



Social Media Overview for Life Sciences

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V. (BALA) BALASUBRAMANIAN
is the President and Co-Founder of Cabeus, a niche services and solutions provider in the areas of enterprise collaboration, content management and social media.



YVES GOULNIK
is a pharmaceutical marketer with extensive knowledge in digital tactics, mobile platforms, social media technologies and web development.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With Facebook being virtually the third largest nation in the world, there is exploding awareness and use of Social Media across all walks of life across the globe. While a number of consumer product companies are fully leveraging this new media to reach out to their customers, many companies in the Life Sciences sector, especially those dealing with prescription pharmaceuticals, are either at a loss or trying to figure out how best to leverage this media without exposing themselves to the risks that are associated with it. At the same time, there is a general belief that appropriate use of social media

can strengthen relationships with patients and providers, and build brand reputation, leading to better business outcomes.

An overview of Social Media, along with a systematic approach on how best to think about the various dimensions of Social Media as they pertain to the Life Sciences sector will be discussed. This article is a result of our own search to understand the overall landscape of Social Media and its impact on Life Sciences. We strongly believe that a comprehensive overview is required to start off any strategic discussions or initiatives around the use of Social Media in Life Sciences.

SOCIAL MEDIA OVERVIEW

Social Media and Social Networking refer to the building of content, relationships and communities based on common interests or sharing of ideas using a variety of online and interactive tools¹. These tools are based on Web 2.0 technologies and a lot of us are familiar with popular tools such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr as well as capabilities such as wikis, blogs, and discussion threads.

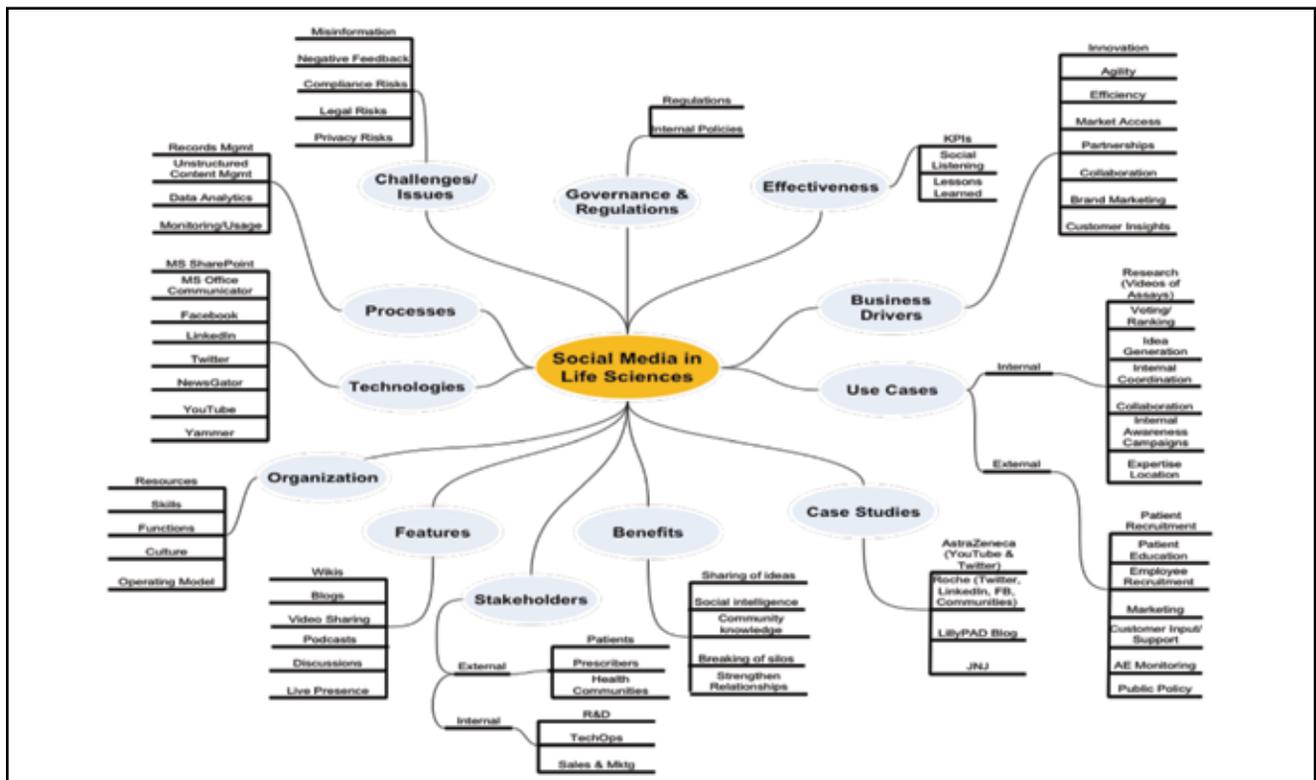
We have seen the tremendous uptake and exponential adoption of social media by companies in the consumer products business as opposed to regulated industries such as pharmaceuticals or life sciences, primarily due to

