

A healthcare professional, likely a nurse or doctor, is shown from the chest up. She is wearing teal scrubs and has a stethoscope around her neck. She is holding a tablet computer with both hands and looking at the screen with a slight smile. The background is a bright, out-of-focus hospital setting. A large orange banner with a white border is positioned at the bottom of the image, containing the title text.

# HCP Social Media Hacks

“

Social advertising has taken over as one of the best ways for brands to market to either a broad or targeted demographic of potential buyers. **Despite its widespread use, however, many companies still get social marketing wrong.** Even further, as you examine marketing strategies, you start to realize that there are myriad ways to get corporate social ads wrong and only a few ways to get them right.<sup>1</sup>

- AdAge Collective, October 2020

1. <https://adage.com/article/industry-insights/8-common-fixable-mistakes-corporate-social-ad-strategies/2285766>

# HCPs USE OF THE BIG FOUR



If social media is hard for consumer brands, it's doubly so for brands marketing to healthcare professionals. **Finding them, talking to them, and most importantly, sharing information they'll value** is a challenge that rewards those brands who take the time to do it right.



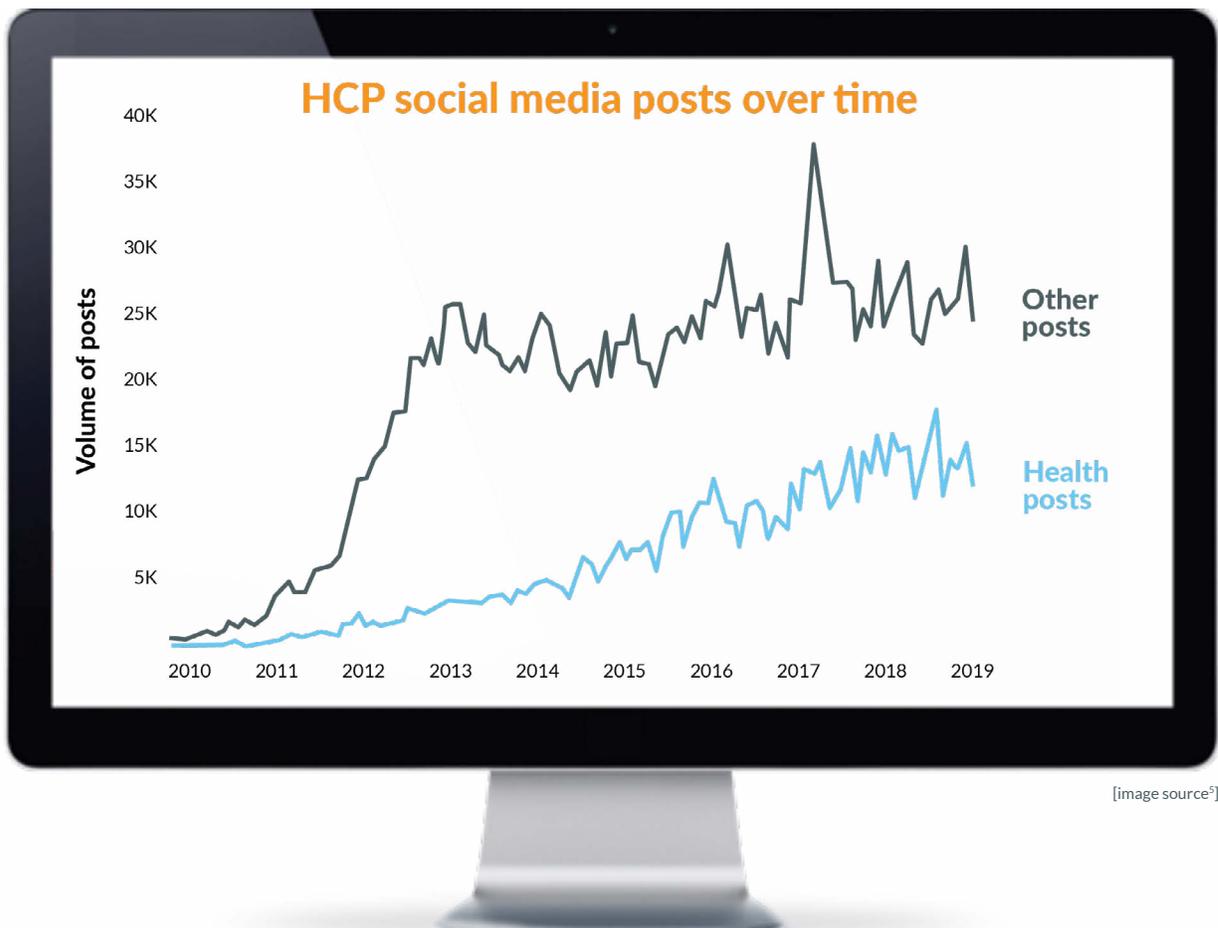
It may surprise you to know that in addition to the “walled gardens” that we'll talk about in Chapter 3, HCPs use public social platforms to **discuss practice and treatment questions** with their peers, as well as **learn about brands, diseases, clinical data, study results, and scientific breakthroughs.**<sup>2</sup>



While HCPs turn to social media to find new patients and to communicate with consumers, they also use it to **bolster their own professional reputations, knowledge, and network.**



HCPs' professional participation in social media, according to HealthLink Dimensions' 2020 Communications Report, is up a whopping 35% since just a year ago.<sup>3</sup> And while they may enjoy a good cat video as much as the rest of us in their downtime, HCPs are most definitely discussing healthcare on public social media channels,<sup>4</sup> including FaceBook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.



[image source<sup>5</sup>]

2. <https://creation.co/knowledge/doctors-conversations-on-private-and-public-networks/>  
3. <https://healthlinkdimensions.com/email-deployment/healthcare-marketing-email-deployment/5-strategies-for-marketing-to-doctors-on-linkedin/>  
4. [http://www.pmlive.com/blogs/digital\\_intelligence/archive/2019/transformation\\_in\\_healthcare\\_professionals\\_digital\\_behaviours](http://www.pmlive.com/blogs/digital_intelligence/archive/2019/transformation_in_healthcare_professionals_digital_behaviours)  
5. [http://www.pmlive.com/blogs/digital\\_intelligence/archive/2019/transformation\\_in\\_healthcare\\_professionals\\_digital\\_behaviours](http://www.pmlive.com/blogs/digital_intelligence/archive/2019/transformation_in_healthcare_professionals_digital_behaviours)

