



# Testing Pharma Marketers' Knowledge of HCP Social Media Marketing

## What we learned, and what it could mean for your brand

By Danny Flamberg, VP Strategy - HCP, LiveWorld

As we started to see signs of the pandemic waning in much of the country, we thought it would be a good time to find out whether HCPs' increased reliance on digital media was going to remain steady, and especially how they are using social as a tool. So we asked a representative sample of HCPs to answer a few questions for us. *Every single one* was open to professional messaging on social media – and almost all said they had taken an action as a result.

At the same time, we were interested in what HCP marketers knew about the rapidly-changing HCP digital and social landscape – so we asked over 100 industry colleagues to share their knowledge in a 90-second quiz. The bad news? Only 50% of responders could answer more than 3 questions correctly.

Here's the headline: **We're facing a major disconnect.** There's a dramatic sustained increase in the use of social media by HCPs, but pharma marketers have a significant knowledge gap in how to use social media to reach HCPs.

So what else did we learn from our two surveys? If you're like us, you'll want to know what your peers are up to, so let's look at those results first.



have taken an action after seeing professional content on social media.

Pharma and life sciences brands are facing a major disconnect: While there is a dramatic, sustained increase in HCPs' use of social media, there is a significant knowledge gap among pharma marketers in how to use social to reach HCPs.



are "beginners" in HCP social media marketing

# The HCP Social Media IQ Quiz

## Quiz Questions

We asked over 100 marketers to take this quick quiz: how do you stack up? Give yourself 1 point for every correct answer.

- HCP use of social media in 2020 increased by what percentage?
  - 25%
  - 35%
  - 50%
  - 100%
- What percent of US HCPs use social media for professional purposes?
  - 20%
  - 25%
  - 33%
  - 66%
- Which Social network prohibits branded pharma promotion?
  - Instagram
  - Pinterest
  - Twitter
  - LinkedIn
- Which HCP online influencer does NOT have a significant social following?
  - Kevin MD
  - Dr. Bob
  - ZDoggMD
  - Dr Fritz
- Which Facebook tool is best for producing a webinar?
  - Facebook Live
  - Facebook Groups
  - Facebook Premiere
  - Facebook brand page
- Use of a brand name with an indication or a claim triggers the need for full safety information.
  - True
  - False
- Which HCP social media platform is known for its drug ratings?
  - Doximity
  - Sermo
  - Skipta
  - Medscape
- Which point of care app does NOT take advertising?
  - Figure 1
  - ePocrates
  - UptoDate

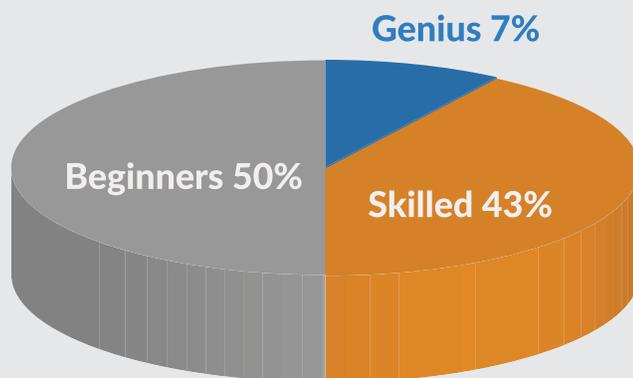
ANSWERS: 1: 35%, 2: 66%, 3: LinkedIn, 4: Dr Fritz, 5: Facebook Premiere, 6: True, 7: Sermo, 8: UptoDate

## HCP Social Media Marketing Is Accelerating

It's no surprise to anyone that the pandemic changed our reliance on digital communications. But lest we think the world will go back to the way it was, virtually every pharma company expects to continue to increase their reliance on digital tools to reach HCPs, and **76% expect to spend more on HCP social media this year** – many reporting “significant” budget increases.