insufficient regulatory guidelines around their use. There are only a few pharmaceutical companies that are actively using some form of social media to engage the public, mostly for educational or customer awareness purposes and not for product promotions. Some of these include Johnson and Johnson (JNJ), Roche, AstraZeneca, Eli Lilly, GlaxoSmithKline, who use a range of tools such as simple blogs (LillyPad) to YouTube videos (AstraZeneca) to more complex product campaigns (JNJ consumer products).

In order to develop a comprehensive strategy around the potential use of social media, where do Life Sciences companies start? In order to

facilitate this discussion, we have developed a mind map to consider various dimensions such as the following:

- Business Drivers
- Stakeholders
- Governance and Regulations
- Use Cases
- Benefits
- Features
- People
- Processes
- Technologies
- Effectiveness
- Challenges and Issues
- Case Studies





We will briefly explore some of these major dimensions in the rest of this section. Note that this framework is preliminary and evolving and we will be revising it based on our own experiences and other best practices. However, we believe that for any business purpose use, these dimensions must be explored in detail in order to define the strategy and roadmaps for the enterprise.

BUSINESS DRIVERS

The foremost consideration would be to understand the primary business drivers on why the company needs to establish a social media presence. Drivers could be to further promote brand loyalty, to engage patients and customers to provide their insights, to promote collaboration with internal and external stakeholders and partners, or to acquire next-generation talent. These business drivers must be aligned with both the short-and long-term goals and objectives of the organization.

STAKEHOLDERS

Social Media has great potential for both internal and external stakeholders – internal stakeholders could be R&D business functions, HR, legal, regulatory, technical operations, commercialization, sales and marketing. External stakeholders could be patients, researchers, caregivers, healthcare professionals or health communities. Based on the business drivers, focus may be directed towards increasing innovation or efficiencies

within internal stakeholders or establishing and strengthening customer relationships.

GOVERNANCE AND REGULATIONS

The whole landscape around social media regulations is a green field, full of challenges and opportunities. For example, FDA's DDMAC has postponed issuing guidelines around the use of Social Media for Life Sciences several times over the past two years. The UK's Code

of Practice regulator, ABPI, has issued guidance on social media and other digital communications tools, stating that all digital communications fall under existing regulations². Many organizations are eager to move forward in order to exploit the tremendous potential of this media. Regardless of new regulations, Life Sciences companies still have to comply with existing product marketing and promotion guidelines, which include not promoting off-label use.

ROCHE SOCIAL MEDIA PRINCIPLES IN SHORT:

7 Rules for PERSONAL online activities *Speaking "about" Roche*

- Be conscious about mixing your personal and business lives.
- You are responsible for your actions.
- Follow the Roche Group Code of Conduct.
- Mind the global audience.
- Be careful if talking about Roche. Only share publicly available information.
- Be transparent about your affiliation with Roche and that opinions raised are your own.
- Be a "scout" for sentiment and critical issues.