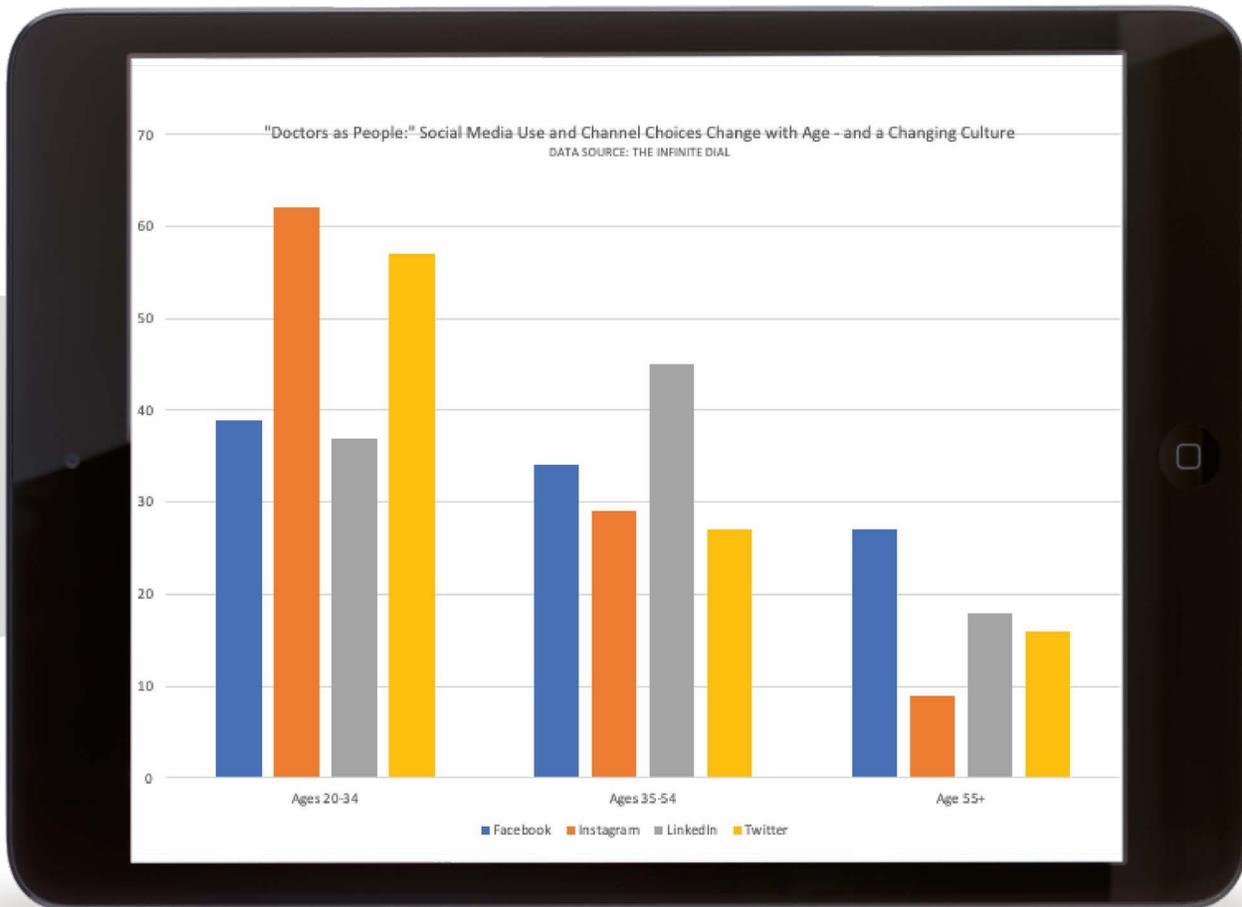
In this chapter, we'll focus on today's Big Four: **Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn**, all popular with HCPs for professional as well as personal reasons. (Bear in mind, those channels won't remain HCPs' first choice forever: keep an eye on what rising graduates are using for a clue as to what will be popular among HCPs in 5 years.)

Survey data from the Infinite Dial (Edison Research and Triton Digital), revealed that younger users not only use social media more in general, but spend more time on different channels.<sup>6</sup> So where Facebook and LinkedIn are more popular with older HCPs, younger users veer toward Instagram and Twitter.

Importantly, every social media platform fills a slightly different function in an HCPs' life and practice; how well you understand those nuances can be the difference between a successful campaign or one that falls flat.

As to what kind of content HCPs gravitate to, education is a clear winner, while product information is a strong second.<sup>7</sup>

As you think about how to use these public channels in your social media strategy for HCPs, keep in mind these seven guidelines for every channel you choose to use:



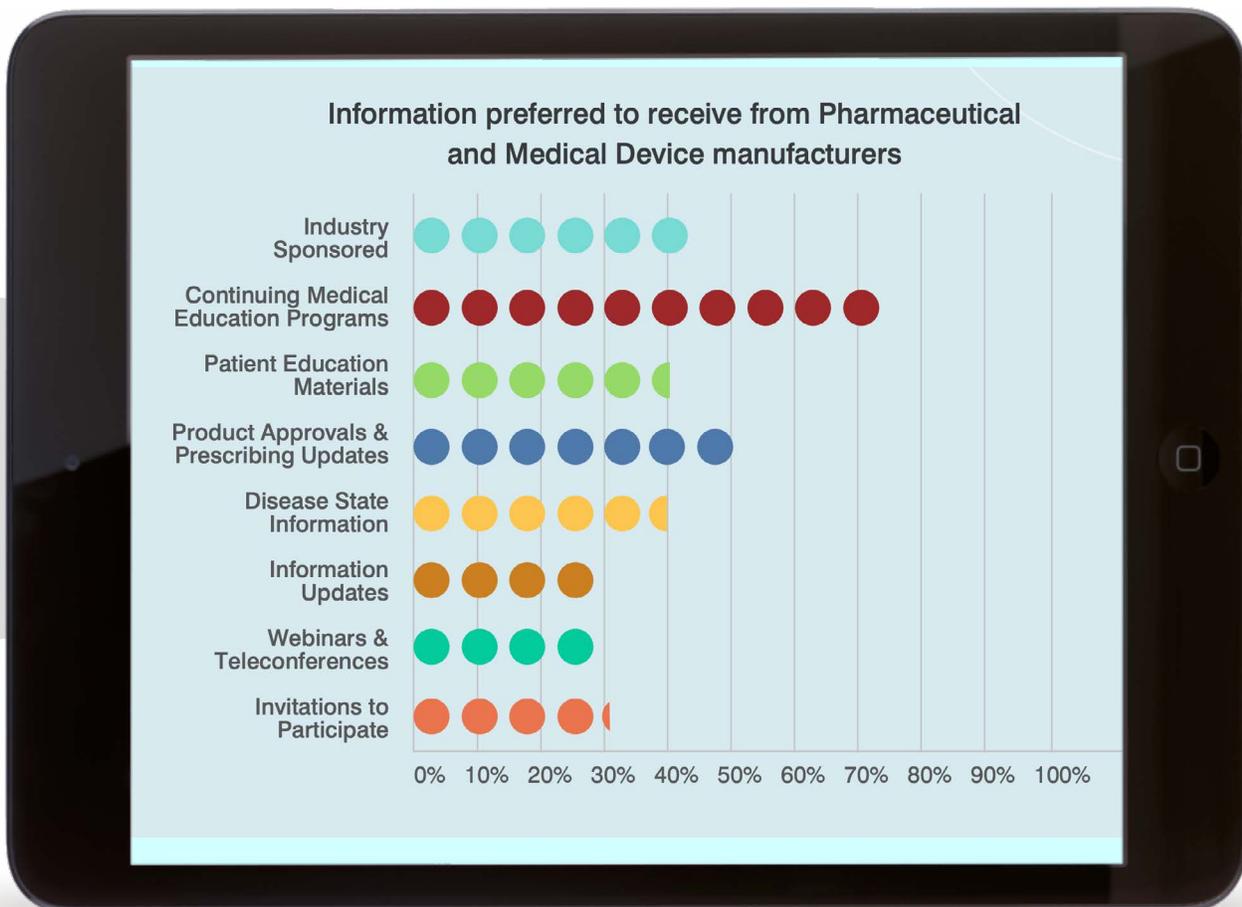
6. <https://intrepy.com/12-medical-marketing-strategies-practice/#social-media-marketing>  
7. <https://healthlinkdimensions.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Medicine-on-the-Move-Final-Version.pdf>  
8. <https://healthlinkdimensions.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Medicine-on-the-Move-Final-Version.pdf>  
9. [http://s.seremo.com/rs/239-PZX-356/images/Sermo\\_The\\_Digital\\_Day\\_of\\_an\\_HCP\\_2019.pdf?utm\\_campaign=klickhealth&utm\\_medium=klick\\_wire&utm\\_source=klickhealth&utm\\_content=kwire\\_hcp-day\\_20190520](http://s.seremo.com/rs/239-PZX-356/images/Sermo_The_Digital_Day_of_an_HCP_2019.pdf?utm_campaign=klickhealth&utm_medium=klick_wire&utm_source=klickhealth&utm_content=kwire_hcp-day_20190520)  
10. [https://www.google.com/search?q=top+hashtags+twitter+medical&client=firefox-b-1-d&source=Int&tbs=qdr:m&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjo0c\\_d8MPtAhVUBc0KHw69CdUQpwV6BAGXECI&biw=1317&bih=702](https://www.google.com/search?q=top+hashtags+twitter+medical&client=firefox-b-1-d&source=Int&tbs=qdr:m&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjo0c_d8MPtAhVUBc0KHw69CdUQpwV6BAGXECI&biw=1317&bih=702)  
11. <https://www.symplur.com/healthcare-hashtags/medtwitter/>  
12. [http://s.seremo.com/rs/239-PZX-356/images/Sermo\\_The\\_Digital\\_Day\\_of\\_an\\_HCP\\_2019.pdf?utm\\_campaign=klickhealth&utm\\_medium=klick\\_wire&utm\\_source=klickhealth&utm\\_content=kwire\\_hcp-day\\_20190520](http://s.seremo.com/rs/239-PZX-356/images/Sermo_The_Digital_Day_of_an_HCP_2019.pdf?utm_campaign=klickhealth&utm_medium=klick_wire&utm_source=klickhealth&utm_content=kwire_hcp-day_20190520)