So how well equipped are pharma marketers to manage this new emphasis on HCP social media? This spring, we asked HCP marketers to test their knowledge in our quick quiz, designed to illuminate different aspects of HCP social media marketing knowledge.

## HCP QUIZ IQ BREAKOUT



While the average time to answer all eight questions took just over a minute (79 seconds), here's the surprising part: **only nine people got our “Genius” rating** – just a fraction of all the players. How about you? Take a look at the quiz questions and test your knowledge. Give yourself one point for every correct answer, and check your score against our online responders:

- 1-3 correct: Beginner -50%** of the players in our online quiz
- 4-6 correct: Skilled - 43%** of the players in our online quiz
- 7-8 correct: Genius - Just 7%** of the players in our online quiz

If you found some of the questions harder than others, you're not alone: **80% didn't know** that Facebook's best tool for producing a webinar is Facebook Premier – and **only 33% knew** that Dr Fritz was the least popular social influencers of the four doctors mentioned.

# Identifying Key Knowledge Gaps

While HCP social media is on every pharma marketer's mind, there are some real knowledge gaps among the very people tasked with bringing programs to life. And that could be a cause for concern. Because while there is a lot of awareness (and unnecessary fear) around FDA guidelines, **our panel of responders demonstrated a lack of clarity or understanding in some key areas** – areas that can cost their companies time and money in reaching HCPs where they are in social media.

## 5 Key Knowledge Gaps About HCP Social Media Among Pharma Marketers

- The scope and scale of how HCP social media has grown, and the role it plays in HCP decision-making.
- The technical nuances of each platform, such as the rules and condition, specs and sensibilities, targeting algorithms
- The growing role of HCP social media influencers, in addition to traditional KOLs
- What goes on behind the walls of the “walled gardens,” such as Skipta and Sermo, where HCPs talk candidly among themselves
- When and how to integrate Point-Of-Care media, such as epocrates, figure 1, UpToDate, as part of HCPs' toolkits.

## Marketers' Disconnect With HCPs

In the meantime, our HCP survey validated our previous research that HCPs are embracing social media for professional purposes more than ever. **Marketers who aren't keeping up with where, when, and how HCPs are using social are missing one of their biggest opportunities to influence and engage with this all-important audience.**

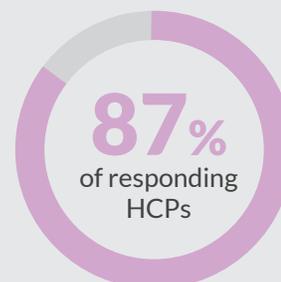
Here's the most eye-popping result from our survey: **100% of responding HCPs** say they are open to professional and / or product messages on public social media.

And they do more than just look at messages. **87% have taken an action because of professional content they saw on social media**, including watching video, forwarding content to a peer, downloading content, taking a poll, quiz, or survey, attending a webinar, and considering new therapies or drugs for their patients.

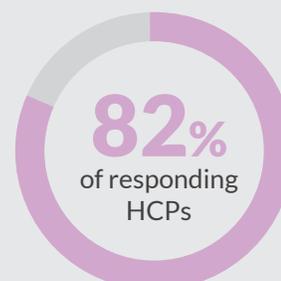
In addition to the big social platforms like Sermo, HCPs are taking advantage of the many subscription physician platforms available to them, including Among Doctors, Mayo Clinic Social Media Network, Daily Rounds, WeMedUp, Doctors Hangout. And they're not just participating in what we call “the walled gardens” of HCP social media: **82% communicate with patients via public social media platforms**, with the majority (75%) relying on FaceBook, FaceBook groups or FaceBook Messenger, even as we see increased use of less “traditional” social platforms like Twitter to Insta and WhatsApp. And as we all know, some more adventurous HCPs have even taken to TikTok to help educate, inform, and even entertain their peer and patient followers.



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say they have taken an action after seeing professional content on social media.



communicate with patients via social media – the majority (75%) via Facebook.

