



For more information,
please call Maureen Croce at 800/639-0515
Fax: 781/639-0529
email: mcroce@hcpro.com

eHealthInsight Series: Reaching Doctors and Patients Through New Digital Media

Exploring new routes to convey sales and
marketing messages to doctors and patients

Existing sales and marketing models are considered unsustainable and Pharma has been slow to adapt and take advantage of the marketing opportunities offered by the internet.

Customers are increasingly using the web to source information and as a result Pharma needs to evolve and engage with their customers online, or risk being left behind.

Reference Code: DMHC2368

Publication Date: 12/2007

Datamonitor USA
245 Fifth Avenue
4th Floor
New York, NY 10016
USA

Datamonitor Europe
Charles House
108-110 Finchley Road
London NW3 5JJ
United Kingdom

Datamonitor Asia Pacific
Level 46 / 2 Park Street
Sydney
NSW 2000
Australia

Datamonitor Japan
Wakamatsu Bldg 7F
3-3-6 Nihonbashi-Honcho
Chuo-ku
Tokyo 103-0023
Japan

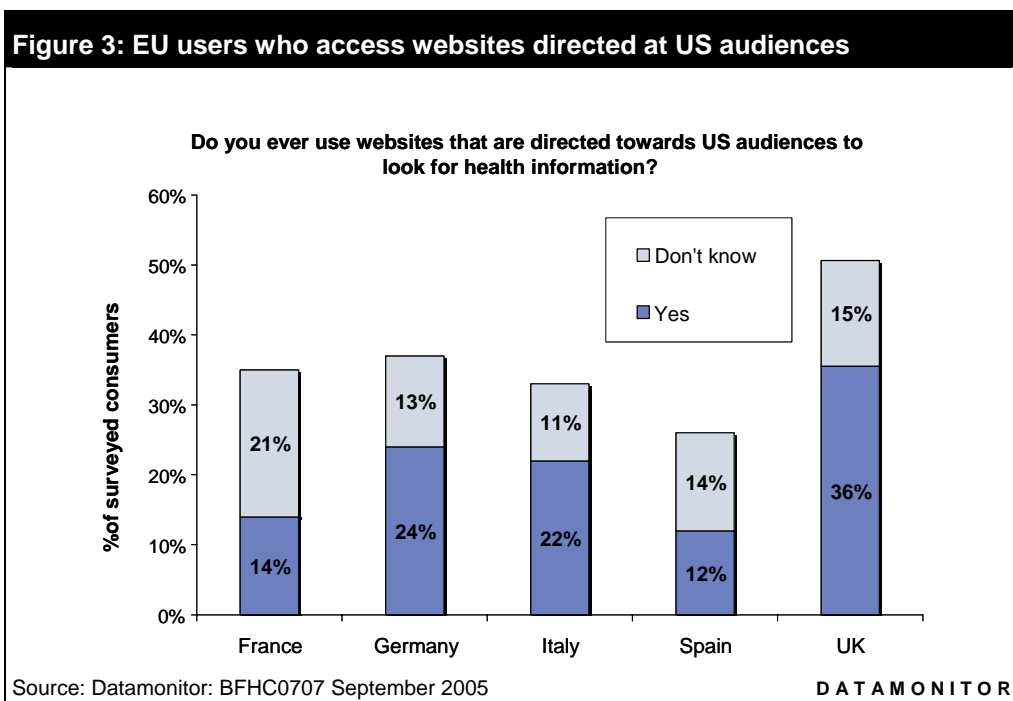
Challenges facing existing sales and marketing models



- links should be appropriate and apparent to the intended audience;
- country-specific information must comply with local requirements.

Implications of DTC advertising on the Web for the EU

Pharma companies in the US have long been advertising direct to consumers whereas, in Europe despite a ban on DTC advertising, the emergence of the Internet means that patients have access to that information. This highlights some ethical, not to mention, legal issues. DTC regulations in Europe mean that Pharma companies have to be careful to ensure disease and product information remains separate.



The fact that DTC advertising is not legal creates huge barriers for marketers who can only communicate with their customers through the guise of medical information.