7 Rules for PROFESSIONAL online activities *Speaking "on behalf of" Roche*

- Follow the Roche Group Code of Conduct and Communications Policy.
- Follow approval processes for publications and communication.
- Mind Copyrights and give credit to the owners.
- Use special care if talking about Roche products or financial data.
- Identify yourself as a representative of Roche.
- Monitor your relevant social media channels.
- Know and follow our Record Management Practices.

Some organizations have established internal guidelines around the use of social media, while acknowledging that this is an evolving area. One of the examples often cited around policies and guidelines is Roche's Social Media Principles³. Here we show an example set of principles, taken from Roche's Web site: Source: http://www.roche.com/social_media_guidelines.pdf

Similarly, AstraZeneca, as part of its white paper on social media in the pharmaceutical industry, has outlined five principles or rules of engagement⁶.

In addition to regulations, there needs to be strong internal governance – as powerful as the media may be, it can also enable the fast deterioration of the brand or market presence if the right controls are not in place or messages are not controlled.

BENEFITS

Social Media enables individuals to have an active dialog not only with the companies but also with other patients or customers, making them heard with equal voice as large businesses and institutions. The sharing of ideas enables the creation of communities which have like issues to be discussed across the globe. This, in turn, increases social intelligence or awareness of issues, which so far may be localized to certain small populations. The technologies

allow these interactions to take place across time and geographic boundaries, thereby creating opportunities that can be leveraged by businesses, to the extent that they do not antagonize basic principles of trust and openness, without overdoing control over content and/or messages.

Social Media plays a key role by introducing a notion of triangulation and trust, which are key components to garner solid engagement between companies and customers. Triangulation is the ability to reconcile various sources of information and enhance trust. For example, people may refer to 'official' product specifications such as package inserts from the manufacturer, then follow up with thorough scientific reviews from professional journals or websites which is subsequently cross-checked with experiences from friends or other individuals. Social media enables individuals to perform this cross-check and build trust. Similarly, in a conventional setting, companies build their customer base by paying for messages through TV commercials, print advertisements, etc. Using social media, companies can build their customer base by earning their trust through the creation of a community of sharing. These communities may become the platform for the emergence of independent Key Opinion

Influencers (similar to Key Opinion Leaders) who are sitting between the sponsors and patients or providers, potentially exerting strong influence through their posts/articles.

USE CASES

Use cases depend on business drivers and target stakeholders. With respect to external-facing use cases, social media campaigns can help increase customer awareness or educate customers about certain disease areas. For example, AstraZeneca has established a general awareness sites called AZ HealthConnections (<http://www.azhealthconnections.com/>). While this has not been tried, due to lack of regulations, another example could be patient recruitment for clinical trials as part of treatment of rare diseases. Some companies, such as Eli Lilly are actively using blogs to have a dialog with the general public about public health and policy issues. Another news article cites the use of Social Media by MO BIO labs to directly engage scientists in pharmaceutical companies about their products for nucleic acid isolation.⁷ There is a huge potential to recruit next generation workforce, who are increasingly living in the era of social media.

It is important to distinguish that unlike in the US where Direct-to-Consumer (DTC) advertising is





permitted, most other markets in the world do not permit this approach, regardless of channel. Social media opportunities include disease awareness campaigns, experience-sharing for patients with chronic conditions, centered around personal aspects of disease management, co-morbidities etc. Carefully planned social media campaigns help companies strengthen their brands and also help establish a continuous dialog with customers and gather insights.

