6 things that doctors want

And how technology can provide it
What do doctors want from the industry? This is a question that marketers have always asked; yet the answers are changing. Healthcare professionals’ needs are not static. They are both more questioning of the value that the industry provides and more open to new approaches.

Many of these expectations spring from technology-driven customer services that doctors daily receive in other parts of life – the on-demand, real-time and ‘just for you’ experiences that have built whole new industries over the last few decades. And so they now expect it from their industry partners and want to provide it for their patients too.

These needs are new but currently often unmet. So what do doctors want today? Agnitio has uncovered six clear needs that marketers can address right now.
Healthcare professionals are now looking to work closer with the industry but it has to be with shared goals. Doctors want a stronger collaboration with industry with the objective of raising the quality of patient care and improving treatment outcomes.

What this means is that the barriers to healthcare professional access come down as the industry raises its game - taking a more holistic approach that adds value beyond the product itself.

There are numerous ways to meet these needs. Doctors are calling for industry assistance in many areas including: online consultations, facilitating care at the bedside, individual patient follow up, patient information services and novel ways to enhance self-management.

“For me it’s about the whole picture. So it would be somebody who is not just coming to sell their product, but also being open to any questions and ideas. Not just talking the talk of being patient focused, but actually being that as well.”

Dr. Partha Kar
UK
It hasn’t gone unnoticed that doctors often receive better services as consumers than they do in their professional lives. So there is a growing interest in technology that improves services – both to them from industry partners and from them to patients and their families.

Good communication is seen as a vital aspect of patient care and there is a belief and desire that technology can and should support this. Yet there is no desire for novelties. It’s the value to the patient that counts.

In particular, communication technology that supports two-way understanding between doctor and patient is very interesting. As is any service that is smart enough to answer real patient questions and give useful guidance that reassures people, helps them get the best from their treatment, and reduces unnecessary consultations.

“It’s about content and delivery… if you are going to provide digital information, it has to be good content. It has to be delivered in a fast and an easy way.”

Dr. Grumet
USA
Information and education

As researchers and innovators, life science companies have long been seen as an incredible source of information. What is new is the opportunity that technology provides the industry to deliver this.

Doctors are increasingly looking to life science companies to take on a role as health educators, making information easily accessible to everyone - both professionals and patients.

Digital communication provides ways to do this in a relevant and timely fashion. Information can be delivered in a way that meets the needs of each individual and accessible in multiple channels and on any device. In other words, technology not only makes the delivery of information possible, it makes it easy - for life science companies, doctors and patients.

“For me, it’s almost completely educational...it would be presentations of the newest studies, based on the drugs that they are talking about. The newest indications, the most frequent side effects and really educational to me.”

Dr. Grumet
USA
A key need for healthcare professionals is treatment-compliant patients. Despite their best efforts, doctors know that many people do not strictly follow their treatment regimen – and so they are looking to the industry for help.

The recent development in consumer health tracking apps have got some doctors thinking that it may be possible to pursue a similar strategy for low-adherence conditions like hypertension – perhaps by prompting patients to follow the prescription or lifestyle advice.

What’s key is that technology must make the treatment meaningful to patients. In pain medication adherence is high because the benefits are obvious. So technology could have a role in making the value of medication clearer for other conditions? Increasing motivation by demonstrating an effect – such as showing blood pressure changing – can turn adherence into something patients want to do.
While medical professionals positively value the trend for patient empowerment, it does pose them challenges. Where previous generations would accept any advice, today’s empowered patients are more likely to question it - though they may be acting on poor quality or incorrect information gathered through online research.

To help ensure that people make fully informed decisions, doctors are looking to the industry to ensure that there is ready access to credible sources of information. This is especially important as developments in medical science enable more individualized therapy and customizable healthcare because there are more choices to make.

Pharma can help by providing authoritative, clear and useful materials that healthcare professionals can share with their patients.

“I think patients who are more informed tend to make better decisions. If you have a patient with a heart failure, and they have an easy place to go to read up on heart failure, they may be more likely to be complaint with the diet.”

Dr. Partha Kar
UK
Doctors are looking for a new kind of relationship. Rather than a sales interaction, they are increasingly interested in a deeper partnership - based on an aligned goal of improving treatment outcomes.

The way these relationships are built, however, will depend on the individual requirements of the doctor. Some will want face-to-face contact, while for others this can be intrusive and they may prefer more electronic communication or group meetings for a whole GP practice or department.

Technology has a key role in facilitating these new relationships. By connecting face-to-face engagement, remote meetings and self-guided multichannel communication, it’s possible to respond to individual preferences - while providing the same high quality experience however the contact occurs.

“Right now we have some fairly minimal patient handout things... so I think it would help to give our patients an easy online tool to further the information we counsel them on in the office.”

Dr. Grumet
USA
Agnitio is a forward-thinking technology company that opens new communication opportunities for life science companies and works to improve the relationships between industry and healthcare professionals.

Our latest solution, Rainmaker, enables our clients to meet healthcare professionals’ expectations for high value communication – both for themselves and their patients – to positively affect treatment outcomes.

“Times are changing and healthcare professionals are now more open to new approaches. At Agnitio, we are working with life science companies around the world to respond to these new needs – building systems that enable a deeper relationship.”

Morten Hjelmsoe
Founder

About Agnitio
Sources

Agnitio qualitative interviews with doctors in the UK and USA. Research conducted in September-October 2015.

HCPs: We want Partnerships with Pharma. An eyeforpharma whitepaper based on M3 EU and eyeforpharma survey of 549 HCPs, 2015.

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