Physicians Spend More Time Online

Contributed by eMarketer
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Internet top resource doctors use for health and medical info

Physicians have become heavy online and mobile users, tapping the internet to research conditions and medications, stay current on industry news and connect with their peers.

As a result, online promotion to healthcare professionals is growing in promise and importance, especially to the extent that it enables physicians to help their patients and do their jobs efficiently.

â€œHealthcare marketers that help clinicians deliver more efficient, cost-effective care to increasingly empowered patients will be most successful with online promotion,â€• said Victoria Petrock, author of the new report â€œMarketing to Healthcare Professionals Online.â€• â€œBut these marketers must develop a deeper understanding of how health-related digital content is changing the way physicians today practice medicine.â€•

The internet has become increasingly important to physicians for professional purposes, and they have upped the amount of time they spend online for work dramatically since 2002.

As Meredith Ressi, VP of research for Manhattan Research, told eMarketer, â€œThis 8 hours doesnâ€™t seem like a lot, but if you think about how [physicians] are on the go vs. people with desk jobs, 8 hours is significant.â€•

June 2009 data from Google and Hall & Partners found the internet was the No. 1 place doctors looked for information on health, medicine or prescription drugs.

They accessed such information both at work, from home and via mobile devices.

Physicians are also embracing social media to share ideas with and learn from their peers. Online communications with patients and other audiences, however, remain a thornier issue because of reimbursement, accuracy, and legal and privacy issues.

â€œThe key to effective online promotional strategies will be the developing tactics that drive information into physiciansâ€™ da routines and leverage their existing online habits,â€• said Petrock.

The full report, â€œMarketing to Healthcare Professionals Online,â€• also answers these key questions:

* How much are pharmaceutical companies spending on online promotion to reach healthcare professionals?
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* How are physicians using the internet professionally?
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* To what extent are physicians using mobile technology?
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* How does the online behavior of nurses differ from physicians, and what opportunities exist to reach them?

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