Similarly, there are a number of use cases for internal use within the organization. While this has not been tried, social media, along with the ability to easily shoot videos can become a powerful tool for scientists to share best practices or procedures around innovative ways of setting up and conducting experiments or assays. Similarly, idea generation and voting/ranking tools can be used for internal efficiency and innovation campaigns, encouraging everyone to participate in the growth of the company. While companies such as Merck have implemented the concept of expertise location, it is still too early to measure the adoption rate or success of such initiatives. But, if the success of networks such as LinkedIn is any indication, similar efforts would yield great benefits within the walls of the organization as well – the key is to encourage sharing and change the culture towards one of openness.

While there are significant benefits with collaborative marketing and

social media, especially in the consumer products sector, life sciences organizations must tread the landscape carefully since they are subject to existing regulations about product marketing and promotions.

PEOPLE

It is important to focus on the people and organizational aspects as organizations gear towards social media. First, there needs to be greater collaboration and coordination across corporate communications, marketing, HR, legal and other functions while developing a social media strategy. Apart from building organizational constructs, the right resources need to be hired and training provided to establish a social media program. In addition, organizational change management programs need to be put in place to encourage and manage behavioral and cultural change.

PROCESSES

Key processes that need to be considered as part of the social media strategy include content and records management. While many organizations are struggling with records management for digital content such as email, documents, etc., social media adds a new dimension to the whole issue. Life Sciences companies should look into how other regulated industries deal with records management of social media interactions. Also, processes must be put in place for social listening and monitoring of

social media sites and channels. The processes should outline broad categories of social media channels available, their benefits, their potential risks along with mitigation strategies. In addition, appropriate standard operating procedures and work instructions must be defined to support any social media initiatives. Data analytics processes need to be defined and implemented in order to measure KPIs and metrics.

TECHNOLOGIES

Various tools and technologies are available for life sciences companies to establish Social Media presence. Many of companies have made significant investments into Microsoft SharePoint, Office and Communicator which together provide a rich array of Web 2.0 or social media capabilities. There are also add-on products, built on SharePoint, for crowd-sourcing, idea generation, voting and ranking. Facebook and Twitter are two popular technologies. Facebook also comes with application programming interfaces so applications can leverage social media features. Another capability that is emerging fast is Yammer which is an enterprise-class social networking platform that allows enterprise users to collaborate, communicate and share information, locate expertise and also connect with remote workers more easily than other means. Many companies have started using LinkedIn as a way to scout for and recruit talent. Platforms

such as NewsGator, built on SharePoint, facilitate enterprise social networking “by providing an integrated, behind-the-firewall, social computing platform that supports collaboration, facilitates communication, and improves worker knowledge.”

EFFECTIVENESS

Similar to any enterprise strategy, it is important to define key performance indicators and metrics to measure effectiveness. Any social media campaign needs to take into account social listening, which refers to monitoring interactions through social media channels and analyzing data to obtain customer or market insights. It is also possible to gather insights into customer searches, needs, preferences and concerns without compromising privacy regulations or jeopardizing customer data. Some of the metrics that would be helpful to track effectiveness of social media channels include a) number of unique and active customer postings and interactions b) number of issues identified and customer sentiments – positive, negative or neutral c) responses to issues, resolutions and time-to-resolutions d) number of brand loyalists and d) overall cost/benefit ratio.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

PwC reports that intense regulatory scrutiny of marketing practices and stringent adverse event (AE) reporting requirements have made life sciences industry wary of taking active steps towards

social media adoption⁸. It is slowly emerging that AE reporting is a non-issue as Social Media typically lacks some major criteria required for AE reporting. Two-way sites such as blogs can open up opportunities for disgruntled employees or dissatisfied customers to create negative impressions that can spread virally. Even if companies decide to use blogs or Facebook for non-product specific, brand promotion activities, utmost care needs to be taken away so as to not get carried away with postings that may be misconstrued or may cause damage to the brand. Companies can address these issues by working with their respective regulatory and legal functions and putting in a process to review and approve any social media approach or campaign.

