and represent good content in the pharmaceutical Internet marketing strategies. In addition to the listed above sorts of data, corporations may utilize their webpage to release their specific content.

Blogs are one of the famous strategies or types of content marketing, it is like writing about industry events. Publications, another kind of data, keep the audience updated about the latest innovations and researchers, and this kind will help identify to use as many as possible of the major keywords that is in the highest rank on a search engine so it guarantees the website will be always in the first page.

3. Online Reputation Management

The act of developing pharmacists' online brand blog by effecting or posting significant online data is known as reputation management. Search saturation, on the other hand, is a popular and effective method of reputation management. Detecting a sign that gives poor outcomes about pharmaceutical trademark, developing new data based on a search term, and posting it online is what search saturation entails. Once users look for those terms, they will only come across the good information that has been published, whereas the unfavorable information will be moved to the lower part of the very first page. Pharma companies face numerous public criticisms, particularly from niche subgroups such as anti-vaxxers, especially in our current time along with the issues people are facing such as Covid-19 vaccination, the rumors that are being passed around it and the followers of new-age medicine. However, those anti-vaxxers lead many counters campaigns on social media, the thing that should make pharmaceutical companies and the institutes that produced the vaccine use digital marketing as a means to build more trust among consumers. That means pharmaceutical companies will have to improve their digital brand identity. On the other hand, campaign groups level the competition in search engine results by posting reliable, detailed information that informs the masses about the company and its goods and services. Furthermore, this pharmaceutical marketing strategy can benefit distributors as well. Eventually, healthcare professionals will be able to control search results for a search item, ensuring that consumers receive the data directly from the original site.

4. Social Media Marketing

Digital marketing is a way of approaching and connecting with customers and item users via Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other social media channels. This way is bridging the data and emotional barriers that naturally exist between the company and the consumers. Most businesses in different firms make use of media marketing to promote their goods as well. However, as a medical company, unable to do so freely. Instead, pharmaceutical companies can use social media to promote the latest findings and recent studies or research, future products, their superior staff, and other things, but not to make money, only to make people feel more at ease with the products. It is critical for medical professionals to be concise and to use multimedia when posting on social media as part of their pharma industry's marketing plan. Pictures work well especially on platforms like LinkedIn or Facebook, and videos operate notably well too on YouTube.

5. Email Marketing

Email marketing is one pillar of digital marketing that increases brand awareness, builds a creative engagement environment and helps to personalize the subject and target customers more.

This strategy will help pharmaceutical industries to segment their groups and specify a unique way of communication with them. For example, sending an infographic mail to the cardiologists telling them about the new innovation or a new drug that is related to their field of interest, and seeking their responses and valuable feedback. So, these traits are making email marketing the key component strategy in digital marketing where healthcare professionals must interact, engage, and evaluate too.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sarma Ranganathan et al., (2016) stated that pharmaceutical companies operate in a regulated environment that places restrictions on the nature of their promotional and marketing activities. Thus, the majority of pharmaceutical promotional initiatives consist of Below-the-Line (BTL) activities with the aim of engaging the customer segment of healthcare professionals with positive brand experience. Pharmaceutical companies around the world are experimenting with the digital medium to capture their attention, to create unique brand commitments and watch brand equity with healthcare

professionals. A significant number of publications have documented and demonstrated the increased interest and usefulness of digital marketing in the global promotion of pharmaceuticals; however, data on the readiness and attitudes of pharmaceutical marketing professionals in India to adopt digital marketing tools are rather scarce. With the rise of interactive communications and digital connectivity, various challenges have arisen for advertising and marketing practice and theory. According to Kozinets et al. (2010), contrary to conventional media, the nature of digital media is communal, participatory, and interactive, which warrants increasingly vibrant advertising content and new forms of communication practice. In addition to affecting advertising in terms of measurement, investment, planning and strategy, according to Rokka (2013), the proliferation of digital media in pharmaceuticals has a broad impact on overall branding and marketing as it requires the search for new ways for marketers to reach and engage their customers further. These reasons make it crucial to recognize the effective and efficient integration of digital media and marketing with another form of communication within the industry. A significant number of publications have documented and documented the increased interest and usefulness of digital marketing in the global promotion of pharmaceuticals; however, data on the readiness and attitudes of pharmaceutical marketing professionals in India to adopt digital marketing tools are rather scarce.

