

10 TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR PHARMACEUTICAL BRANDED WEBSITE



Your pharma brand's website can be its best marketing tool. Think about it. In what other medium do you have a captive audience? An audience that sought you out specifically, if not by name, by related search term? Where else do you have virtually unlimited time and space to share your content? The chance to capture your target's contact information?

As market researchers, we have spent *a lot* of time listening to what patients and caregivers want and do not want when it comes to pharmaceutical websites.

Listen up! From the very big to the very small, here is a list of ten suggestions from consumers on how to increase your website's potential.

1 "SURPRISE AND DELIGHT ME THROUGH INFORMATION."

More often than not, the patient or caregiver is visiting your site because they are desperately seeking a better solution, or want to know the side effects of your drug from a credible source. While website "experiences" and being "surprised and delighted" with unexpected or trendy design features may be the gold standard in other categories, in pharma the delivery of critical and relevant information **MUST** be prioritized above all else.

2 "SHOW ME THAT I'M IN THE RIGHT PLACE."

This one is simple. Both the indication/condition AND the name of the drug must be stated clearly, boldly and consistently on every page of the website. This small tactical detail establishes an immediate sense of relevance, assuring the visitor that they are in the right place regardless of how they arrived or on which page they are entering.

3 "MAKE IT EASY FOR ME TO GO HOME."

Ensure there is always a clear option to return to the homepage from interior pages. Most visitors do not realize that clicking your logo will take them home. Without a specific option to return home, most will default to the browser's back button, which can cause frustrating delays in re-loading site content and/or may inadvertently take them away from your site.

4 "DON'T MAKE ME GUESS."

The taxonomy (labeling and order) of your site's navigation panel is critical to the site's success. While it may be tempting to use the navigation panel as a place to be creative, clever or to align with a campaign theme, visitors who are seeking answers do not want to guess what's behind door number one. Navigation labels should be concise, clear and descriptive of the content, as well as ordered in a manner that works with the visitor's priorities, not the brands.

5 "DON'T FORGET THAT I MAY NOT COME TO THE FRONT DOOR."

Many brands and agencies put a lot of effort into designing the ideal homepage, ensuring that it is inviting, organized and easy to navigate. At the same time, paid search strategies and other media for that same brand are driving visitors to interior landing pages, bypassing that perfect homepage. Remember that every page on your site should be able to "act" as a homepage, establishing relevance and giving visitors a reason and way to navigate.

7 "GIVE ME ACCESS TO SIDE EFFECT INFO, OR I'LL ASSUME YOU ARE DANGEROUS."

Many patients are visiting your site to research side effects. It may be the only detail that stands between your brand and a filled prescription or a patient request. When side effect information is not easy to find, visitors will assume your drug is going to kill them. Or they will resort to reading the ISI (Important Safety Information), which is clearly not a brand's best foot forward. Give side effects its own tab. The visitor will appreciate your transparency.

9 "IF YOU PROVIDE EASY ACCESS TO WHAT I CAME FOR, I'M MORE LIKELY TO CLICK AROUND."

It may seem counterintuitive, but the easier you make it for your visitor to get to the information they came for, the longer they will stay on your site. Burying their desired content or attempting to take them on a "journey" that favors your brand typically results in frustration and site exits. To encourage longer site visits and increased engagement, use seeded content on key pages that will encourage deeper clicks AFTER they have happily absorbed the content that they came for.

6 "DON'T EXPECT ME TO SCROLL OR TO READ EVERY WORD."

Assume nothing! Some visitors will never scroll down past the "fold" of the homepage unless the content below is visually teased. Most visitors are also skimming your site, not reading word for word. If important or motivating details exist in a large block of copy or at the bottom of a page, they are likely to be overlooked. Prioritize key content at the top of interior pages. Use bullets and bolds to indicate important information within the site.

8 "I WILL SIGN UP FOR YOUR THING, BUT ONLY IF YOU STATE WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME."

Don't ask the visitor to provide their email address without telling them explicitly what your CRM program will and will not do. Many find value in the idea getting information from a brand (especially if it is timely or, even better, customized), but they have questions. What are the program benefits? How often will you contact them? Will you sell their information? Give the visitor a sense of control and they are much more likely to sign up, on and in.

10 "IF I FEEL EDUCATED AND INFORMED, I'M MUCH MORE LIKELY TO ACT."

Your website is a marketing tool, but it doesn't need to promote in the same way as other marketing tools. On the website, you can "sell" through information. You can "promote" through education. You can "differentiate" by providing a transparent, simple and thorough experience. Visitors will only be motivated and able to act if they feel confident that their questions have been answered.

Your branded website is a major opportunity for your brand. It should be developed thoughtfully, researched thoroughly and optimized frequently to make the absolute most of its potential gains.

Above all else, brands must ensure that there is a specific consumer insight driving the organization and content strategy of their website. If there is no insight, find one and start over. It's that important. Because regardless of how great a site looks, how creative or integrated the approach – if it doesn't feel intuitive to the visitor, it fails. Failed websites can result in low engagement, high abandonment and negative business impact overall. Make it a point to prioritize your best marketing tool.

For more information on how to achieve insight for your websites, how to ensure insight is driving your website strategy and how to ensure your websites are operating to full potential, contact Brädo Creative Insight. Kim.bowers@brado.net