One of the key challenges is that the boundaries between personal and professional engagement of employees are increasingly blurred in many ways, for example, with employees using personal devices to perform work-related activities and vice versa. With this comes the danger of individuals losing their identity and perhaps speaking out of turn in social media outlets that may not

represent the official company position but may be misconstrued as such due to their professional association.

CASE STUDIES

We explore a few examples or case studies with Life Sciences companies having social media presence. There is so much activity going on that we can write a separate white paper on Case Studies alone.

LillyPad (<http://lillypad.lilly.com/>) is the official blog of Eli Lilly, which was launched to “focus on public policy issues, corporate responsibility initiatives, our advocacy efforts and the work our employees do every day to make the world a healthier place to live...we don’t want to simply provide our perspective on the issues. We want this to be a two-way conversation and encourage you to join us and share your thoughts.”





AstraZeneca has perhaps the most exhaustive social media presence with channels on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. AZ's Twitter presence is actively used for talking about public health, their strategies around presence in emerging markets, public announcements on collaborations and product approvals etc. AZ's YouTube channel carries messages from the CEO (<http://www.youtube.com/user/AstraZenecaPharma>) as well as already approved promotions which appear in traditional media such as television, print etc.

Janssen Pharmaceuticals has recently set up a Facebook site called Psoriasis 360 (<https://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/psoriasis360>) outside the US with moderated discussions, talking about the disease, coping mechanisms and treatment approaches.

Roche has established social media presence on multiple channels such as Facebook and Twitter (German) and YouTube (Canadian - <http://www.youtube.com/user/accucheckcanada>) for its Accu-Check showcasing product use information or carrying interviews or stories with patients about use of products.

GlaxoSmithKline has set up presence on Facebook similar to their primary company web site (<https://www.facebook.com/GlaxoSmithKline>). There are many others who are joining the race to establish social media presence.

1.0 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

While some initial guidances are emerging⁵, following are some key considerations for life sciences organizations as they enter the world of Social Media:

- Similar to planning any communications or media strategy, start with a strategy and plan to establish social media presence. Bear in mind that social media should be part of your larger marketing and consumer relationship strategy.
- Define a strategy and implementation roadmap based on the business drivers and needs of the organization.
- Be mindful of existing regulations while developing your strategy – so, focus more on quick wins such as developing a community or increasing customer awareness and do not venture into dialogs on prescription products or adverse event monitoring.
- Focus on your strategy and plans, not on the technologies per se. Technologies are just a means to an end, not the end itself.
- Start small with a proof-of-concept, define metrics for success, and develop a plan for social listening and monitoring.

- If you are looking at testing two-way interactions, start with blogs to discuss public policy issues or to understand customers' or providers' perceptions of overall brand, not any specific product.
- Being engaged in Social Media is a full-time effort. Create a small, dedicated team to understand the Social Media landscape and possibilities. This needs a combination of communications and media professionals, IT professionals proficient with emerging social media tools, creative and graphic design professionals, infrastructure professionals, organizational change management professionals, etc.

2.0 CONCLUSION

In this article, we introduced a systematic approach to generate ideas and facilitate discussions around developing a strategy for Social Media in Life Sciences. We believe entering the world of Social Media requires thoughtful strategy and planning just like any other media or communications approach and cannot be taken lightly in an enterprise setting. At the same time, the power of the media enables Life Sciences companies to reach out to partners, providers and customers more readily with easy-to-use capabilities and technology solutions, creating a true networked enterprise⁴ with

the ability to increase their reputation, brand loyalty and market share. We believe that there is tremendous potential to be unearthed with Social Media given the right strategy and approach.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

V. (Bala) Balasubramanian is the President and Co-Founder of Cabeus where he is responsible for vision, strategy, re-usable frameworks and methodologies. Bala can be contacted at balasubv@cabeusinc.com.

Dr. Yves GoulNIK is an innovative lifesciences marketer with extensive knowledge in digital tactics, mobile platforms, social media technologies as well as internet application development. Yves can be contacted at yves@goulNIK.com.

