

How Healthcare Reform Will Change Your Patient

Featuring:

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JOSH: Hello and welcome to another episode of the Draftfcb Podcast series. My name is Joshua Dysart. I'm a Manager on the Corporate Communications Team here at the agency. And today I'm joined by Kurt Zoller, head of Draftfcb Chicago's Consumer Healthcare Team. Good morning Kurt!

JOSH: Well I wanted to sit down with you today and discuss kind of a hot button issue and consumer healthcare I'm sure you've been following it, but so has everyone else. The idea of healthcare reform. How will this really affect communicators you know this idea of healthcare reform?

KURT: Sure. It's going to affect big time. The reason being is that as obviously healthcare reform puts more of the pressure I think on the patient and people to understand what their choices are moving forward, I do think that you know the communication will vary. Meaning right now we're seeing a lot of DTC advertising on TV. What will evolve and change is obviously we'll see a transition and a move more toward the digital space. Right now social you know marketing is an area that's been a very touchy area because of the concerns of not being able to control the conversation. And really what it comes down to with communication is managing the conversation between the doctor and the patient. And that's going to be something I think that's going to be amplified even greater as we move forward with regards to healthcare reform.

JOSH: Do you see a lot more customization with healthcare reform in terms of if patients, if I have a choice about what I'm going to, which practitioner I'm going to go see, are you as a marketer going to reach out to me in a customized way through whatever channel that is?

KURT: Absolutely. I mean what's happening is that a lot of the customization is happening because people are empowering themselves. When you think about this is affecting their every day costs of living. And so they want to know more about this. And so whether it's diabetes, whether it's you know cardio, whether it's dealing with cancer. And so you're finding patients becoming more empowered and how that's happening is they're going to the websites. They are looking at you know the general search like Web MD to understand the general information. And as they get more general information, they're going to also understand from the pharma sites specifics ways to potentially solve or treat their needs.

What they then do is then go into the doctor and talk to the doctor. So the more targeted we can get because let's say you suffer from diabetes. Your needs, Josh would be very different than my needs. And so you want to make sure that we speak in a relevant way, no different than you know we've always said you know one to one communication is the most powerful impactful way. And so being relevant to your needs and being relevant to my needs, you can customize that on the digital sites.

You can also customize it with CRM programs. And that's going to be, I think something that as people opt in to find more information you're going to see much more of a flow toward understanding you know marketer, insurance company, pharma company, how are you going to satisfy you know my needs right now.

JOSH: I know that the pharma sector in terms of advertising is highly regulated. There are a lot of concerns that go into creating a campaign behind a product launch that could take several years. How will that customization impact the regulation? Do you see more regulation in the works or do you see the current level as where it'll probably stand?

KURT: You know I think the current level will probably stay in place. I mean the whole idea that the government and I think pharma is in the same space is fair and balanced copy. So for all the benefits you're telling you know a patient or a consumer about, you also have to tell them you know the potential side effects. And that's important to understand because the last thing anybody wants is knowing that they're going to enjoy whatever the benefits are from taking the medication. But if they start suffering from side affects that's something

that they should be aware of. And that's obviously something that the side effects are a discussion that they should bring back to the doctor and talk to the doctor about.

So I think the way they're going to talk about side effects will continue to evolve and it's an area that actually DD Mack has asked the pharma industry to participate in. That if we have certain studies that demonstrate that side effects are more meaningful in the way you present them, please share that with DD Mack because we want the same thing which is let's make sure we understand all the information before we start getting on a medication.

JOSH: Do you think that patients' access to knowledge or access to information, sometimes in certain instances incorrect information, do you think that's a challenge that more personalized communication will help overcome? Or do you think that those problems will still persist?