- 1. Understand how HCPs are using each channel** to connect and share professionally.
- 2. Be an active manager** of your social media accounts: follow, share, and post frequently with visually-driven content. Remember that branded posts need to include Fair Balance language.
- 3. Focus your content** on subjects of interest to your target HCPs, which may mean setting up multiple accounts per platform.<sup>9</sup>
- 4. Maximize your hashtag strategy:** some of the general hashtags followed or searched out by HCPs include #tipsfornewdocs, #medtwitter, #HCPs, #somedocs, #HCSM (for Health Care Social Media), #MDChat, #MedED, #clinicaltrials, and #Health21, as well as brand

names, conditions, associations, journals, and conferences.<sup>10,11</sup>

- 5. Research what HCPs are saying in each channel:** reflect and respond to the terms, topics and questions they bring up.
- 6. Optimize for mobile:** according to Sermo, 74% of physicians start their day, and 52% end their day on their phones.<sup>12</sup>
- 7. Work with an expert:** platform rules for content, paid and branded advertising - for pharma in particular - are constantly changing, sometimes overnight: running without expert advice can risk poor targeting, low ROI, and even a letter from the FDA.

Read on for a deeper dive into how today's HCPs use Facebook, Twitter, and more.



[image source:Healthlink<sup>®</sup>]

6. <https://intrepy.com/12-medical-marketing-strategies-practice/#social-media-marketing>  
7. <https://healthlinkdimensions.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Medicine-on-the-Move-Final-Version.pdf>  
8. <https://healthlinkdimensions.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Medicine-on-the-Move-Final-Version.pdf>  
9. [http://s.sermo.com/rs/239-PZX-356/images/Sermo\\_The\\_Digital\\_Day\\_of\\_an\\_HCP\\_2019.pdf?utm\\_campaign=klickhealth&utm\\_medium=klick\\_wire&utm\\_source=klickhealth&utm\\_content=kwire\\_hcp-day\\_20190520](http://s.sermo.com/rs/239-PZX-356/images/Sermo_The_Digital_Day_of_an_HCP_2019.pdf?utm_campaign=klickhealth&utm_medium=klick_wire&utm_source=klickhealth&utm_content=kwire_hcp-day_20190520)  
10. [https://www.google.com/search?q=top+hashtags+twitter+medical&client=firefox-b-1-d&source=Int&tbs=qdr:m&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjo0c\\_d8MPtAhVUBc0KHw69CdUQpwV6BAGXECI&biw=1317&bih=702](https://www.google.com/search?q=top+hashtags+twitter+medical&client=firefox-b-1-d&source=Int&tbs=qdr:m&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjo0c_d8MPtAhVUBc0KHw69CdUQpwV6BAGXECI&biw=1317&bih=702)  
11. <https://www.symplur.com/healthcare-hashtags/medtwitter/>  
12. [http://s.sermo.com/rs/239-PZX-356/images/Sermo\\_The\\_Digital\\_Day\\_of\\_an\\_HCP\\_2019.pdf?utm\\_campaign=klickhealth&utm\\_medium=klick\\_wire&utm\\_source=klickhealth&utm\\_content=kwire\\_hcp-day\\_20190520](http://s.sermo.com/rs/239-PZX-356/images/Sermo_The_Digital_Day_of_an_HCP_2019.pdf?utm_campaign=klickhealth&utm_medium=klick_wire&utm_source=klickhealth&utm_content=kwire_hcp-day_20190520)

# FACEBOOK: THE DAILY NEWSFEED

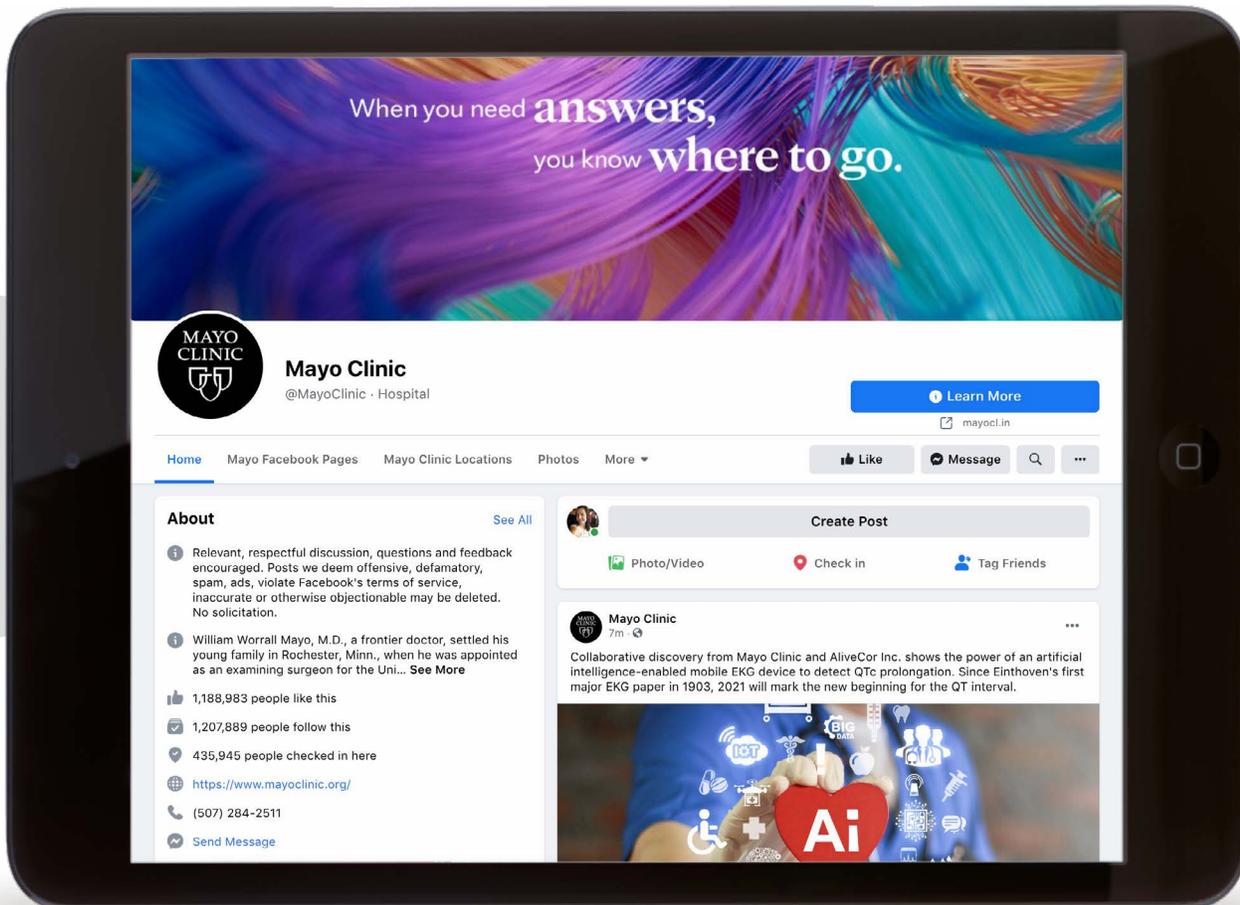
There are four major ways HCPs use Facebook, in addition to individual accounts:

## Facebook Groups:

There are hundreds of Facebook groups started by doctors, for doctors, with memberships ranging from a few hundred to tens of thousands.<sup>13</sup> Some of these are open to all, to increase public awareness and motivate behavior change, while private groups exist for sharing personal and patient stories.<sup>14</sup>

## Practice pages:

Many physicians use Facebook to grow their practices, offering prospective patients an easy way to learn about the staff, their safety precautions, insurance acceptance, and other important points. Some doctors use their page to share links, videos, and other public health information. Some allow patients to instant message (IM) them for important questions.<sup>15</sup>



13. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7494133/>  
 14. <https://www.mdsearch.com/physician-careers/physicians-on-facebook>  
 15. <https://www.mdsearch.com/physician-careers/physicians-on-facebook>  
 16. <https://pharmaphorum.com/views-analysis-digital/whathcpstink-5-digital-behaviours-when-hcps-use-social-media/>  
 17. <https://powerfulpatients.org/2019/12/18/health-care-and-social-media-importance-of-facing-their-challenges/>  
 18. <https://www.mdsearch.com/physician-careers/physicians-on-facebook>  
 19. <https://www.facebook.com/MayoClinic>

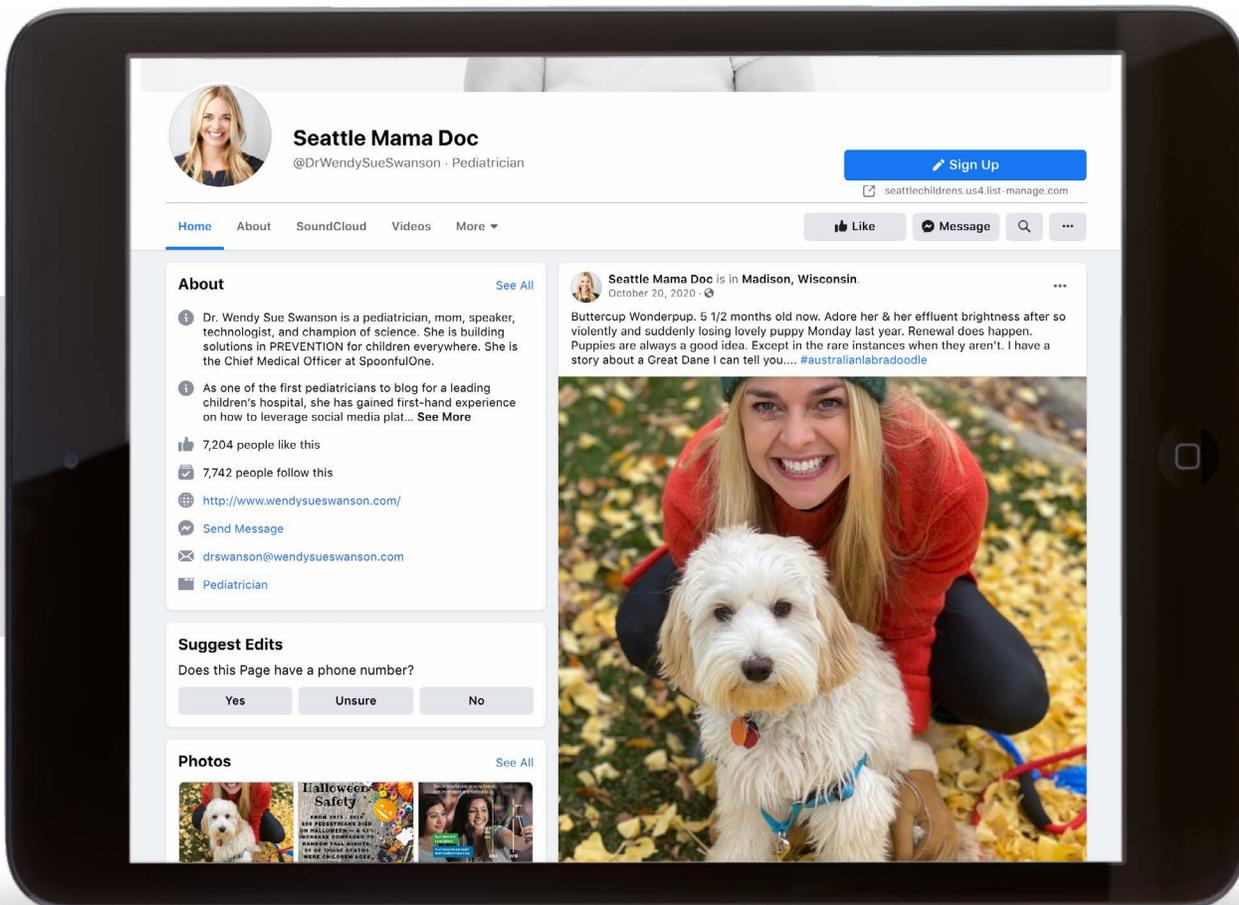
# FACEBOOK: THE DAILY NEWSFEED

## Influencers:

In addition to practice information, many HCPs are FaceBook influencers, covering topics relevant to their specialties and patient needs, in formats ranging from quick posts to videos, to blog links. For example, Seattle pediatrician @DrWendySueSwanson regularly posts information about her practice as well as childhood health issues to her 7000+ followers.<sup>16</sup>

## Institutional pages:

99% of hospitals in the U.S. have an active Facebook page,<sup>17</sup> for recruiting patients as well as staff, by offering an easy-to-access look at where they are, what they offer, and links to more content.<sup>18</sup> The Mayo Clinic offers its Facebook page as a place for “relevant, respectful discussion, questions and feedback” for its half-million followers.<sup>19</sup>



13. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7494133/>  
 14. <https://www.mdsearch.com/physician-careers/physicians-on-facebook>  
 15. <https://www.mdsearch.com/physician-careers/physicians-on-facebook>  
 16. <https://pharmaphorum.com/views-analysis-digital/whatchpsthink-5-digital-behaviours-when-hcps-use-social-media/>  
 17. <https://powerfulpatients.org/2019/12/18/health-care-and-social-media-importance-of-facing-their-challenges/>  
 18. <https://www.mdsearch.com/physician-careers/physicians-on-facebook>  
 19. <https://www.facebook.com/MayoClinic>

# BEST IN CLASS

We like how Moderna, one of the leading Covid-19 vaccine makers, has a straightforward, science-first approach to its Facebook page.<sup>20</sup> By keeping their content focused on evidence, they are providing the information HCPs are most interested in right now.

