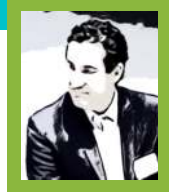


# Navigating Change: The Case for Context



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The need for context seems acutely critical at this point in history as the practice of medicine is evolving rapidly in response to COVID-19. The pandemic has forced faster and broader adoption of digital information and platforms and presents several opportunities for digital marketers and publishers. It is clear, however, that an increased level of understanding, authenticity, and relevancy, in our messaging and strategies is needed now, more than ever.

Just as a health care provider would not employ a one-size fits-all approach for their myriad of patients, medical publishers and pharma/digital agencies have a mandate to create and deliver richer, more thoughtful experiences and messaging that reflect and respect the needs of our audiences.

## Greater Reliance on Credible News Sources and The Increasing Role of Online Publishers

As we have already started exploring in a recently [published paper by MedPage Today](#),<sup>1</sup> the need for Non Personal Promotion is rapidly accelerating as HCPs are increasingly relying on digital channels and medical publisher sites for news, resources and information. MedPage Today, for one, has seen a significant and sustained increase in traffic and site activity.<sup>2</sup>

As compared to the same time last year looking at March to May, in 2020 we've seen

**107%** Increase in Visits<sup>2</sup>

Beyond the traffic itself, we've seen an exciting and meaningful increase in activity with key metrics such as time on site, with over

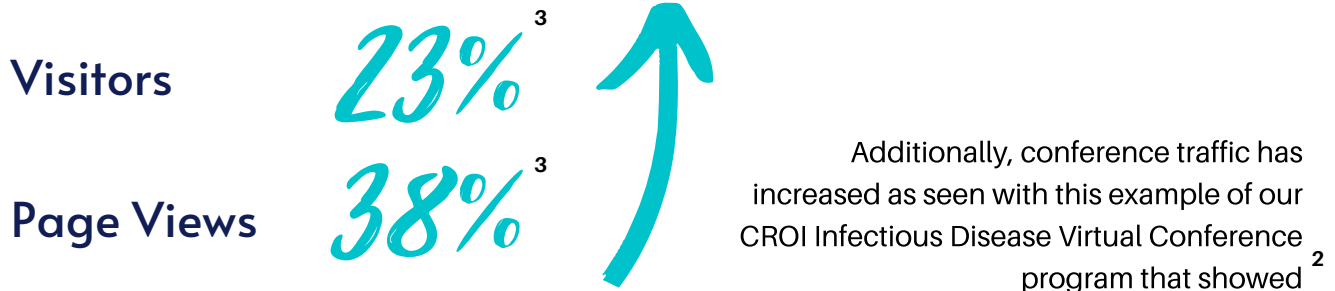
**3+** Minutes per Visit<sup>2</sup>

**100%** Increase in eNewsletter Opens & Click Throughs<sup>2</sup>

demonstrating that our editorial content strategy is resonating now more than ever with target HCPs.<sup>2</sup>

And the growth in both traffic and depth of engagement also extends to our unique Society Partner relationships and content where you can see the differences this year versus 2019.<sup>2</sup>

## Across all Society Partner Content



## CROI Virtual Conference Coverage<sup>3</sup>



As with the growth of partner content and the CROI conference traffic,<sup>3</sup>



To be most effective within the context of a news site, we need to consider the specific needs and mindsets of the HCP visitor as well as their content preferences, from articles to video. We all make decisions as humans as to the credibility and impact of a message depending on where we hear it or who we hear it from. HCPs are no different. The venue for where your message lives matters and there are expectations for how information can be presented credibly.

## The Changing Mindset of an HCP: Telehealth, Prescribing Patterns Shifts and Patient Needs

While the rapid adoption of telehealth was a critical necessity to provide safe access to frontline patient care during the early stages of the pandemic, it has quickly become apparent that it is also filling an unmet need in the industry for convenience, time, and cost efficiencies.<sup>4,5,6,7</sup>

HCPs do not see it as a replacement for the office visit, but they do see it as crucial for delivering services to patients, diagnosing symptoms, and modifying treatments.

