The Marketer's Ultimate Guide to **Adverse Events in Social Media**

> “Social media’s greatest gift to mankind is the opportunities it provides for healthcare and the wellness of people.”
>
> **– LiveWorld CEO Peter Friedman**

The Marketer’s Ultimate Guide to Adverse Events in Social Media

There’s one sure-fire way to break through to your patients and customers: having 1-to-1 conversations. And the most practical way to do that is through social media. However, pharmaceutical companies can’t participate in social media without having the processes and procedures in place to manage adverse events in social media. Whether you create a branded Facebook page or have conversations with consumers through messaging apps and chatbots, these conversations may lead to adverse events. It is mandated by the FDA that pharmaceutical companies must have processes in place for adverse events management.

To understand how social media channels can best benefit patients, it is important to understand the patient journey and the needs that drive people to use social media as a source of information. Typically, when patients begin having symptoms, they will begin by searching social channels for information. Their initial discoveries often occur before or in parallel with a healthcare professional (HCP) visit. The subsequent HCP diagnosis then triggers a second wave of research. Newly-diagnosed patients go online to seek more information about their conditions from both credible sources, and from people like themselves. Stories from other patients is key to the healing power of social support

As a result, it’s inevitable that some patients will share inaccurate information, causing adverse events. Pharmaceutical companies should be taking part in conversations with consumers and counter false information with their voice of authority.

While facilitating and participating in online conversations with consumers is vital, you need to have the right processes in place first.

The Patient Journey

This graphic shows the patient journey from self-diagnosis to gaining peer support for symptoms.

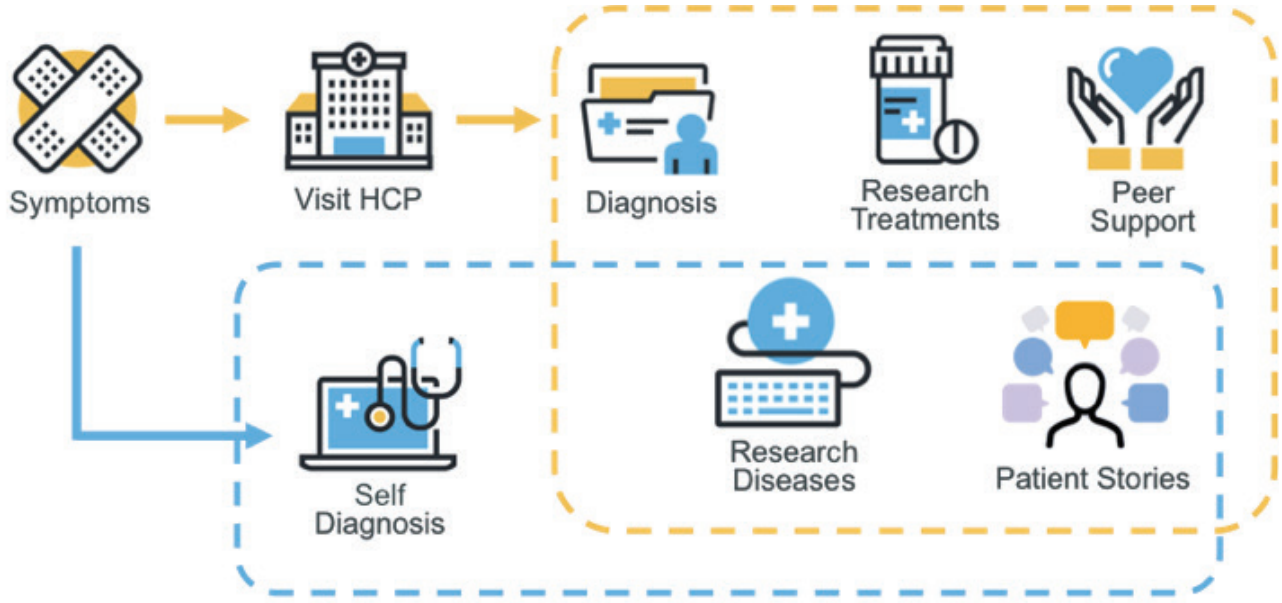
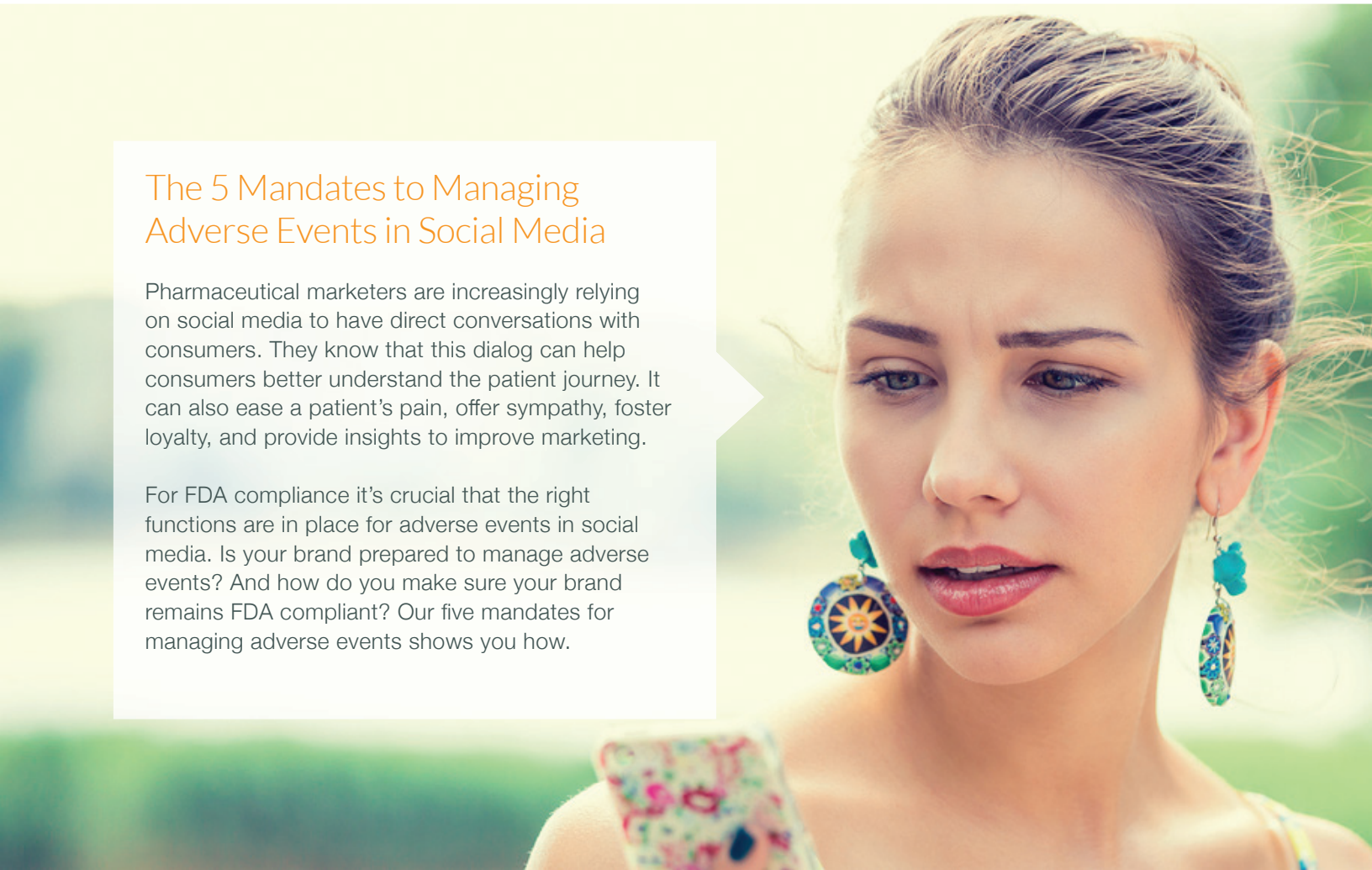