In contrast, Pfizer, a giant in the fight against Covid, uses its Facebook feed for news on everything, from its vaccine to campaigns about cardiac and blood disorders, to sharing social justice initiatives. All important and worthy information, but not geared toward providing data to busy doctors on the platform they use daily.

## Implications for Marketers

A branded Facebook page with content that's fresh, frequent and factual is the first foundational step for anyone searching out your brand. But what many marketers fail to do is take that next step to actively participate in the conversations that make Facebook a go-to destination for so many HCPs.



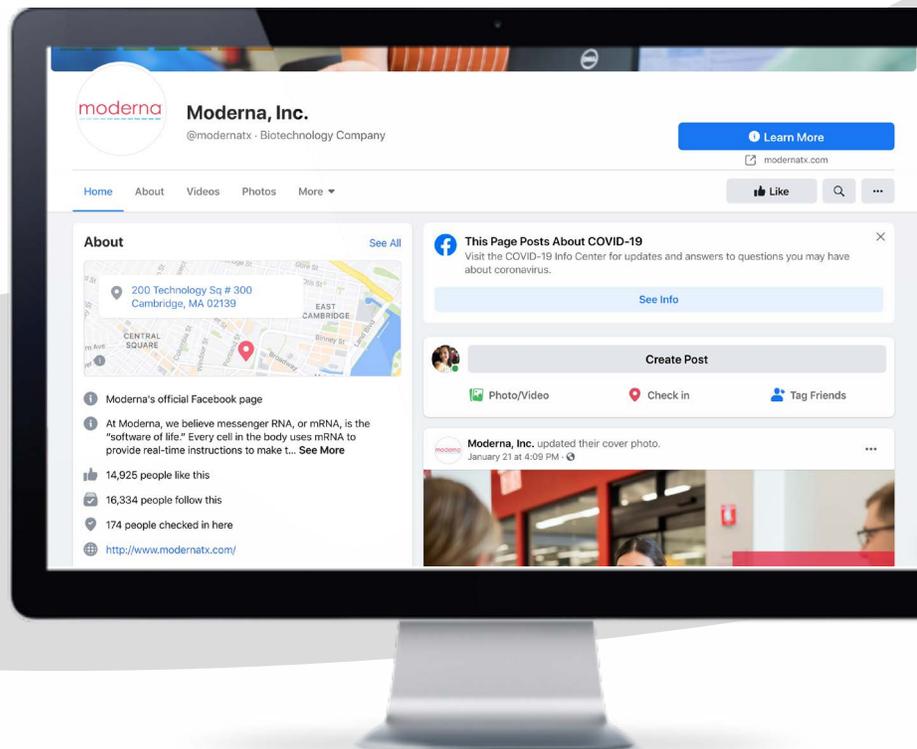
## What can that look like?

- A Facebook account or newsfeed specifically for scientific data, clinical trial recruitment and results, real-world evidence, educational opportunities and materials
- Ads that target HCPs' day-to-day needs<sup>21</sup>
- Native paid content that offers scientific and/or educational value
- Support and sponsor relevant Facebook Groups
- Active social media management that adds relevant commentary to appropriate groups and HCP discussions



## What to avoid:

- Corporate updates
- Internal news and events (save those for your employee-focused channels and accounts)
- Content that tries to be all things to all stakeholders



20. <https://www.facebook.com/modernatx>

21. <https://mergeworld.com/news/merge-insights/how-to-target-hcps-in-social?returnUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fmergeworld.com%2Fnews%3Fpage%3D2>

# INSTAGRAM: WHERE INFLUENCERS CAN BE THEMSELVES

As Facebook's more visual sister platform, Instagram (IG, or Insta to its friends) uses the immediacy of pictures and videos to transcend language to its billion monthly users.

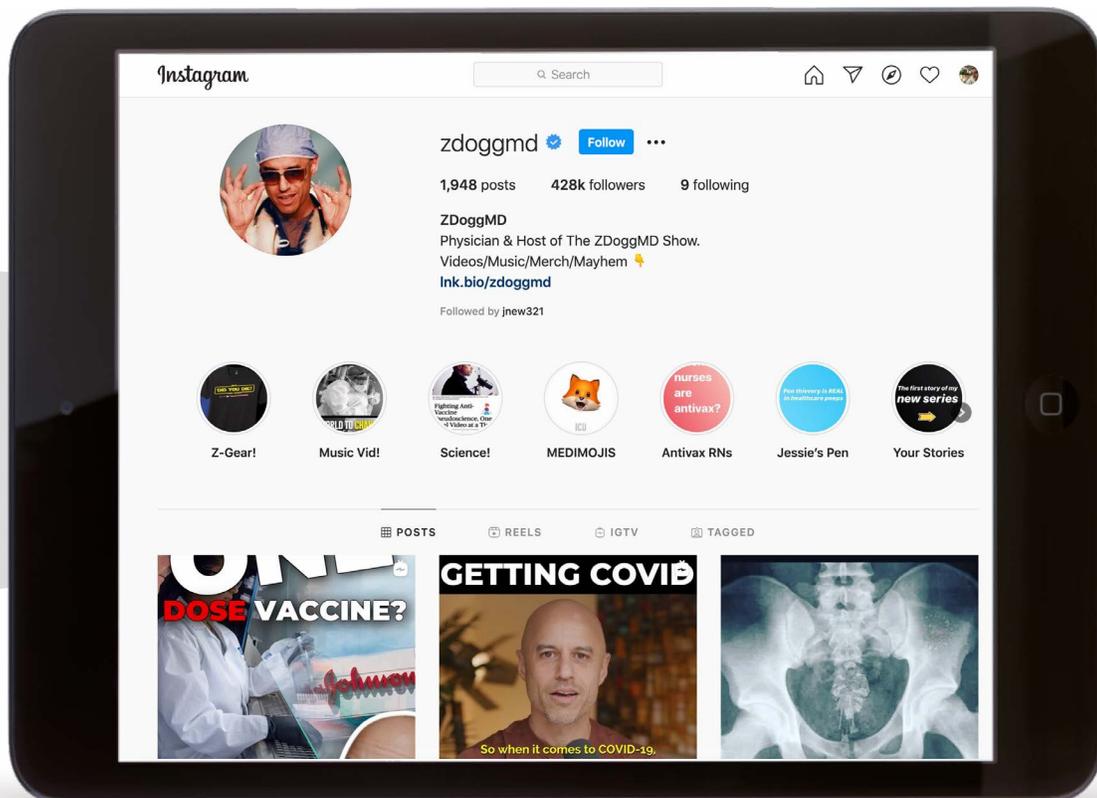
HCPs often use Instagram to humanize the daily grind of being a medical professional, posting selfies in scrubs and behind-



the-scenes pictures of operating rooms pre- or post-surgery. Insta Stories and Instagram Live allow doctors to bring their practices to life, sometimes seriously, sometimes humorously. You may have heard of @ZDoggMD, in real life, Dr Zubin Damania, who became a popular healthcare influencer through his musical takes on everything from combating

vaccine misinformation to supporting nurses.<sup>22</sup>

Other influencers bring a unique blend of the personal and professional, like ER Resident and heart-transplant recipient Dr. Alin Gragossian, who posts on @a\_change\_of\_heart\_blog. Alin combines her own story with inspiration and resources for transplant patients and families.<sup>23</sup>