**80%** of frontline medical offices are now using telehealth & almost all specialists have migrated to telehealth <sup>4</sup>

**56%** of patients want to continue to deal with their chronic conditions through this channel <sup>4</sup>

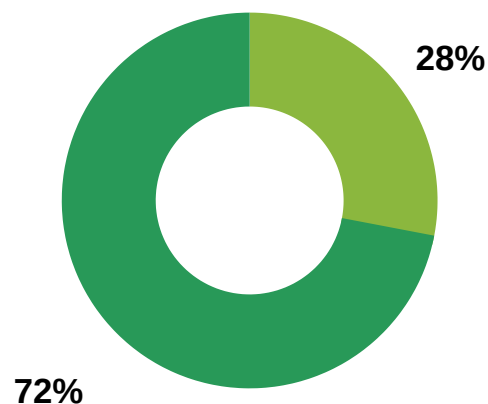
**38%** of surveyed MPT subscribers have used telemedicine in the past month <sup>5</sup>

The growing reliance on telehealth also provides an opportunity for marketers. While the inherent limitations of telehealth, like lack of physical exam and in-office testing may mean a reduced ability to effectively diagnose or a loss in traditional Point of Care opportunities, the benefits are many. Increased access to care can be realized across divergent geographic settings (rural or urban) and economic situations (commercially insured or indigent) as HCPs, patients and caregivers can connect with fewer logistical limitations. Here are a few ideas:

- Digitizing the Point of Care with a 'virtual waiting/exam room' experience can create effective and scalable platforms for engagement with pharma messaging
- Providing HCPs digital patient support and integrated services alongside ePrescribing capabilities and workflow functionality of current telehealth platforms
- Provide telehealth resources, tips and best practices to the 87% of surveyed MedPage Today subscribers who are actively using telehealth <sup>5</sup>

## Changes to Prescribing Behaviors


In this new environment, studies are showing HCPs are altering their prescribing behaviors:



**72% of surveyed MPT HCPs claim they're maintaining prescribing habits and following guidelines <sup>5</sup>**

However, our survey uncovered the trend is towards the consideration of the larger implications for a specific treatment plan amidst the pandemic. They are writing longer supplies, prescribing safer dosages and consciously thinking of ways to minimize complications like side effects.<sup>5</sup>

This new mindset means HCPs may become more comfortable with increased lengths of therapy and alternate dosage considerations. This may translate into higher dollars initially for a brand, but conservative approaches by HCPs may make NRx switches more difficult down the road and could require stronger messaging to inspire changes to treatment approaches. Thus, an opportunity presents itself for additional HCP support tools and messaging about dosing, side effects, and safety information now, before behaviors become entrenched.



**40% of HCPs** have changed their prescribing habits, writing longer supplies or prescribing treatments without an in-person consultation<sup>5</sup>

**54%** noted consideration for keeping patients at home and not asking them to come in for follow up visits<sup>5</sup>

**38%** of HCPs feel their patients are looking to them for advice on staying healthy<sup>5</sup>



They also note that patients are more proactive about their own health more so than ever before<sup>5</sup>

## The Case for Context

The trend toward the reliance on digital news, information and tools by HCPs has been growing for several years but the true tipping point is upon us. The digital-first healthcare professional is here. Given these implications, there is a strong case to be made for improving how we can respectfully and effectively engage HCPs with messaging and programs. Put simply, the mindset of the HCP matters. An HCP who is accessing clinical news and information has chosen to self-educate with a level of professional interest and intent. Many would argue that this is the most appropriate and respectful time and venue to deliver your brand messaging and content versus messaging in the 'recreational' environments found in non-endemic content and websites. The venue matters.

## And the context for HOW we engage matters:

- Deliver an increased level of authenticity and relevancy in messaging and execution, which is paramount in meeting the expectations of HCPs and patients. This is the new context by which we need to market our brands
- Consider limiting promotion emails that fill their inbox and providing more on demand support and resources and shorter form messaging
- Align tactics to the correct HCP segment and information gathering mindset such as news, education, medical reference, etc. A one size fits all approach will be met with increased resistance as expectations increase, particularly in the digital environment
- Leverage partners who can 'execute with context' using deep segmentation, sequenced messaging, and physician level data. As rep visits decrease, the ability to replicate in-person promotional strategies and to learn and adjust in real time will only become more important moving forward

**The evolving digital landscape necessitates addressing the changing needs of HCPs. Together, we can collectively create relevant content and personalized experiences to engage authentically - delivering an all-encompassing experience that reflects user preferences and behaviors.**

**Publishers providing immersive environments allow the ability to thread the user down a path with relevant brand messaging and content. Striking the right balance between venue and context, your messages are delivered in a respectful way that the user feels they have chosen - allowing you to leverage scale and create greater impact for your clients.**

## Referencing & Sourcing Information

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