# What Can Social Communication for HCPs Look Like?

Let's take a look at what we created on behalf of MYCAPSSA®, a groundbreaking new oral treatment for acromegaly from Chiasma. In the unbranded phase, we used LinkedIn to target endocrinologists, **raising awareness** of the burden of treatment patients have faced with the current standard of care, **inviting them to a new level of empathy** through patient stories, and **driving them**



Patient stories and data from new studies attracted HCP attention on LinkedIn

to attend webinars and sign up for ongoing information via CRM.

We also created an engaging, interactive quiz on the unbranded site, AcromegalyALLY.com, delivering information and education to HCPs in a unique way.

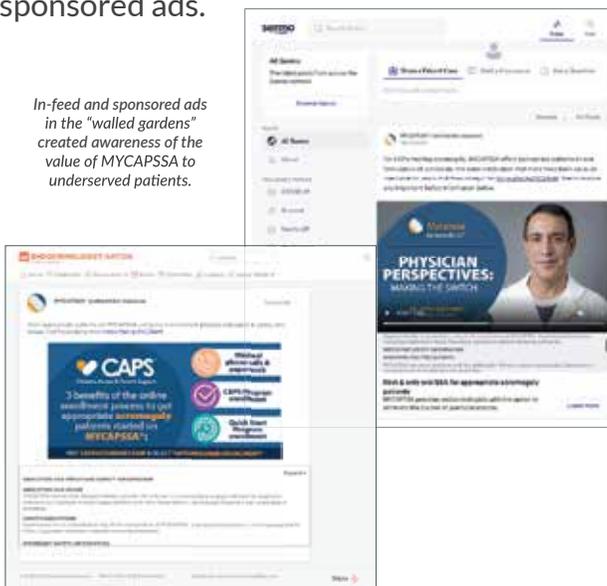


A custom unbranded quiz educated HCPs interactively.

## Branded Marketing in the "Walled Gardens"

When it was time for branded marketing, we used the "walled gardens" of Sermo and Skipta to **raise awareness of MYCAPSSA's value to patients**, with both in-feed and sponsored ads.

*In-feed and sponsored ads in the "walled gardens" created awareness of the value of MYCAPSSA to underserved patients.*



## Amplifying Conference Content on Twitter

Social was also a valuable tool in ensuring that even virtual conference content was seen by the right HCPs. We used both corporate and branded Twitter to help **drive virtual conference booth attendance at ENDO 2021 and AACE**, as well as amplifying conference material with a video reel, highlighting successes and awareness for MYCAPSSA.



Twitter drove traffic at virtual conferences and amplified content.

# The World of Social Is Changing Fast

The trend toward HCPs using and relying on social media has clearly accelerated, driving the role of HCP social media as a primary communications channel, with strategic relevance for reaching and engaging HCPs.

And while Covid-19 quarantines and need for speedy communication may have increased HCPs' reliance on social, it's far from the only factor. Slower-moving, but steady trends – from hospital systems reducing rep access, to the generational change in medical practice, where today's HCPs are

more often digital natives than TV-friendly Boomers – **will keep pushing HCP social to the forefront as a first-choice marketing medium.**

**Marketers who are on top of these trends are powering a shift in emphasis**, as savvy healthcare, life sciences and pharmaceutical brands pour more money, energy, and strategic thinking into creating a more dominant role for HCP social media. Those that don't rise to the challenge will surely get left behind.

## About the Author



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**Danny Flamberg**, is a senior marketing strategist who has been a pioneer in digital, video, mobile and social media to support pharmaceutical and life science brands.

He's worked on Pfizer, Merck, AstraZeneca, Boehringer Ingelheim, AbbVie and Sanofi brands and led product launches for McNeil Labs, Wyeth, GSK, Novartis, Johnson & Johnson, Genentech and Unilever.

He earned an A.B, an M.A. and a Ph.D. in econometrics at Columbia University.

## About LiveWorld

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