Image courtesy of LiveWorld. © LiveWorld



The 5 Mandates to Managing Adverse Events in Social Media

Pharmaceutical marketers are increasingly relying on social media to have direct conversations with consumers. They know that this dialog can help consumers better understand the patient journey. It can also ease a patient's pain, offer sympathy, foster loyalty, and provide insights to improve marketing.

For FDA compliance it's crucial that the right functions are in place for adverse events in social media. Is your brand prepared to manage adverse events? And how do you make sure your brand remains FDA compliant? Our five mandates for managing adverse events shows you how.

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The power of online dialogue establishes a relationship with consumers. **It can produce:**

A Sense of Community

Ease Patient's Pain & Provide Sympathy

Understanding Patient Journey

Consumer Loyalty

Did you know...

If you work at a pharmaceutical company you'd be responsible if you heard about an adverse event at a **cocktail party**?

For FDA compliance it's crucial that the right functions are in place for adverse events in social media.

Pervasive Review & Monitoring of UGC

Software and Human Agents

Routing of Alerts to Pharmacovigilance

Archiving of Alerts for Compliance

LiveWorld

5 Mandates to Adverse Events Coverage In Social Media

1 Commitment to using social media

Commitment from Marketing, Pharmacovigilance & Executives

2 Approved process for managing adverse events in social media

Process must be collaborative

3 Human agents and software solution

Software can help automate. Human monitors assure no misses

4 Direct line of communication with Legal, MedReg, & Pharmacovigilance

5 Regular reporting and archiving

Use software to store alerts for the FDA

The one key element all pharma brands need to manage adverse events: A close partnership with pharmacovigilance

Brands that have successfully managed adverse events in social media have one thing in common: all have buy-in from their pharmacovigilance (PV) team. Below is a primer that all pharma marketers need to know about working with PV – and how to make the most of this crucial partnership.

