Listening to the Voice of the Healthcare Consumer

BY MALCOLM BOHM, CEO, LIQUID GRIDS™

LIQUID⧘GRIDS™

The Healthcare Industry's Only
All-In-One Social Marketing Platform

89%

Adults that use the internet

72%

Adults that search for their health online[1]

90%

Trust the information they find about their health on social media

Listening to the Voice of the Healthcare Consumer

As consumers we think of healthcare in predictable ways – we describe symptoms that lead to a diagnosis and a procedure or a treatment. However, all of the work that occurs at the doctor's office: be it with the physicians, the nurses, the blood tests or the follow up visits, in actuality involves an incredibly complicated protocol. Medicine is full of complex algorithms that work together to determine the right course of actions to treat a patient.

The healthcare system makes sense of all these steps by carefully coding every step. To marketers, as useful as those codes can be, they still remain too rigid to extract the right insights to better understand, engage and help healthcare consumers. Now for the first time since DTC advertising started, marketers have a new way to better understand and engage with healthcare consumers – via social media.

Converging the rigor and structure provided by the healthcare coding system with the fluidity of online dialogue of the consumer, presents a variety of actionable opportunities in healthcare. That's exactly what Liquid Grids™ set out to do.

Suggestion

Conveniently, the ways people discuss their health fall into 4 categories that are all codified: procedures, diagnoses, treatments and symptoms. Don't think people talk about their health? Consider the following: of the 89% adults that use the internet, 72% search for their health online[1]; of those that are18-24 years of age, over 80% are more than likely to share health information through social media channels and nearly 90% would trust the information they found there. On any given day approximately 100 Million people are online searching, sharing and engaging in healthcare dialogue. Many of us are in fact documenting our health online:

"I'm going home early, this aura is telling me a migraine is coming."

And we often talk about others too:

"Prayers for my mom who is back on oxygen in hospital. She had a bad fall again. She couldn't make it up the stairs because of her COPD".

As consumers we mostly think about, talk or write about our health in the 4 categories previously mentioned: we have symptoms, we have or seek a diagnosis, we have been or are being treated using drugs or other solutions, and we may have had a procedure. The job of the health care professional is to determine our health problems from the way we express it.

1. "Social Media 'Likes' Healthcare", PwC HRI Social Media Consumer Survey, April 2012

The New Insights are a Treasure Trove For Healthcare Marketers

In this hyper-connected age more and more of us are sharing more of our lives online. This phenomenon is known as the "Zuckerberg Law," largely confirmed by the now billion plus Facebook users. With seemingly daily technological advances, sharing about our lives will even become more effortless? passive in the future. Not only are we sharing more, but because we are empowered through the internet and each other, we are also seeking more information, more advice; less from professionals and more from our peers. This fact further fuels the sharing engine, and the marketer's gold mine.

Even if the Doctor remains the most trusted place to confirm a diagnosis – 70% of consumers will go to their physician to get their opinion and confirm a diagnosis[2] – most people search and discuss their health online before any encounter with the healthcare system; and they return there afterwards. With an unsustainable healthcare system increasingly giving priority to demonstrating outcomes; it is within these online discussions where the opportunity lies for healthcare marketers to engage and guide the consumers' hand to their desired outcome.

At the time of this writing, Liquid Grids™ had aggregated and de-duplicated 500,000,000+ health related posts by 125,000,000+ unique posters, in the English language. As we only gather only publicly available dialogue, this is no doubt just a glimpse of the treasure trove of insight into consumers' thoughts about the way they think about their health – and how they can be influenced.

Cracking The Code

While this virtual fire hose of consumer health dialog is unstructured and unruly, Liquid Grids™ has developed a patented technology, that standardizes and indexes this vast amount of online data to code; reducing boundless rivers of dialogue into manageable, cataloged streams of how consumers talk about – and think about – their health. Resulting in an indexed database of consumer insight – as told by the consumers themselves – ready to be utilized by healthcare marketers looking to engage in the evolving patient driven healthcare paradigm.

