

Analysis of social media interactions between pharmaceutical companies and consumers: the power of the 'Like'

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Background

- Social media's ubiquity in society can be seen globally
- In 2008, 75% of Internet users used social media
- With Facebook now having 350 million members and Twitter seeing over 400 million Tweets each day, social media has become a vital tool for social interactions and knowledge dissemination
- Pharmaceutical companies utilizing these resources is important in staying competitive, but the way social media users respond is just as important
- Social media provides a unique outlet for users to see in real time how others respond to the content posted by liking, commenting, or interacting with the information in various ways, which allows for the information to be evaluated quickly based on its public reception
- This study evaluates the key elements of social presence and processes of pharmaceutical companies to assess the corresponding interactions with social media users and customers

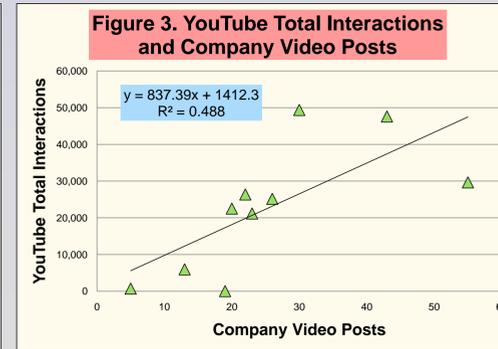
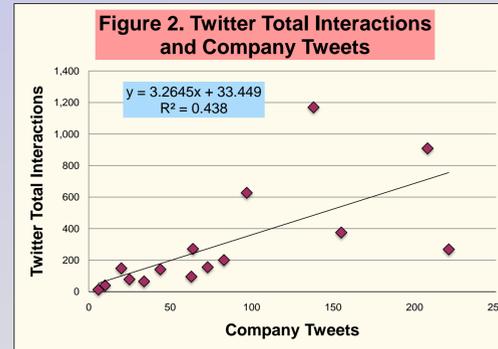
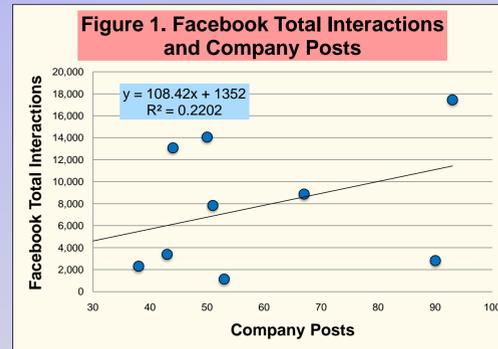
Objectives

- Primary: To determine if high social media usage by the top 20 pharmaceutical companies corresponds to higher interactions with consumers
- Secondary: To evaluate the interactions (both by pharmaceutical companies and consumer) qualitatively for subject matter