According to Reibstein et al. (2009), the cooperation between managers and scholars has made some of the best contributions to the study of new theories in use, which, in addition to succeeding in practical application, is also academically rigorous. However, Reibstein also identifies the need for collaborative work between industry and academia. Crush (2011) acknowledges the presence of a strong trade comment that affirms training needs, with a focus on the 'digital skills gap' within the marketing field. Reibstein et al., please (2009), argues that marketing has been in high demand for research so that existing issues and challenges in the field can be discussed along with the considerations of practitioners; while Valos et al. (2010) emphasizes its need to address skills shortages. Digitization has led to several changes in the field. For example, Brynjolfsson and Schrage (2009) contend that it is rather easier for marketers to use Facebook to experiment with new ideas and gather rapid feedback in larger numbers compared to focus groups; while Mulhern (2009) contends that it is a better option than other traditional research approaches. Wymbys (2011) asserts that it took academia relatively longer to implement technological advancements and business skills into the curriculum. To address these skills and training gaps, it is advised that the courses provided by professional marketing bodies be attended.

According to Micu et al., (2011) marketing research is mainly performed to address 80 percent of current issues; however, in the future, technology and people will have been formed by the most advanced companies According to Valos et al. (2010), the majority of decisions will be based on statistical methodologies and data-driven extrapolations rather than gut-feel, opinion, and conjecture.

Bharskar & Siddheshwar, (2020) some companies are very creative in terms of technical innovation, but the lack of good case studies on digitization in the pharmaceutical industry limits their use. The pharmaceutical industry is not well suited to online marketing. The pharmaceutical sector's conservative behavior, combined with unpredictable legislation, held it back as advertising agencies hurried online in banking, consulting services, production, and business services. Nonetheless, online professional and patient communities have developed to incorporate patients' increasing use of the internet, social media, and online information by medical practitioners, key opinion leaders (KOL), and the broader medical community, prompting pharmaceutical companies to invest in and test digital marketing approaches in accordance with industry guidelines. Surprisingly, this is one of the most effective social media marketing strategies for pharmaceutical companies looking to improve their brand image. However, in the pharmaceutical industry, digital marketing is still in its early stages. Pharmaceutical companies are utilizing technology-based services to assist patients in learning more about their conditions and monitoring their health. It may also be useful to provide physicians with information about the patient's health and any side effects from any particular product. These digital platforms also make it easier for doctors to communicate with patients about specific health conditions. Digital marketing has evidently simplified advertising, campaign institution, and mass reach at low cost and efficient methodologies. Medical pharmaceuticals are used all over the world. In developing countries, infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, typhoid, and others are common. Pharmaceutical companies are working hard to keep up with the changes brought about by digital technology. The use of digital marketing in this field has allowed companies to take a different approach to targeting customers, doctors, and caregivers in recent years.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aims are:

- 1- To comprehend the proper usage of digital marketing in the pharma industry

2- To highlight the techniques that tend to improve the marketing strategies for pharmaceutical goods.

DATA COLLECTION

For this research, secondary data was collected from online journals, research papers and websites.

FINDINGS

Even though social media is emphasizing the impact of consumer-to-consumer conversation methods, the methods for shaping those discussions have yet to be formulated. Another point of view demonstrates that there are numerous websites, that are legally recognized and provide ease, privacy, and safety measures for purchasing medications. However, there are several "fake websites" in this race that sell potentially dangerous drugs that have not been proven safe or effective. Those fake sites appear professional and valid, but they are actually illegal. Another cause for concern is purchasing medication from fake websites, such as those that sell prescription drugs without requiring valid prescriptions and/or do not upload contact details.