Implications of DTC advertising on the Web for the US

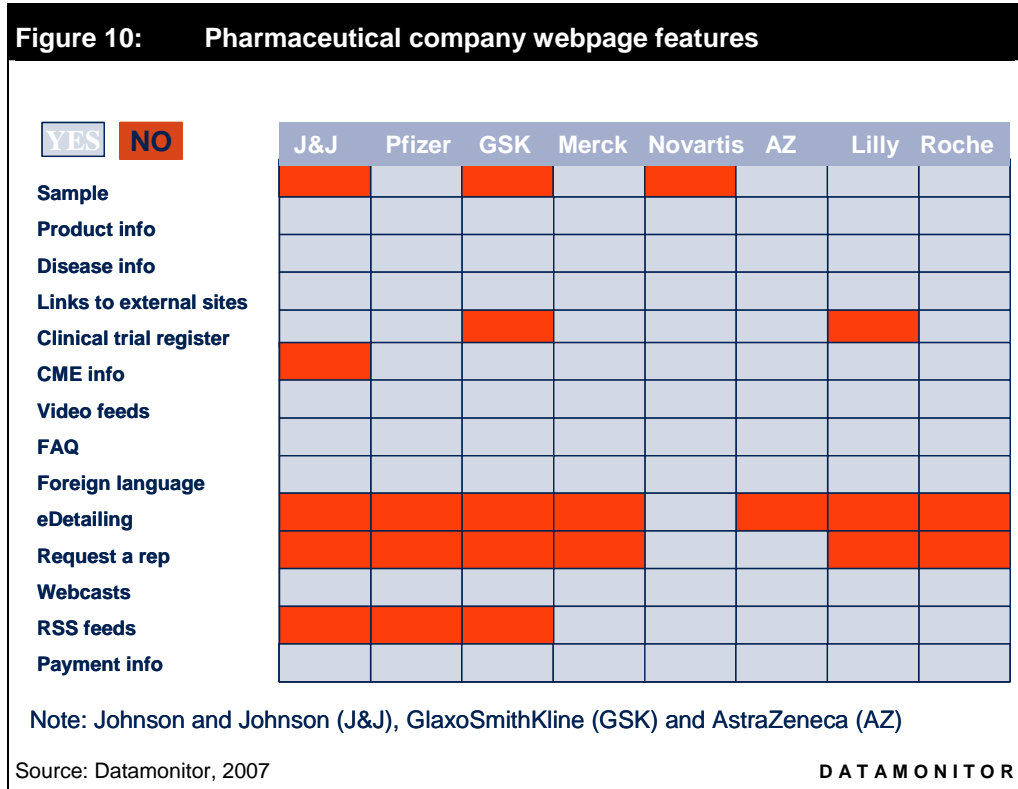
The FDA recently acquired new powers that require drug companies to submit television advertisements for review before they run, however, it is only empowered to recommend changes, not require them. This is the toughest drug advertisement restriction implemented in the US so far. However, Pharma companies actively pushed for these powers to be implemented. Furthermore, some companies have

Current sales and marketing initiatives to target physicians and patients

For more information,
please call Maureen Croce at 800/639-0515
Fax: 781/639-0529
email: mcroce@hcpro.com



Figure 10 summarizes the features benchmarked across the eight randomly selected websites. For details of the methodology and websites please refer to the Appendix .



While Pharma companies should work to make their websites more physician-friendly, many physicians still prefer independent websites. A survey conducted by MediConnect, Healthcare Insight involving 1,943 GPs and 2,533 secondary care doctors in the UK stated that 61% preferred to find out about prescription medicines from independent websites and only 1% visited pharmaceutical company websites (see Figure 11). These findings highlight firstly, that doctors identify the Internet as a trusted medical resource and secondly, a distrust of Pharma company websites or/and lack of useful information.

New media offers a variety of novel opportunities to Pharma



For more information,
please call Maureen Croce at 800/639-0515
Fax: 781/639-0529
email: mcroce@hcpro.com

companies now need to engage with their customers, as one-on-one, face-to-face influencing is becoming unsustainable.

A potential drawback to virtual worlds is that it is based on trust. It is very hard to check if people are who they say they are. This could lead to doubt about the reliability and authenticity of the information or avatars online. Pharma companies will have to be careful about how they set this up to ensure that this does not happen. Another potential downside is dealing with the legal and regulatory issues associated with such an open forum. The Pharma industry may well be hesitant about having any negative comments online, but, it is going to have to confront this challenge as hiding from it is no longer an option. Virtual sites like Second Life are likely to play an important role in future communication, the Pharma industry will probably have to find a way to get onboard or end up being out of touch and playing catch-up with its consumers.

Figure 15: Virtual meeting room in Second Life



Source: Bertalon: Medicine in Second Life – virtual doctors, (2007)

DATAMONITOR