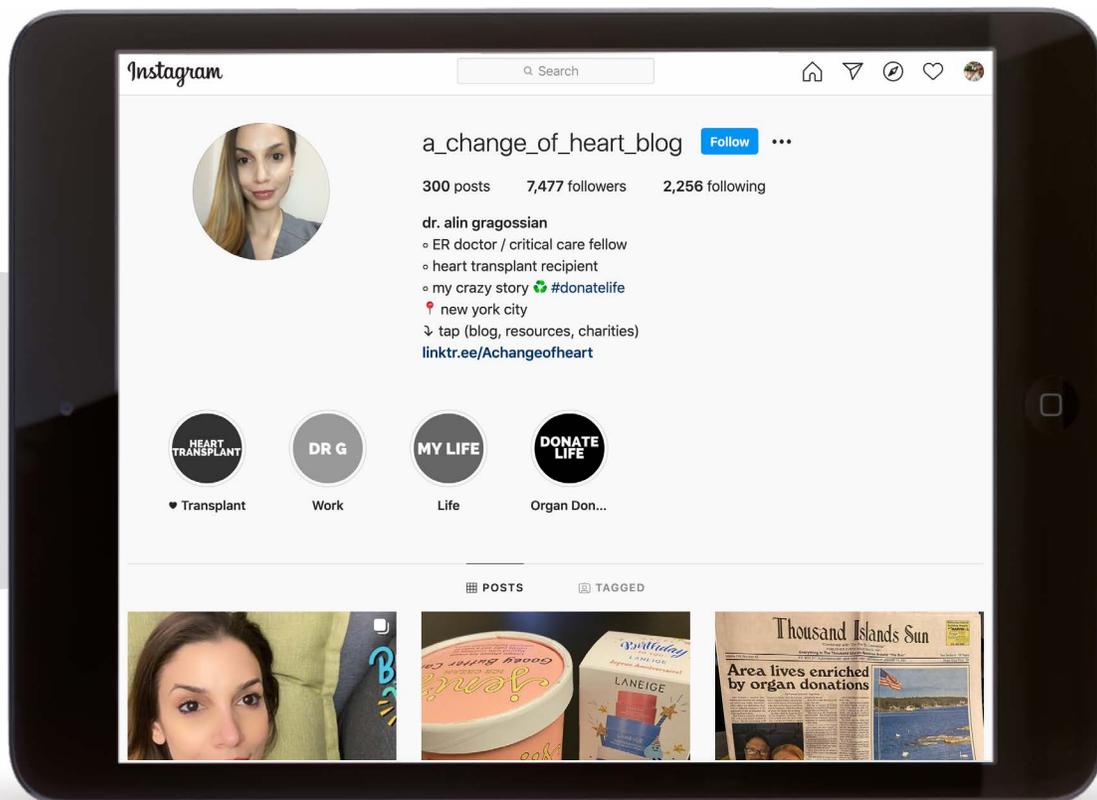
# INSTAGRAM: WHERE INFLUENCERS CAN BE THEMSELVES (CONT'D)

This kind of authenticity and ability to be “themselves” seems to be the reason that patients engage with HCPs on Instagram more than on other social media platforms, often in Q&A sessions led by the doctor.<sup>24</sup>

Instagram is also an educational resource, especially for younger HCPs.

In a post ironically shared on LinkedIn, one physician wrote “that in the last 6 months I have learned more medicine from Instagram than any other source.” Citing content that is more “digestible” than textbooks, and the ability to interact with a specific medical community, some of the educational influencers mentioned include

@eddyjoemd, “who brings evidence-based medicine to the front lines” and @justageneralsurgeon, who offers “a first-person view of his actual surgical procedures.”<sup>25</sup>



24. <https://pharmaphorum.com/views-analysis-digital/whathcpstink-5-digital-behaviours-when-hcps-use-social-media/>

25. [https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/time-acknowledge-instagram-home-medical-education-michael-javid-do/?trk=related\\_article\\_Is%20it%20time%20to%20acknowledge%20Instagram%20as%20a%20home%20to%20medical%20education%3F\\_article-card\\_title](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/time-acknowledge-instagram-home-medical-education-michael-javid-do/?trk=related_article_Is%20it%20time%20to%20acknowledge%20Instagram%20as%20a%20home%20to%20medical%20education%3F_article-card_title)

# BEST IN CLASS

We enjoyed Merck’s cheeky take in promoting 2019’s Infectious Disease Week, using all of Instagram’s visual capabilities to bring viewers into the experience, and appreciate Sanofi’s more serious educational efforts on rare diseases, which include quizzes and videos to help HCPs to get a quick understanding of the disease.<sup>26</sup>



## Implications for Marketers

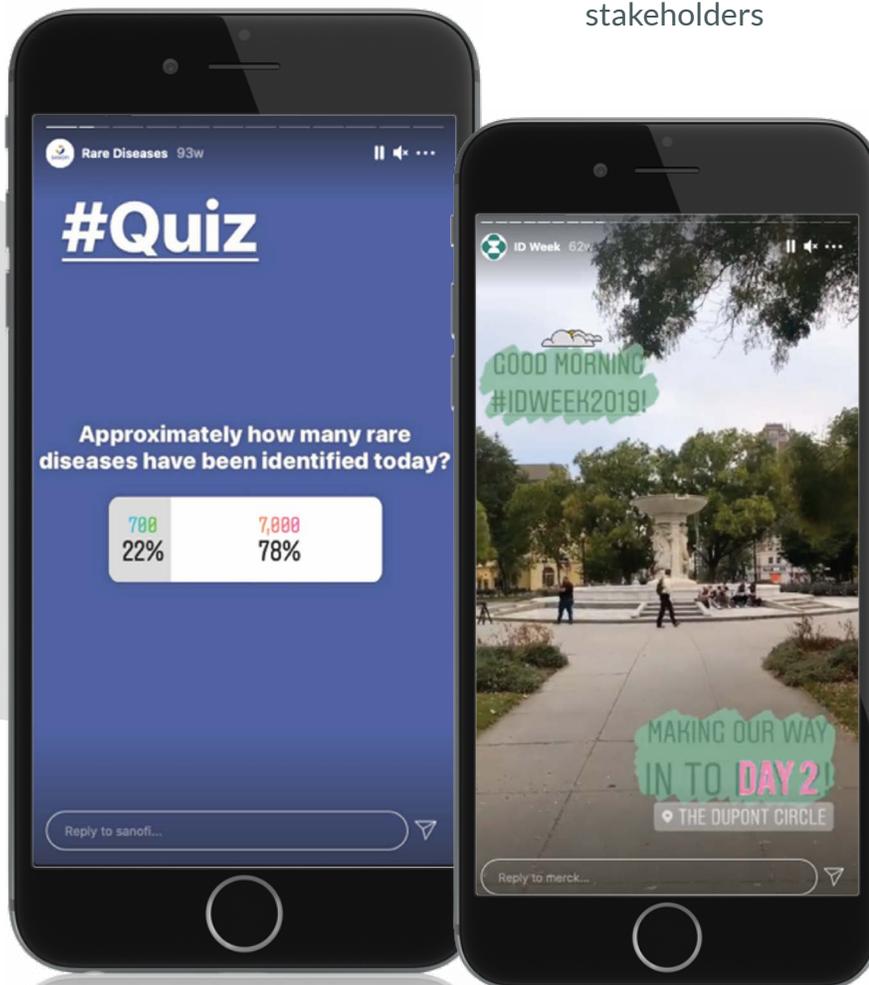
Just as with Facebook, it’s important to go beyond a single Instagram account that broadcasts content.