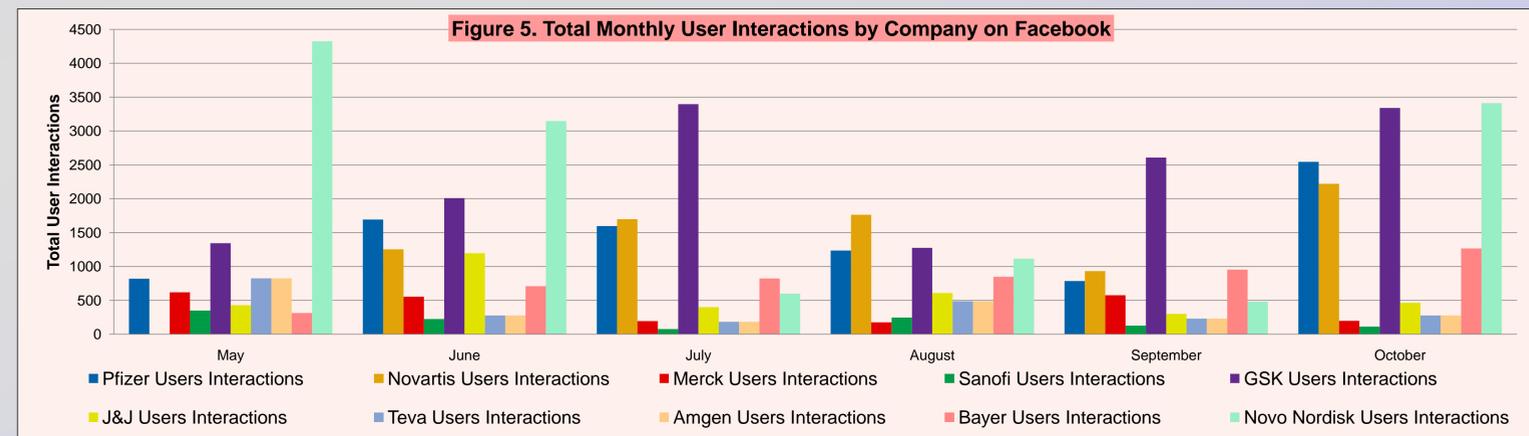
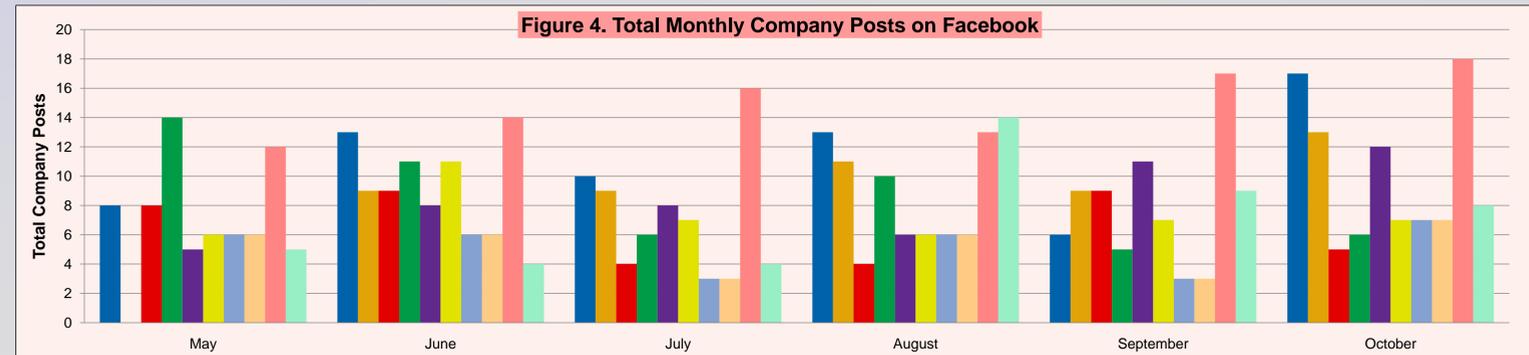
Methods

- Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube were chosen for this study due to their significant ownership in the social media market and the high amount of self-presentation and self-disclosure that each platform provides
- The top 20 pharma companies were determined by a ranking conducted by PharmExec in 2013 evaluating prescription sales and R&D spending
- Facebook and YouTube were retrospectively evaluated for social media usage during a 6 month time period (May 2013 - October 2013), while Twitter was evaluated for 1 month (October 2013)
- A linear regression was conducted to determine if high social media usage by pharmaceutical companies corresponded to higher total interactions by consumers

Results



Figures 1-3. Regression analyses compared total consumer interactions versus pharmaceutical company interactions on each social media platform. Consumer interactions were categorized for Facebook by: likes, comments, and shares to a post; for twitter by retweets, favorites, and comments to tweets; and for YouTube by: views, likes, and comments to video posts.



Figures 4,5. The following tables describe the 6 month trend of total interactions by consumers and pharmaceutical companies on Facebook. Total user interactions include likes, comments, and shares to a company's Facebook post.

Results Cont'd

- Consumer and pharmaceutical company interactions on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube did not demonstrate a linear relationship based off of the R² interpretations (0.22, 0.44, and 0.49; respectively)
- Twitter (90%) was the most highly used social media platform by the top 20 pharmaceutical companies followed by YouTube (70%) and Facebook (50%)
- Consumers were most likely to respond passively to company posts
 - On Facebook, consumers "liked" a post 67% of the time relative to commenting or sharing
- YouTube is the only social media platform that allowed users to see whether comments capabilities were disabled, and five companies took advantage of this feature and blocked commenting

Discussion

- Through this study, no significant relationship was seen by consumers' interactions with pharmaceutical companies on social media platforms
- Interestingly, companies were most likely to use Twitter (90%) even though it had the least social presentation and process.
- Information on all social media platforms was limited to forms of disease state awareness, business analytics, and community involvement
- By understanding social presence and self-presentation, pharma companies can best align with consumers on how to disseminate important information
- Further research looking at the relationship on types of posts correlating to customer response may provide further insights on the value of social media interactions

Limitations

- A significant limitation in proper evaluation of social media impact is the copious amounts of data
- The data mining of social media can be financially burdensome given the amount of human capital needed to go through all the various interactions

Disclosure

- No authors of this presentation have conflicts of interest to disclose