KURT: You know I think that the accessibility information is really where it's going to not only to information but also to care, is going to explode. So when you look at the whole landscape of what's currently going on with retail clinics for example. In the hospitals and the accessibility you know I'll give you a good example. My wife you know last winter our child had an ear infection on a Friday night. There's no way you can go see the doctor over the weekend. So you have to wait until Monday. But she felt if we could you know obviously identify what the issue is, hopefully get the you know if it is a vaccine that is available that could help the ear infection, that by Monday obviously you know my daughter's back in school. And I think the retail clinics are providing the accessibility that has been limited in the past. And so again that you know care of service is one area of accessibility.

Another area of accessibility is I think will continue obviously being the TV and obviously the digital space because while up on Capitol Hill you get people like you know Henry Waxman saying that DTC is causing people to get you know, ask their doctors for prescriptions that they don't need. The fact is that that's really sending an insult frankly I think to the doctor industry which is saying they know what a patient will need. They're not being forced or handcuffed because of some DTC.

So again awareness as we all know is the critical juncture here to hopefully if I'm not feeling well whether it's physically, emotionally I can go talk to my doctor about it and have the doctor assess what are my needs and then move forward. So I think again you know accessibility by treatment or areas as well as by information will continue to expand and be customized.

JOSH: Do you see that as the biggest opportunity then moving forward for DTC advertising and the space?

KURT: Absolutely. You know I think when you look at for example, like adherence. You know adherence is a huge issue in our country. There's a lot of people that are on life-saving medication that don't take them because of whatever emotional reasons. And it's a big impact on the country financially it's billions of dollars. And I think again through no different you know, you know in the consumer packaged goods world, we talk about obviously awareness and then retention you want a retention message so that you people are being reminded about to make sure that they take their medication. I think it's going to be more customized where you get people calling to remind people. Because we found out in a study that we did with an adherence expert at the University of Colorado that the human voice is the number one thing to keep people on the medication. So the more people can get a call saying hey did you take your medication this week, the more adherence helps and obviously reduces the cost with regards to you know what's currently going on.

JOSH: So Kurt, in the next few years I guess with healthcare reform still a big issue, where do you see that potentially going? And then I'll follow that up with I guess the question of if healthcare reform doesn't happen conversely, do you still think the CRM and digital, do you think there's an opportunity for customization really?

KURT: Absolutely. You know I think where it's headed right now, and pharma's also taking a lead on this is that many of the top pharmaceutical companies have delayed doing any kind of DTC advertising for the first six months just so that the doctors can become aware of the medication. And understand again what are the benefits and what are the side effects. You know if, you know Capitol Hill gets their ways, I do believe that DTC will be delayed

further probably about two years, which again what happens is as, where you have advertising going out and connecting with people, you'll probably have more people opt in. Meaning they'll probably find out about whatever their disease state is. They'll go online, they'll opt in for more information. So it leads to more CRM programs. And these CRM programs will be customized. Because the different ways to address my customs or concerns in the path to purchase will be needed with regards to the CRM effort. So that's one.

With regards to your second question regarding what happens if healthcare doesn't happen? You know I think we'll continue seeing the current state which is a very conflicted approach which is DTC and the numbers demonstrated truly help educate consumers. And an educated consumer as we all know is someone that can create a better conversation with a doctor. And that's truly what we're all about. We just want to make sure that as the patients go in and talk to the doctor, they're well informed. It helps actually the doctor because then he has a more, he doesn't have to explain as much because he understands that they've gone through the background. And this is I think one of the biggest evolutions that are going on because even in the medical schools, they're being taught more and more about not doctor knows all, but doctor as a partner. And that's really where the things are headed in the future.

That patients will come in educated, understood. The doctors will understand okay we're a team here, let's figure out how we can solve this. And I think the more that happens, the more the messaging is going to revolve around the conversation between doctor and patient.

JOSH: So I appreciate you joining us today.

KURT: Well thank you.

JOSH: Very much so. Like I said a hot button issue that we just kind of wanted to focus on where it's going to take communications.

KURT: Great. Thanks a lot Josh. Appreciate it. Take care .