- Consider your target HCPs: what behind-the-scenes content would they value? What makes it personal?
- Consider teaming up with relevant influencers to talk about science and myth-busting.
- Use the tools that make Instagram fun, even for doctors.
- Include interactive tools like quizzes for instant education.
- Have an active hashtag strategy.



## What to avoid:

- Static or infrequent posts
- Impersonal content
- Content that tries to be all things to all stakeholders



26. <https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/18097367983049816/>

# TWITTER: ON-THE-SPOT CONVERSATIONS

For Pharma brands, it's an important place to be, with over 640,000 HCPs on Twitter globally,<sup>27</sup> and a format that is the definition of the quick, snackable content that HCPs increasingly prefer. Twitter is where HCPs look for news and conference updates, and for an increasing number, it's one of the main public platforms where they use their voice to share science and data that support



public health. And they are often influenced by what they learn, including how they make treatment decisions.<sup>28</sup>

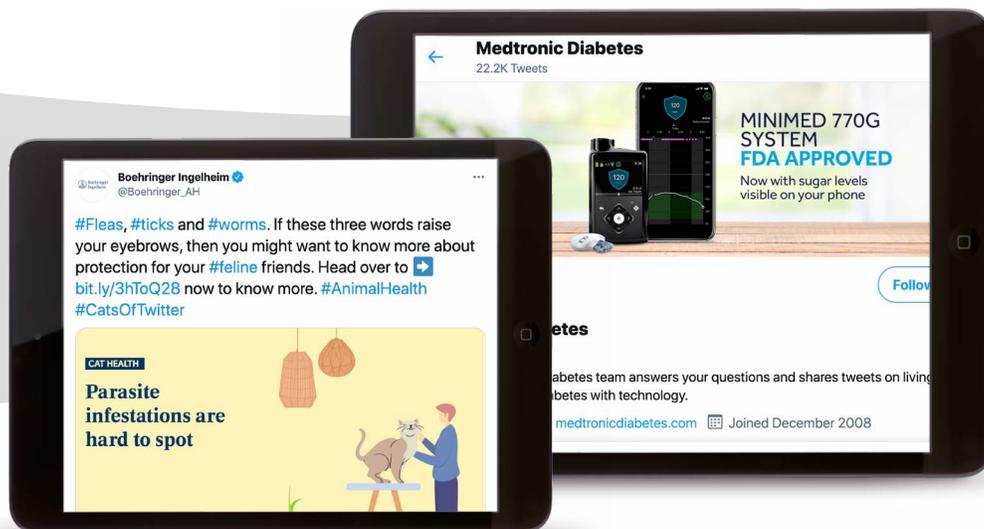
Twitter is a vibrant platform: There is actually a scholarly article in the Journal of Medical Internet Research that reports more than 140 different ways HCPs use Twitter.<sup>29</sup> **To take full advantage of the platform to engage with them, consider:**

- Teaming up or sponsoring public influencers or micro-influencers
- Promoting the proactive health measures.<sup>30</sup>
- Creating or sponsoring Twitter chats and/or Twitter Journal Clubs.<sup>31,32</sup>
- Amplify speaker presentations from conferences or webinars.<sup>33,34</sup>
- Post new data or treatments.<sup>35</sup>
- Share personal perspectives from influencers and micro-influencers, as well as in-house HCPs.<sup>36</sup>
- Offer patient stories and case studies.<sup>37</sup>



## What to avoid:

- Posting only content about your brand product
- A single handle for multiple types of content
- Treating Twitter as a broadcast medium, instead of a tool for engagement and interactivity



27. <https://pharmaphorum.com/views-analysis-digital/whathcpstthink-5-digital-behaviours-when-hcps-use-social-media/>

28. <https://avanthc.com/digital-opinion-influencers-vs-kols/>

29. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4103576/>

30. <https://www.jmir.org/2020/11/e21582>

31. <https://pharmaphorum.com/views-analysis-digital/whathcpstthink-5-digital-behaviours-when-hcps-use-social-media/>

32. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamadermatology/article-abstract/2762875>

33. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4103576/>

34. <https://mergeworld.com/news/merge-insights/how-to-target-hcps-in-social?returnUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fmergeworld.com%2Fnews%3Fpage%3D2>

35. <https://pharmaphorum.com/views-analysis-digital/whathcpstthink-5-digital-behaviours-when-hcps-use-social-media/>

36. [https://twitter.com/gradydoctor?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor](https://twitter.com/gradydoctor?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor)

37. <https://creation.co/knowledge/why-hcps-use-social-media-in-their-professional-lives/>

# BEST IN CLASS

Boehringer Ingelheim has put multiple twitter accounts to use, both on a regional basis and by subject matter.<sup>38</sup> For instance:

- @Boehringer\_bio shares the latest company biomedical “news, research, clinical trials, and reports”
- @boehringerlabs tweets about “medical devices in the areas of respiratory therapy, autologous blood recovery, suction controls and minimally invasive surgery”
- @Boehringer\_AH, the company’s global Twitter channel for their Animal Health business, tweets about, you guessed it, animal health and related company news.



## Implications for Marketers

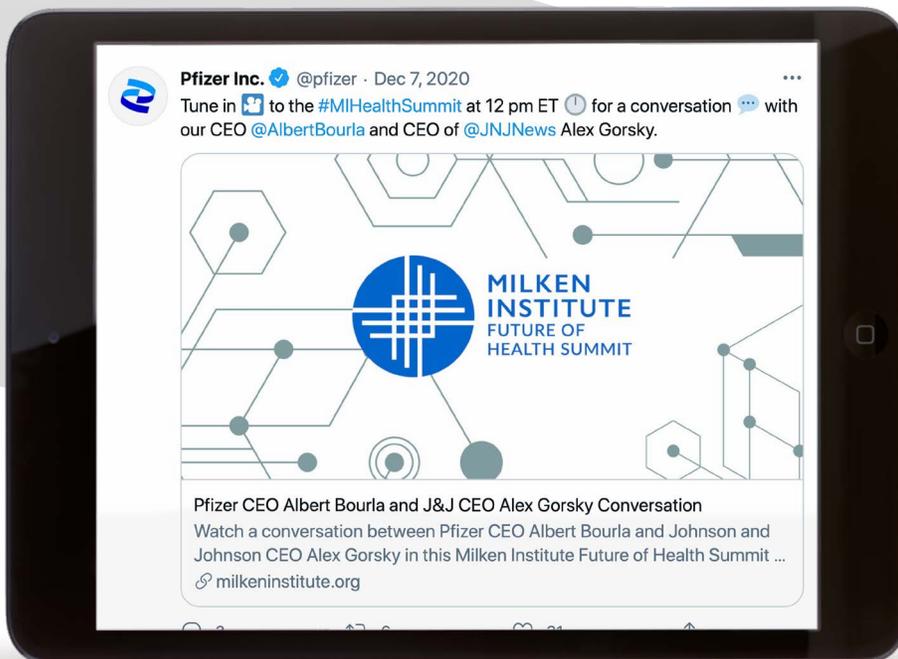
Since Twitter has restrictions on pharmaceutical advertising, it’s important to supplement any paid ads with an active presence on the platform.<sup>40</sup> Consider multiple accounts to focus content and:

- Support and amplify relevant HCP discussions.
- Sponsor and/or participate in Twitter Chats (including but not limited to medical conferences) and Journal Clubs.
- Support medical schools and students with educational opportunities and materials.
- Announce clinical trial recruitment and results.
- Offer timely access to new data and scientific innovations.