What does Pharmacovigilance do – and why do they matter?

The pharmacovigilance team focuses on collecting, monitoring, researching, assessing, and evaluating information from healthcare providers and patients on the adverse effects of medications. They monitor the effects of medicine during all stages of the product lifecycle, from clinical trials until after the product is available to the public. That's why acquiring adverse event data from social media is vital to pharmacovigilance.

PV and marketing are required to work together

In the past, pharmacovigilance was strictly a downstream recipient of data related to adverse event. Before tightened FDA regulations introduced in the 1990s, companies were slow to report AEs to pharmacovigilance, but the introduction of regulations and internal controls reduced that time. As a result, marketing and PV have become partners at pharmaceutical companies.

Marketing teams must have a relationship with their pharmacovigilance colleagues. In addition, social media marketing lets pharmacovigilance take a more active role in adverse events collection by giving them a direct connection to patients and adverse events reporting. As a result, social media marketing can provide your pharmacovigilance team a closer connection to patients, and provide earlier responses to adverse events. A process that decades ago could take months or years, when the pharmacovigilance department relied solely on adverse events reporting from physicians.

Develop a sound tracking process for AEs – and everyone benefits

To ensure your pharma brand stays FDA compliant, it's important to create a sound adverse events tracking system in place.

Companies need to develop their own strategies for sustainable engagement with consumers by framing guidelines for online interactions and messaging. An effective social media model will allow them to create a strategic pharmacovigilance practice that is less reactionary, process-intensive or resource-heavy. It will help them become a proactive agent for patient safety. Specifically, it will make them future-ready.

> "An effective social media model will… help them become a proactive agent for patient safety."

Need a process to capture adverse events in social media? **Start here.**

Your AE process should include both software and human agents. Software is effective at the scale that social media requires, by automatically capturing adverse events and bringing them to the foreground. It also enables the reporting and archiving of the AE's. Meanwhile, human agents can catch the adverse events typically missed by automated software, such as "me too's," sarcasm, inflection, misspellings, and syntax.

As LiveWorld has discussed previously, pharmacovigilance and marketing should work together to develop the process. This includes creating the rules for the identification and notifications of AE's to pharmacovigilance, along with scripted brand responses from marketing. It's important to develop a sub-process so you can continually improve the effectiveness of your scripted responses.

Use this process to capture adverse events in social media.

The FDA, MHRA, and EMA mandate that pharmaceutical companies have a process for Managing Adverse Events

Step 1

Assure the following functions are in place

Software

to systematize adverse events capture

Human Agents

most effective method to evaluate context and tone

LiveWorld

Step 2 Content Review

UGC Created in Social Media

Software pulls in content

Human agents review content

Step 3 Manage Content

Is there an adverse event?

Should the content be removed?

Does the content require a response?

YES

NO

YES

Delete UGC

PHARMA TEAM

BRAND TEAMS

Notify Pharmacovigilance, Legal, MedReg

Processes the AE

Prescripted and preapproved response

Continual Brand Response improvement

Step 4

Reporting for different colleagues & marketing improvement

- Reports to MedReg
- Reports to Brand
- Reports to Pharmacovigilance
- Reports to Marketing
- Reports by social media channel
- Reports by response time
- Reports by scripted response

Say yes to social media and no to adverse events risk

Patients are increasingly turning to social media, healthcare communities about specific illnesses and conditions, and even messaging apps and chatbots, to find information and sympathy. They're sharing information about your brand – and likely adverse events.

Today, it's crucial for pharma brands to be using social media, messaging and chatbots as well – and it goes beyond the benefits of connecting with consumers through 1-to-1 dialog. Marketers also need to participate in social media to counter the false information on the internet about medicines, sharing their company's expertise and authority to provide a trusted source of correct medical information.

As we outlined above, adverse events are no longer a barrier to entry in social media for pharmaceutical companies. The key to risk-free social media is to put an established process in place and get buy-in from cross-functional teams such as pharmacovigilance. Finally, use a combination of software, human agents, strict procedures and agreed-upon scripts to address adverse events day to day.

The result: your brand can connect with consumers and be part of the conversation on their path to wellness – and remain FDA-compliant.

See how LiveWorld can help you manage adverse events.

Through services and software, LiveWorld empowers the largest companies in the world to deliver social customer experiences that deepen relationships between brands and customers. Our marketing, customer service, and insights solutions enable companies to maximize the potential of social media and online communities. LiveWorld services include strategy, campaign management, content moderation, customer engagement, social media analytics, and customer service. For over 19 years, LiveWorld has delivered services and software for moderation, engagement, customer service, and insight, enabling brands to manage social media and online community programs at scale. LiveWorld clients include the #1 brands in consumer packaged goods, retail, pharmaceutical, financial, and travel services. LiveWorld is headquartered in San Jose, California, with offices in New York City and Austin.

Learn more at **www.liveworld.com**.

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