



IMPIRICUS

HCP ENGAGEMENT **WHITE PAPER**

HCP/Pharmaceutical Engagement: Is SMS Messaging the New Backbone?

Exploring the Current State and Potential of Direct Messaging

This white paper will describe the changes in Health Care Professionals engagement needs and preferences with external data portraying the shift in communication channels.

Dissecting the HCP Engagement Revolution of the Last Several Years

The COVID pandemic forced the world to look into the eyes of challenge, mortality, and change. However, the remnants are not all negative. There are innovations and differences that were born through this global experience. Two differences that stand out above the rest, are the way in which we communicate and work. We no longer need to be in the same location to collaborate. In fact, the borders between states, countries, and continents are slowly fading; creating a planet in which we can seamlessly connect with family, friends, colleagues, and customers. One industry in which this change shines bright is healthcare. The emerging digital innovation, new technologies, medical education, and virtual communications are likely to stay and advance further. (Furtner et al., 2021)

According to an article in the National Library of Medicine, the healthcare industry has seen the adoption of digital solutions, such as telemedicine, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, connected healthcare devices, natural language processing, and virtual learning, which all lead to a digital system that is more resilient to future challenges. All this advancement took place in an industry that heavily relied upon face-to-face and sales resource-orientated interactions pre-pandemic. (Furtner et al., 2021)

Evolution of HCP Engagement Incites A Revolution of Marketing Strategy

The healthcare professional/pharmaceutical relationship was a strictly face-to-face interaction that built a multi billion-dollar industry. Today, the once valuable in-person meeting has become digital as a result of COVID induced transformation. New drugs are being launched virtually using video, email, and SMS texting. (Goldberg, 2022) Reps no longer drop off samples but send them over after having digital-based dealings with the HCP. The rep, once solely a salesperson, has morphed into a digital marketing expert in order to keep the physicians' needs met as well as grab their attention and maintain interest in both the products being sold and the information they are conveying.

So, the question becomes

What is the best form of digital communication that pharmaceutical companies must use in order for doctors to get the necessary information in the wake of a COVID-affected reality?

The Answer Lies Within the Numbers

SMS messaging via mobile device is an extremely effective way to reach a target audience. According to Pew Research, 92% of American adults are using smartphones and most of them are spending an increasing amount of time on them. Google's Micro-moments report also uncovers some interesting details about people's mobile device interaction:

68%

Within 15 Minutes

Of waking up, phone users check their device

150

Times/Day

Users check their phones

87%

At Their Side

Have their smartphone at their side day and night

177

Minutes Spent

On mobile phones per day (est 3hours), which is one-fifth of total waking hours*

Ways SMS Messaging Can Strengthen the Healthcare Professional/Pharmaceutical Interaction:

- Engage with time-starved doctors by quickly and efficiently providing them with the information they are seeking (for example journals and RWE).
- Send automatized SMS notifications to a segmented list of providers (for example specialists most receptive to certain medications or treatments).
- Include easy-to-use Link Shorteners to seamlessly route HCPs to destination with a single click — circumventing the abandonment of websites that can be tricky to navigate.
- Automate scheduled reminders, in advance, for remote meetings or slide presentations.
- Enhanced open rates: SMS is 5X more effective than email, with 98% open rates vs email's 18%.
- Follow up on important email campaigns with an SMS text alert to expedite awareness. The average response time for SMS is 90 seconds while emails from a known source are 90 minutes.
- Raise awareness and stir excitement for product launches with a variety of promotional SMS campaigns.

(Goldberg, September 2022)

Engagement Shifted Out of Necessity. Now, Engagement Channels Are a Preference

COVID-19 also changed the physician's downtime. Between increasing illness and decreasing medical workers, the physicians that are practicing pack in a hectic day filled with a multitude of tasks and various hats they must wear. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, half a million healthcare workers have left their jobs since February 2020. (BLS, August 2022)

Since this shift in numbers, 82% valued texting over all other modes of communication. The reason for this is simple, text messaging saves them time and eliminates unnecessary visits. And that's why sales teams and HCPs both love this new mode of communication. (Brue, August 2021) On average, it takes only four seconds to send a text message. In addition, the response rate for texts is 209 percent higher than it is for phone calls, and most text messages are read within 15 minutes. (Weiner, April 2021)

Pre-COVID face-to-face interactions between HCPs and pharmaceutical companies were responsible for building a multi-billion dollar industry, but it's safe to say that technology will be responsible for a portion of post-COVID growth. A valuable part of that technology is SMS messaging, which has proven its worth by creating new opportunities for quick and efficient human interaction. In a world where time is gone forever once spent, humans are hungry for more. It is this hunger that will lead them toward fast, reliable communication solutions. So, at the end of the day, there will be a portion of time left for themselves.

Reach out to Impiricus at info@Impiricus.com to learn about the future of HCP Engagement

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