DESIGNS FROM EXPERIENCE

To offer maximum returns, pharmaceutical Web sites and CRM programs must be designed and built using the insights from the user experience, say **Laura Keller** and **Mark McConaghy**

It is not uncommon for marketers to lose sight of the quantifiable objective of marketing—to generate revenue, lest anyone forget—and get caught up in trying to win the awe of their peers with the next big idea. A marketing program serves a fiscal purpose, either by generating revenue or mitigating marketing operations costs. But to be successful, communications must be based on consumer insights, on leveraging targeted messaging and on a user experience specifically designed for each targeted consumer segment.

Getting consumers to engage with your marketing message increases the likelihood that they will engage with your brand (buy it). In pharmaceutical marketing, credibility and relevance are crucial elements in driving engagement with the marketing message.

Unfortunately, there is no cookie-cutter approach. Moreover, the degree to which you can drive return can be limited, based on factors that are often beyond the marketer's control, such as internal regulatory review standards, product pricing or formulary penetration. Nevertheless, if your ultimate goal is to communicate with consumers, there are four fundamental steps you should take:

1. Research your customers and identify their needs
2. Document your marketing objectives, your strategy, and the underlying rationale for selecting the tactics that support your strategy
3. Implement business rules to support the user experience you have designed
4. Develop a process for measuring program success

While visiting a pharmaceutical Web site, consumers have highly specific informational needs, consuming 3-5 pages in a visit, and a low tolerance for information overload. Furthermore, their behavior varies significantly, depending on the amount of information available elsewhere online, the prevalence of the condition they are researching and, most importantly, how the brand initially engages the consumer online (i.e. banner ads vs. search). Consequently, presenting information that is irrelevant to their needs runs the risk of simply driving them away.

Customer-focused experience design

Design teams will often ask, "Who's our target?" A valid question, often leading to an unfulfilling response: "A prospect who we want to convert," or "A 45-year-old woman who wants to feel in control of her condition." Then, teams pontificate, "What do we think this target would want?" The problem is that your audience is a multi-faceted collage of differing mindsets, information needs, attitudes, online expertise and cognitive function. A one-line description doesn't encapsulate less-tangible attributes, such as a spouse's influence, a coworker's opinion, the dull cubicle in which they work or their erratic home life.

Customer-focused experience design considers these facets at every phase of Web development and anticipates how, when, where and why consumers will interact with the site. And as interactive media become increasingly integrated into their daily lives, it is imperative that they feel your site was designed for them.

When your customers are taking time out of their busy lives to actively go to you instead of passively seeing a print or TV ad, they have much higher expectations for what the Web site needs to do—if it doesn't fulfill those expectations, they will go somewhere else.

To elucidate customer-focused experience design, it's important to compare it to typical approaches that brands and agencies employ—brand-centric or design-centric. With the former, the incentive for patients to register is typically information. But the degree to which you can get visitors to register for an RM program, when brand-related information is the value-add, is limited. Rather than exclaiming, "We need to get more names into our database" the question is, "What can we provide our customers that helps them cope with X, helps them solve Y but also accomplishes Z for the brand?"

The design-centric approach is best illustrated through the temptation to offer "what's cool." Designing a user experience around the latest trend, without considering whether the end-user will see it as relevant and useful, often leads to wasted marketing dollars. And possibly even a loss of customers. One egregious example is attempting to pass off a promotional Web site as user-generated content (a key element of the Web 2.0 revolution). Sony attempted such a ploy to promote its PSP game system. Within weeks, the blog was taken down after Sony acknowledged that it was an artificial marketing tactic.

Rather than trying to mimic what the Joneses are doing on their sites, find your customer's unique needs and wants and fulfill them. It may be a user-generated site if your target is highly engaged, if they rely and

In a recent Google search for "overactive bladder", the top two paid links drove traffic to branded pharma sites. In one scenario (left) the user lands on a page deep in content about the condition she is researching. In the other (below) the user has to identify once again that she is interested in learning more about the condition (and not the brand). The first will push the customer more efficiently through the brand continuum

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trust the opinions of others, have time at home to participate, and are active online. But don't build a user-generated site simply because "Everybody's doing it."

