



Stirring Conversation

OREF CORPORATE ASSOCIATES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Although it may appear that jumping on the social media bandwagon is a must, it's not a given that corporate entities have embraced Facebook, LinkedIn, Tumblr, YouTube and other online platforms enthusiastically, at least not yet. Through a survey initiated this summer, OREF learned that companies in the orthopaedic sector occupy different points on the social media adoption continuum.

Stryker, one of OREF's original Corporate Associates, is a global leader in medical technology, serving reconstructive and medical/surgical care providers. Stryker vice president of communications and public affairs, **Ms. Yin C. Becker**, explained that online platforms are well integrated into the company's communications strategies and have become gateway channels for some constituents.

"Stryker has used online platforms for many years, providing information about the company, its products and services, and how we make a difference in the lives of customers and patients," said Ms. Becker. "As social media have become increasingly important, we have broadened our online approach to include the use of these platforms with target audiences. Social media hubs can be the first point of contact with certain stakeholders, like patients and job candidates, and we will continue to develop our communications strategies to include them."

Ms. Becker said Stryker maintains an internal social media policy, which helps direct inquiries to pre-established contact persons and offers guidance to employees for strategic and ethical use of social media platforms. The company has established additional standards as well. "Stryker conforms to industry guidelines for appropriate use of social media and other online platforms, including guidelines regarding the on-label promotion of products and services," Ms. Becker added.

On the care provider front, OREF spoke with **Mr. Tyler Browning**, physician recruitment coordinator for the **Hospital Corporation of America (HCA)** network of hospital and free-standing surgery centers. Mr. Browning reported that HCA has been using social media for two years, for brand awareness and as a tool for recruiting physicians to work at their hospitals.

HCA is currently active on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, and encourages all employees to contribute to discussions on company social media sites. "These three platforms provide the largest audience of not only medical providers, but also clinical staff as well as health care executives," said Mr. Browning. "Our internal data team follows the trends of our pages and accounts. All three outlets have worked extremely well in their own ways."

Managing HCA's presence on social media channels includes checking conversations against the company's communications objectives. "We closely monitor outside responses for the opportunity to better explain our mission as well as the purpose of our presence on these sites," Mr. Browning noted.

Mr. Browning pointed to the dynamic nature of online platforms and the need to continue developing them. "We are currently in the process of coming up with innovative



ways to engage our audience,” he said. “More than just speaking to the audience, we are looking for ways to make it easy to actively participate in our discussions.”

Longtime OREF Corporate Associate **Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation (MTF)** is a national consortium of academic medical institutions and organ and tissue recovery organizations across the United States that recover, process and distribute donated human tissue for use in transplant surgery and research. MTF prompts stakeholder conversation through social media as a component of core communications initiatives and also as part of the process of cultivating donors.

MTF has been using Facebook and Twitter for broad outreach for about a year. “Each platform offers a large audience base and they’re free!” MTF Marketing Services Supervisor **Ms. Megan Schwab** affirmed. “MTF is pleased to use these tools to drive traffic to our educational Web site, www.biologics.org.”

Through Google Analytics, MTF staff have determined that Facebook delivers on the Foundation’s communications goals better than Twitter. Still, the team feels both channels have been successful in engaging operating room professionals, especially nurses. “With social media, we are able to alert MTF customers to news as it happens, update followers on new procedures and new uses for tissue,” said Ms. Schwab.

For MTF Donor Services, social media channels offer the ability to cost-efficiently target a younger demographic, reach a wide range of constituents around the globe—including those who are donating, receiving and implanting tissue as well as the general public—and leverage viral messages. “We especially value social media for helping us increase tissue donor designation rates and

educate our public about tissue donation and transplants,” said MTF Director of Communications, Donor Services **Ms. Melinda Lockard**.

The MTF Donor Services team also uses Facebook and Twitter, and has successfully added YouTube.

“YouTube has been, far and away, the most successful medium,” Ms. Lockard said. “The first-person narratives of tissue recipients and donor families that we post on YouTube generate the biggest response. The impulse to hear a good story seems to be hardwired into humans. ‘Tell me a story!’ our donors and donor prospects seem to be saying.”

Again, using Google Analytics, MTF has tracked how YouTube has performed. “To date we have posted six clips, have 64 subscribers and more than 76,800 total views,” Ms. Lockard recounted. “We are learning that people now use YouTube and other social media to replace conventional brochures.”

Looking forward, Ms. Lockard said the team hopes social media will help drive up donation rates, increase the Foundation’s visibility and stimulate more tissue donations. “Social media are helping us actively engage with our various audiences and create an interactive dialogue about the positive, life-improving story of tissue donation,” she said. “They are an important part of the mix for MTF.” ■

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