

# Pharma and Online Communities - An...

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Rachel DeFriend 6 posts since

Jul 30, 2008

Does anyone have thoughts on or experience with creating online communities for pharma customers? I think there is such a need for people with conditions to connect to one another, but under a pharma name/sponsorship it leads down a narrow path with little freedom (thanks to the FDA and DDMAC) for user generated anything. Granted a lot of the regulation is to protect us as consumers, but hinders pharma co's from offering venues for us consumers to connect.

I'd love to hear any thoughts.

Thanks for letting me join the community!

rachel

Tags: pharma



ddmcd 8 posts since

Jun 25, 2008 **1. Re: Pharma and Online Communities - An obvious need, but how do we create something valuable with so much regulation?** Jul 30, 2008 1:54 PM

That's a tough one. Plenty of communities have emerged independently around diseases, conditions, even for independently reporting on adverse drug reactions, but you're pushing for direct involvement of the drug company. Here are a couple of ideas:

1. Tie community building to new drug development and testing. Incorporate mutual support and feedback into the mix of what is being tested -- and closely monitored -- in order to reinforce things like seeing that specific target groups take their medication correctly. Maybe this approach could be adapted for introduction of medical technology and therapeutic devices, not just drugs.
2. Build community around communities already related to patients -- caregivers, nurses, therapists. Emphasize lessons learned, tricks of the trade, mutual encouragement and support. Drug company rewards most original/helpful/adopted ideas that emerge from the group.
3. Target a group such as hospital pharmacists to aid in developing and sharing "best practices."

Just some ideas. Thoughts?

Dennis McDonald

<http://www.ddmcd.com>



[Az Sanders](#) 6 posts since

*Jul 30, 2008* **2. Re: Pharma and Online Communities - An obvious need, but how do we create something valuable with so much regulation?** Jul 30, 2008 4:46 PM

Now im curious by "Pharma customers" what do you mean exactly? John and Jane Doe who buy from pharماسists?



[danielrae](#) 22 posts since

*Jul 31, 2008* **3. Re: Pharma and Online Communities - An obvious need, but how do we create something valuable with so much regulation?** Jul 31, 2008 6:38 AM

An interesting one. We currently sell compliance/quality software and one of our largest markets is healthcare and life sciences, such as hospitals, blood banks, medical device manufacturers, pathology labs, pharmaceutical/drug manufacturers etc. Our software is designed to help companies in these markets to comply with FDA and other regulations (e.g. MHRA in the UK, EU guidelines, ISO standards, etc).

In terms of using communities, I've had a few customers from FDA regulated industries participate and haven't noticed anything different... perhaps the fact that there's not a lot of users from pharma companies that is the difference.



[mike crocker](#) 2,102 posts since

*Jun 12, 2008* **4. Re: Pharma and Online Communities - An obvious need, but how do we create something valuable with so much regulation?** Jul 31, 2008 9:25 AM

Hi,

There are some large global Pharma that have put in place knowledge collection and sharing in the discovery and development area. While it is not a community, there is a

potential for communities to add value attached to these. Having access to people and experts and being able to discuss the information will provide a big business value.

Mike



[Rachel DeFriend](#) 6 posts since

*Jul 30, 2008* **5. Re: Pharma and Online Communities - An obvious need, but how do we create something valuable with so much regulation?** Jul 31, 2008 11:40 AM

By "Pharma customers" I mean consumers who buy branded pharmaceutical drugs like the Lipitor's and Lunesta's of the drug world produced by companies like Merck, GSK and Pfizer. I believe pharmacists are like the Swiss - they must remain neutral when it comes to direct to consumer advertising/messaging.



[Rachel DeFriend](#) 6 posts since

*Jul 30, 2008* **6. Re: Pharma and Online Communities - An obvious need, but how do we create something valuable with so much regulation?** Jul 31, 2008 11:49 AM

Thanks for your ideas. It is a slippery one. We have taken the angle from the expert's opinion and it just didn't seem to resonate with the consumers/patients. And when sites like WebMD do it so well, it's hard to make a case for your little spin off.

But you might be on to something for behind the scenes, if you will, when the drug is being tested. See how those participants communicate to each other (if they allow that) and track their behavior through an online community. Since the drug will not have launched for the mass, the Pharma co would still be responsible to react to anything occurring in the test and hopefully turn around and apply what was captured for a better patient and user experience.

Rock on - thanks so much - any other ideas keep 'em coming!

rd



[Az Sanders](#) 6 posts since

*Jul 30, 2008* **7. Re: Pharma and Online Communities - An obvious need, but how do we create something valuable with so much regulation?** Jul 31, 2008 12:00 PM

While im still alittle hesitant on this one due to its subject (consumers are -rarely- truely qualified when it comes to medicinal drugs, doctor should always be ones first call if theres an undiagnosed problem).

Mike provided some good solid information there, i dont know what your -actually- trying to do (put customers more in touch with phrama companies so they can buy more drugs???), but if pharma companies have "put in place knowledge collection and sharing in the discovery and development area." with a decent amount of "legwork" it should be possible to take those seperate threads and plug them into a single "community".

Just remeber though.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wizard's\\_Rule#Wizard.27s\\_First\\_Rule](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wizard's_Rule#Wizard.27s_First_Rule) (People are stupid)

and

*"If it can be made someone will make it, if it is made someone will unmake it and/or someone will change it and/or someone will use it in ways its not intended to be used and/or someone will turn it into a "weapon"."*