How to achieve the best customer experience

I. RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH

One-on-one qualitative interviews with members of your target group elicit how they think of the topic at hand, what questions they have and what's important to them. These outcomes help drive the development of content areas and navigation on the site. These interviews also help eliminate "feature creep"—the tendency of a site to have lots of bells and whistles that serve no use for the customer and often detract from more critical content. Conducting these interviews with a variety of participants across a continuum helps ensure the site is relevant to the mindset of the core audiences coming to your site.

Quantitative segmentation research, through surveys and behavioral data analysis, is useful to determine who comprises your target audience and to identify their needs, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. It enables you to focus on the key attributes of the people for whom you should be designing. The more detailed and actionable the research, the more relevant and effective the design can be, for example: "Young women, an information-seeking population, who want to be in control of their condition, and who will respond to information but not a financial incentive" vs. a more general target definition, such as "Women in their 40s who are undiagnosed."

Experience observation involves watching participants interact with your site at various phases. Static concepts can elucidate issues with navigation and callouts. Using a prototype and then a fully programmed site can test the intuitiveness of the experience and whether participants are accomplishing what you want them to. Ideally, observations are done contextually in the participant's typical environment where they would be using your Web site, and could also involve offline pieces to test the cross-channel experience. Fortunately, due to more sophisticated Web analytics tools, marketers also have the opportunity to "watch" individuals' online behavior (without identifying the specific user, of course).

For example, a medical aesthetics client faced disappointing activation rates of a rewards card online. Because most people who landed on the activation page did register, the Web site was eliminated as the cause of the issue. Rather, it was hypothesized that the issue was at the point of program awareness—in the doctor's office. Observation of the distribution of the card packets at the doctor's office found that patients were confused whether the card was a credit card or whether they had to pay for it.

II. DOCUMENT AND RE-DOCUMENT

To translate all the insights arising from the research into the site, the following experience design documents need to be delivered to the creative team and developers:

Personas—descriptions that distill the different types of customers and describe their attitudes and beliefs to make your end user "real."

Scenarios and experience maps—document customers' situations and their typical pathways when using your site to ensure the end experience is realistic and valid.

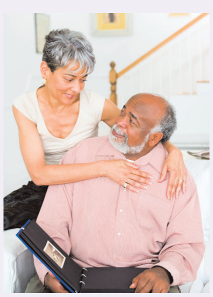
Program flows—document all the inputs to your site (brochures in doctors' offices, banner ads, etc.) and where they fit strategically in the overall marketing program. These flows highlight any special considerations for site design so that customers are moved efficiently through the decision-making process to the next phase in the continuum. They account for all the paths users may take to land there and often highlight gaps in the experience, where a media landing page may be needed or when an in-office piece would be most effective.

Site Maps and Wireframes—lay out the architecture and paths of the site and anticipate how users will navigate. They show the hierarchy of page elements for optimal intuitiveness and usability.

The value of research in Web design

Example: Gout

For a client that was about to market a new drug for gout, interviews were conducted with patients who recently had a painful attack vs. patients who hadn't had an attack in a few years, which led to diverse information needs and wants: a) Patients with recent attacks wanted information about causes of attacks and what to do during one, and b) Patients who hadn't had a recent attack wanted information on the long-term effects and on diet. Knowing this helped prioritize content and navigation. Observing participants search online also showed that patients have a strong mistrust of content related to gout. Because of the numerous "cure-alls" being sold online, patients would quickly abandon a site if it looked even remotely promotional. The design implication was to ensure that the credibility of the site was clear—in fact, the pharmaceutical sponsorship's presence validated the content immensely. Designing the site with these and similar findings led to a successful site launch, evident in atypically strong levels of site engagement, namely low abandonment rates, high page consumption and strong lead acquisition rates.



Example: Alzheimer's

For a property for a client that recognized a need to communicate with Alzheimer's caregivers, online chat was passively monitored to help identify specific issues that caregivers needed addressed. In doing so, it became clear that all caregivers were struggling with similar specific issues and they simply wanted someone else to acknowledge that the situations they were encountering were not unique. As such, in designing the new online property, these key issues were prominently noted in the "Caregiver Support" content. Following launch of the site, it was observed that nearly 6% of site visitors were engaging with the content, spending nearly a minute on each page of this area of the site. Moreover, a considerable share of visitors was coming to the site directly on these pages, indicating that this content is viral.