Furthermore, Social media has penetrated almost every aspect of a person's digital life. Patients today use social media as a primary source of information and healthcare research. As a result, it is critical, for pharmaceutical companies to be present on social media to provide consumers with accurate data. To understand how social media can help patients, it is necessary to first understand what motivates people to be using social media as a means of information. Social media allows people to interact with one another by exchanging and creating information. It is the ideal channel through which pharmaceutical companies can interact with customers, patients, and healthcare professionals. According to current FDA regulations, pharmaceutical companies are unable to easily participate in a conversation in order to provide accurate and balanced information. Regulations require brands to provide concise facts on the benefits and risks associated with conditions and products in a single social post.

On the other hand, online pharmacy is a supplier of prescription medications over the Internet, and the term includes both legitimate and illegitimate pharmacies. The sale of medications outside of a traditional retail pharmacy is not a new phenomenon. It has only recently flourished in this Internet age. The debate over the advantages and disadvantages of direct-to-consumer advertising has been going on worldwide. Direct-to-Consumer (DTC) advertising is critical to the success of any business. DTC advertising, on the other hand, has always been a challenge for pharmaceutical and medical device companies. Any marketing professional in either of these industries will acknowledge that there is a natural reluctance to advertise drugs and medical devices to end-users. Advertisements on Internet websites, search engine marketing, social networking sites, and mobile phones are also included in DTCA. YouTube provides a platform for consumers to voice their opinions about brands and products.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bharskar & Siddheshwar, 2020; Lakshmi & Sudha, 2017; Parekh et al., 2016; Sarma Ranganathan et al., 2016) Bharskar, G. R., & Siddheshwar, S. (2020). Digital Marketing in Pharmaceutical Sector. *International Journal of Pharmaceutical Science and Health Care*, 2(10), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.26808/rs.ph.i10v2.01>
- Lakshmi, P. V., & Sudha, T. G. R. (2017). Mapping of Online Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices: Review of Literature. *International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature*, 5(11), 15–26. <http://globalresearchonline.net/journalcontents/v32-1/20.pdf>.
- Parekh, D., Kapupara, P., & Shah, K. (2016). Digital pharmaceutical marketing: A review. *Research Journal of Pharmacy and Technology*, 9(1), 108–112. <https://doi.org/10.5958/0974-360X.2016.00017.2>
- Sarma Ranganathan, S., Bellani, V. C., & Smitha Sarma Ranganathan, A. (2016). Digital Marketing in the Indian Pharmaceutical Industry: A Study To Assess Views of Pharmaceutical Marketing Professionals in Using Digital Marketing As a Brand Promotional Lever. *World Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences*, 5(4), 2278–4357. <https://doi.org/10.20959/wjpps20164-6548>
- DigitalMarketing for Pharmaceutical Companies, URL: <https://www.webfx.com/industries/health/pharmaceutical/#:~:text=Pharmaceutical%20digital%20marketing%2C%20however%2C%20offers,and%20legal%20pharma%20marketing%20s%20strategy.>
- Pharmaceutical Marketing: The Internet impact, URL: <https://www.pharmaceuticalonline.com/doc/pharmaceutical-marketing-the-internet-impact-0001>

Study on Digital Marketing Strategies at the Pharmaceutical Sector

Technologies that will Impact the Pharmaceutical Companies in the Near Future, URL:
<https://www.insightssuccess.in/technologies-that-will-impact-the-pharmaceutical-companies-future/#:~:text=Pharmaceutical%20industries%20are%20still%20unclear,%2C%20workforce%2C%20and%20cyber%20security> in-the-near

Digitalmarketing for the Pharma and Healthcare sector
<https://www.smartinsights.com/tag/digital-marketing-for-pharma-sector/>

Email Marketing Strategies for the Pharmaceutical Industry <https://www.amuratech.com/blog/email-marketing-strategies-for-pharmaceutical-industry#:~:text=The%20pharmaceutical%20email%20marketing%20makes,doctor%20and%20demonstrate%20the%20products.>