## What to avoid:

- Infrequent, low-value posts
- Content that tries to be all things to all stakeholders



38. [https://twitter.com/Boehringer\\_bio](https://twitter.com/Boehringer_bio)

39. <https://business.twitter.com/en/blog/healthcare-brands-use-twitter.html>

40. <https://business.twitter.com/en/help/ads-policies/ads-content-policies/healthcare.html>

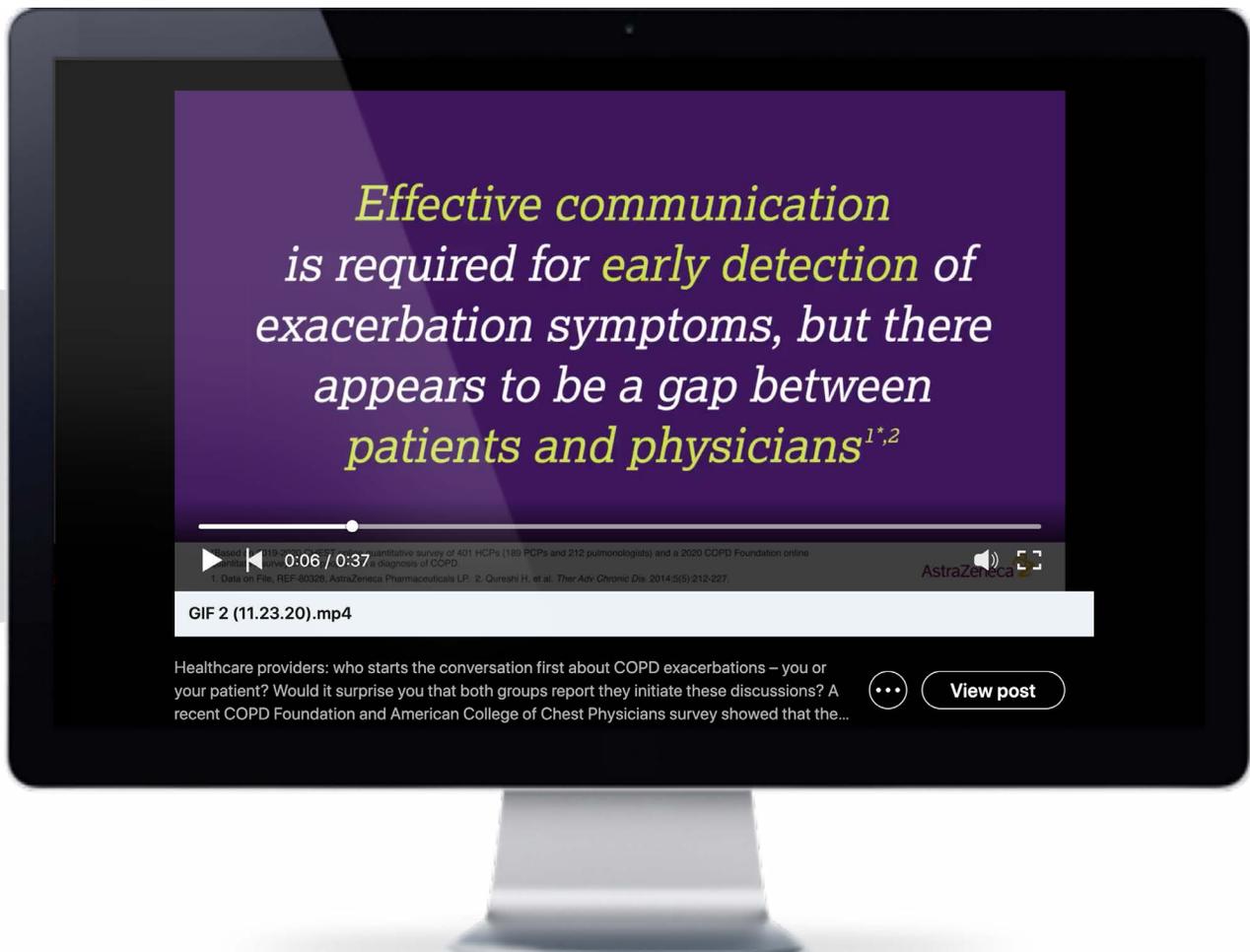
# LINKEDIN: WHERE HCPs GO TO WORK

Did you know that doctors use LinkedIn too? 90% have a LinkedIn profile, and according to a Sermo study, LinkedIn is the #1 network for HCPs looking for new jobs.<sup>41,42</sup> In the last year, LinkedIn reported a “surge” in HCP activity, with a 60% increase in content creation and a 55% increase in conversations<sup>43</sup>



Because it is a business-oriented platform, LinkedIn is where HCPs truly manage their professional reputations

- expanding their audience and influence among professional peers, enhancing their reputation for thought leadership, and creating opportunities to be “found” on search engines. Beyond that, LinkedIn is naturally a leading source of networking for jobs, recruiting for employees, even finding professional mentors. And like the other social platforms, LinkedIn provides opportunities to both teach and learn.<sup>44</sup>



41. <https://www.sermo.com/doctors-use-social-media/>

42. <https://www.meddatagroup.com/resource/physician-online-in-app-behaviors/>

43. <https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/blog/marketing-for-healthcare-services-/2020/measuring-healthcare-marketing-s-worth--6-steps-to-drive-growth>

44. <https://healthcaresuccess.com/blog/doctor-marketing/reasons-doctors-need-linkedin.html>

# BEST IN CLASS

AstraZeneca has amassed 15MM followers on LinkedIn,<sup>45</sup> with posts highlighting team members' professional expertise, as well as conference insights and scientific innovations. We especially like posts that literally call out to HCPs, flagging content for their attention.<sup>46</sup>

LinkedIn, unlike other public platforms, allows marketers to target ads, articles, and other thought leadership by profession, as well as keywords relating to education, job experience, and interests.<sup>47</sup> And while LinkedIn has a robust platform for paid ads, an active presence on the platform will add authenticity, amplification and credibility.<sup>48</sup>

Activities to consider:

- Support and amplify relevant HCP posts.
- Sponsor and/or participate in LinkedIn Events and Groups.
- Sponsor conference updates and other relevant third-part announcements.
- Offer a window into how employees created or added value to a relevant therapy.
- Support your employees' efforts to post with relevant educational material for HCPs themselves, as well as for their patients.
- Don't forget your hashtags.



## What to avoid:

- Using LinkedIn home pages to redirect users to company websites
- Infrequent, low-value posts
- Content that is only about company financials

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Public social media channels are valuable places to target HCPs – as long as you’re aware of both the platform rules and the way HCPs use each specific site.
- Every platform has its own macro and micro-influencers.
- FaceBook is doctors’ everyday newsfeed for professional news and links to long-form content.
- Instagram is a highly visual medium with opportunities for brands to express their personalities – both silly (when appropriate) and serious.
- Twitter is HCPs’ real-time conversation platform.
- LinkedIn is the place where HCPs focus on their reputations, personal brands, and careers.

# ABOUT LIVEWORLD

**LiveWorld is a digital agency and software company specializing in social media solutions that help companies build stronger customer relationships.** We provide consulting, strategy, and creative along with human agents, conversation management software, and chatbots for digital campaigns and social media programs.

Our solutions empower companies to deepen relationships with customers, professionals, patients and healthcare providers with emotion driven behavior change through conversations and campaigns with a human touch.



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