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Your measurement plan—identifies the specific goals and quantifiable objectives of the program. Further, it identifies how you plan on collecting data so that the user experience team understands how customer interaction will be tracked and technical resources understand the appropriate technical infrastructure that needs to be in place to support program measurement.

It is crucial that the measurement plan be implemented before program design so that: (a) there is clear consensus on what constitutes program success, or failure; (b) the mechanisms by which program analysis will be conveyed to stakeholders/decision-makers are agreed upon; (c) necessary business rules are implemented to permit measurement of program utilization; and, most importantly, (d) data collection procedures are in place at program launch.

In documenting the measurement plan, one of the goals of this phase is to identify what actions your Web site will cause your target to take that will drive revenue. Further, this phase should also identify what you intend your Web site to motivate your customers to *avoid* doing. Put another way, while a Web site can drive revenue through new patient acquisitions and/or patient adherence, it can also mitigate costs, for example, through reducing call center volume as well as driving patients with a script already in hand to fill that script (by assuring patients that the brand is right for them).

Using analysis to redesign a program

Example: Hypertension

In developing a CRM program designed to support patients prescribed a hypertensive medication, the initial design was based on a basic consumer segmentation: persons treating for less than four months vs. persons treating for more than four months.

Although the first group was the target in that they represented the greatest marketing potential, program analysis revealed that the latter was the more engaged segment.

Moreover, analysis also showed that program engagement in the segment of users treating for less than four months was greatest within the initial weeks following program enrollment.

Therefore, in redesigning the program, the initial series of emails to those treating for less than four months focused exclusively on what to expect during the initial weeks of treatment. Additionally, an offline component was developed to further stimulate engagement among those in the target segment in the initial weeks following registration.

Results of the redesigned program showed a more persistent level of engagement among this target segment beyond the initial weeks following registration.

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III. IMPLEMENT BUSINESS RULES TO CONVEY A RELEVANT USER EXPERIENCE

How many times have you purchased a product only to find a coupon or special offer for that same product in the mail or the local paper the following day? Unfortunately, in mass media, it is nearly impossible to instantaneously account for individual customer behavior. In the online arena, however, this is not necessarily the case.

Marketers have the ability to leverage online search to craft the initial user experience, through identifying the consumer's "consideration state" by the term being researched and ensuring that the initial brand experience conveys a relevant message. A recent search on Google revealed two separate examples of how pharmaceutical marketers are utilizing paid search advertising to leverage what they know about the consumer's mindset to craft the initial experience with their brand (See illustrations on page 83). After typing "overactive bladder" into the Google search engine, the top two paid links drive to branded pharmaceutical sites. In one scenario, the user lands on a page deep in content about the condition she is researching, while in the other the user is driven to the brand site where she has to identify once again that she is interested in learning more about the condition (as opposed to the brand). The first is clearly more customer-focused and will push the customer more efficiently through the continuum for the brand.

In addition to tailoring a Web site experience to a visitor's consideration mindset, based on even limited available information, marketers can leverage a wealth of information on consumers interacting with their CRM program to ensure strong levels of program engagement. Specifically, marketers can (and should) design business rules that account for the frequency with which they communicate to a particular customer based on their response to the last communication. Has your customer told you that their doctor just changed their dosing? Make sure your next communication addresses some concerns a customer whose dosage has been changed may have. Did your customer fail to respond to your last three e-mails? Try reaching them via direct mail.

IV. MAINTAIN AND OPTIMIZE AGAINST YOUR MARKETING DASHBOARD

It is imperative to allow sufficient time to document a measurement plan. Part of this process would include documenting Key Performance Indicators to track quantifiable program goals and the process by which this information will be disseminated following launch. Once the program is live, the marketing dashboard should be updated frequently enough to realign the program toward its goals, but not so frequently that key stakeholders lose interest because it lacks actionable data.

A marketing dashboard must identify quantifiable program goals, performance toward those goals and, most importantly, recommendations towards immediate optimization of the user experience if the data suggest the site is not driving toward those program goals. Most often, this simply would involve making adjustments to the marketing mix towards the channel(s) that elicit the most cost-efficient and engaged source of response. However, this could also involve changing or modifying any incentives that may be in place to assist in driving response, changing content on the site, or repositioning call-outs. When properly implemented, with all stakeholders vested in the measurement of an online program, the ability to make ongoing actionable decisions based on your marketing dashboard can result in a significant lift in ROI. ■

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