Our patented technology hones in on all the people sharing and discussing any health related topic online at any given time. Moreover, by comprehensively analyzing specific health dialogues by source, we identify appropriate engagement channels for targeted messaging; providing a strategic and actionable format for a complete start to finish solution for the problems that the uncontrolled firehose of Big Data healthcare dialogue presents.

Ok, but why?

Traditional Media Has Been Tuned Out

Surveys confirm that consumers continue to ignore traditional healthcare advertising in droves. As more and more time is spent online and in social media, patients and consumers are empowering themselves by the information they find there. The demographics of social networks suggest plenty of reasons to be leveraging these channels. Consider one fact: 67% of Facebook users are female, aged 25-49. This group of women are prolific users of social media; with many averaging 3-4 hours per day in the medium. Importantly, this demographic is increasingly identified as making healthcare decisions not only for themselves, but for their families as well. Significantly, they virally share content across their connections that is helpful and meaningful to them.

This phenomenon is not confined to women alone: approximately 70% of healthcare costs are coming from the 55 and older population, the fastest growing group on social media.

67%
of Facebook users are female, aged 25-49

3–4
average time spent on Facebook per day
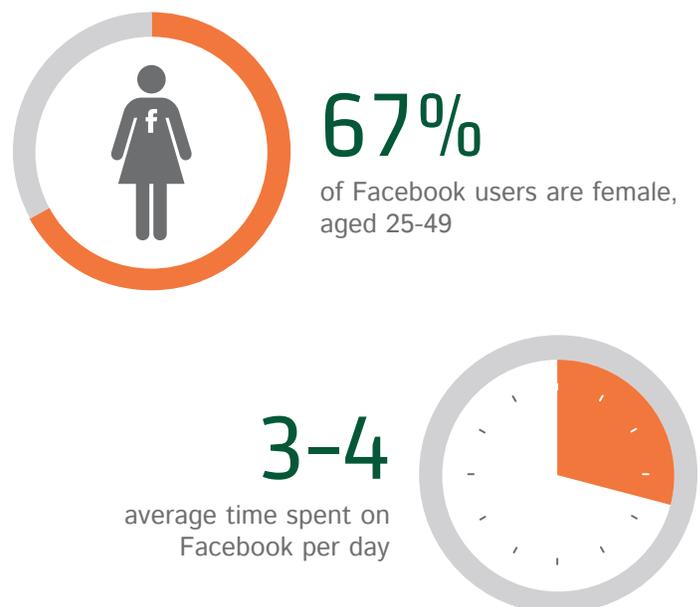
These healthcare consumers, often referred to as e-patients, are actively engaged in sourcing credible and useful information about their health and that of their connections. The opportunity lies in how to influence these people in a targeted way.

> *E-patients are empowered, equipped, enabled, and engaged."*
>
> – Malcolm Bohm, CEO, Liquid Grids™

Content is King But Context Wins

For health related brands and marketers today, it is crucial to understand the target consumers and engage them on their terms, with relevant healthcare information and resources that are meaningful to them. As the saying goes, content is king, but context is even more important. In order to engage healthcare consumers effectively about their health it must be communicated in messaging that is relevant and meaningful to them. As an example, it's not beneficial to summarily communicate to everyone who mentions their blood sugar HbA1C results with generic diabetes information – they are already past that need and will resent being spammed with irrelevant content.

The Liquid Grids™ technology empowers marketers to strategically identify the communities of consumers of greatest relevance to their marketing objectives. We have developed algorithms that allow you to uncover the layers of these communities; and what drives and influences them. For example, what makes up the community of people that are discussing breast cancer? Some users solely originate and transmit news, while others are the patients themselves speaking about their experiences. Some are talking about their friends, others about their relatives.

Uncovering the perspective of the post and the poster is vitally important so that the appropriate messages can be crafted and delivered in a scalable, personal and relevant way.

Look Who's talking?

As alluded to above, to craft messages that resonate with your intended audience, it's imperative to understand as much as possible about the communities of online posters to whom you're communicating. What is their gender, age, education level, their geolocation? Is the poster a health-care professional, a friend, a relative or is he referring to himself. When and where are they most active online? Who influences them and who do they influence? All of these questions need to be answered as completely as possible to ensure that your messaging resonates with and is heard by your intended audience.

Economies of Scale Through Influence

What garners influence amongst these communities is vital to understand to maximize the impact of your messaging. The Liquid Grids™ influence algorithm takes in to account all of the characteristics of the poster and their specific activity on the topic of interest. There's little use in applying a generic social media influence score to a screenname. To use the HbA1C diabetes example again – if this is your target audience, wouldn't it be meaningful to know who the people are online that are influencing others within their circles of HbA1C discussions?

Using our proprietatry algorithm, Liquid Grids™ focuses the estimation of influence down to the dictionary of terms that precisely describe the target audience you're intending to communicate to.

Disease Intelligence vs Brand Intelligence

The subject of brand sentiment is one that is often publicized by social media intelligence companies, yet it is but a minor piece in the health consumer dialogue. Given that just 2% of our databases include brand names, brand sentiment analysis must be viewed as useful in this 2% context; missing 98% of the disease dialogue. True sentiment analysis is much more complicated to compute in the context of disease discussions. By way of example if a poster states they have just been diagnosed with Lupus, is this negative or neutral? Or if a person states they are having a Lupus flare, is this negative or neutral? Certainly neither may seem positive, but the true direction of sentiment can only be determined from viewing the context of the post as a whole. This is the type of analysis that Liquid Grids™ seeks to provide across all of the healthcare dialogue we aggregate.

98%

2%

Unprecedented Reach

The average person has 150 connections online. Some are friends, some are family members and others consist of weaker, more temporary ties. What is significant is that within these groups are connections to others that center around the different themes of our lives. For every person who can be influenced about some aspect of their health, many more they are connected to can also be instantly connected and influenced by the same materials and opportunity. If we can find the right people and deliver value to them they will quickly share it – many refer to this as going viral.

Putting It All Together for a Single Solution

Integrating all of these analytical pieces together – contextual disease dialogue of relevance, poster characteristics, sentiment analysis and perspective – into a single, dedicated social media platform for healthcare dialogue is what Liquid Grids™ has done. It was designed for healthcare by healthcare.

Simply put, we uncomplicate the disease dialogue and make it strategically actionable. To a variety of stakeholders the list of opportunities is a long one. Below are listed some of the ways in which social health intelligence and engagement can be applied:

- Improving Patient Adherence
- Safety Surveillance
- Signal Detection
- Patient Reported Outcomes
- Patient Recruitment
- Market Research
- Augmenting Healthcare Claims Data
- Identifying Optimal Health Protocols
- Promoting Health and Wellness
- Exploding Brand Reach
- Brand Awareness
- Brand Loyalty
- Brand Champions

Contact us today to start listening to and engaging your target audience.

LIQUID GRIDS™

About Liquid Grids™

Our team has extensive experience in the healthcare industry and deeply understand the needs and challenges of our industry. We built our platform specifically for the Healthcare industry. Our mission is to transform the way the industry can understand, communicate and market its innovations to healthcare consumers. Our Direct to Persona marketing platform is a breakthrough that is unmatched in its precision, reach and scalability.

Malcolm Bohm CEO, Liquid Grids™

Malcolm Bohm is a recognized expert in Life Sciences. In the industry since 1993, Malcolm served in increasingly senior positions at major pharmaceutical companies including Astra, Pfizer, and Novartis. In 2005 Malcolm established a successful US affiliate for biotech firm, Aspreva Pharmaceuticals. In 2006 he created Trialytics, an industry leading software solution leveraging electronic healthcare data to redefine clinical R&D strategies eventually selling the company to SDI Health Inc. Malcolm was educated in Great Britain and achieved a Bachelor of Science degree in Physiology and a Master of Medical Sciences degree in Renal Physiology and Pharmacology along with advanced training in analytical data modeling.

Want to learn more?

Email info@liquidgrids.com or call 858.768.5136 for more information.

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