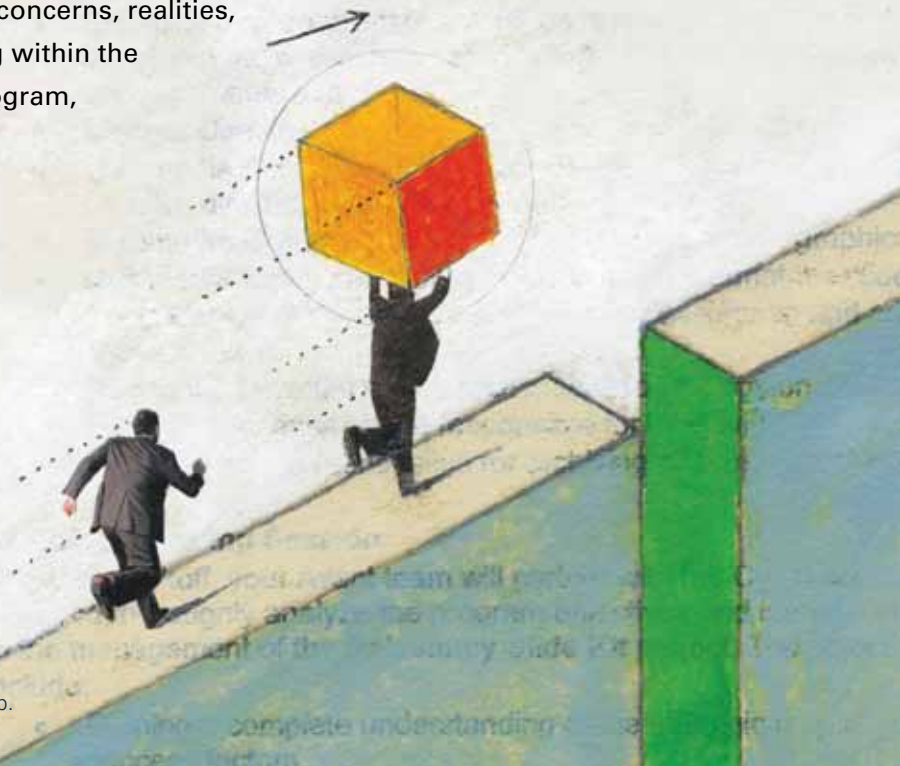


Avant Roundtable: The State of Peer-to-Peer Marketing

Part Three: The Mix Matters

The breakneck pace of change within the healthcare marketing and education industry, in conjunction with increasing FDA limitations and diminishing budgets, brings with it intense scrutiny over every brand decision, measure, and tactic. Once considered an “automatic,” the peer-to-peer environment as the definitive, tried-and-true core channel for reaching HCPs and advancing brand agendas has come under fire as brand teams struggle to do more with less.

Recently, an Avant Healthcare Marketing panel of brand experts, medical professionals, and peer-to-peer strategists convened a roundtable forum to candidly discuss emerging issues and challenges our clients face in the wake of changing times. Moderated by Tammy Prouty, Chief Officer, the ensuing conversation covered the range of pressures, concerns, realities, and possibilities that brand marketers working within the peer-to-peer space encounter, program by program, as well as the responsibilities incumbent upon ourselves as brand stewards.



Presented in a series of installments as an opportunity to share our insights, part three of The State of Peer-to-Peer Marketing roundtable discussion wraps up our conversation on the role of peer-to-peer in today's climate and focuses on the right questions to ask when setting the stage for optimized ROI and ROE. The crucial importance of channel mix and measurement is covered, as well as "bottom-line" considerations on peer-to-peer from the perspectives of brand marketers and physicians.

Tammy Prouty, Chief Officer

TAMMY: We know from our market research that healthcare providers love to receive education from other healthcare providers and know peer-to-peer is of value. We know that they love to engage in some type of face-to-face scenario where they can have much more of a vibrant, substantial dialogue. But, we also know the challenges that they're facing from time constraints and other things. And, we know that brand teams are struggling now with the budgets they have for these types of programs, and it's very difficult for them to make those trade-off decisions. What is the bottom line if you are a brand marketer? How do you start to determine committing your resources? What resources and why?

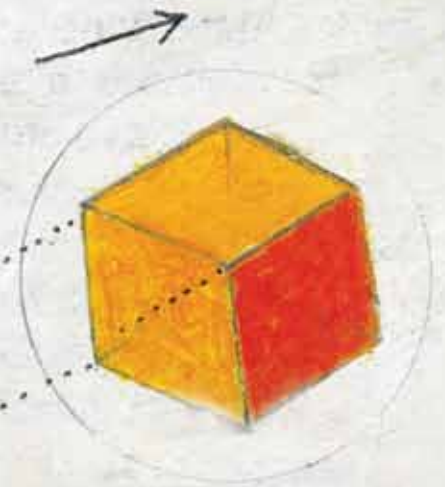
Trina Stonner, MSN, Executive Director, Strategic Brand Network

TRINA: The first thing, before you think about that tactical plan, is really stepping back and analyzing brand maturation—where you are on that brand life cycle. Do you know your customers and what they want? Always be thinking about the marketing mix and how can you address those needs.

Kathleen Barrett, MBA, Executive Director, Strategic Brand Network

KATHLEEN: The mix matters, as everyone learns in a different way. HCPs thirst for information from credible sources, such as thought leaders (TLs) and respected peers, and from individuals who have "been in their shoes" and paved the way with their own experiences to share. When peer-to-peer programming is implemented effectively, it often results in a positive ROI. When it isn't—low attendance, low or non-targets attending, inadequate target data, high cost per exposure, etc—the resulting quantitative data clouds the value of the channel. Based on the value of peer influence, brand teams should want to support the peer-to-peer channel above and beyond other channel options—with the understanding that it takes a variety of message

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touches/interactions to result in a behavior change. It's important to reach a single target customer via a mix of marketing channels. That type of strategy can reduce message exhaustion and also provide unique and different opportunities for a customer to hear and retain a message and apply it to their practice.

Mark Luckie, Executive Director, Strategic Brand Network

MARK: I would just challenge marketers that if they feel like a tactic isn't working, what's broken? If it's the message—your original assumptions, your strategic intent—that's all wrong, then there are larger issues that demand attention. So, be sure that it's the venue or the vehicle. Unless you understand your tactics very well and understand metrics and measurement with the end in mind, you're not going to do that. So, it's a matter of not throwing out the baby with the bathwater. That goes with any tactic, let alone peer-to-peer.

**Robin Eggers, MBA,
Former Executive Director, DWA Healthcare Communications Group***

ROBIN: I would just counsel our clients to pause instead of hurrying to implement everything in a shotgun approach. As Mark touched on, have a comprehensive measurement plan in place. And, reassign some budget away from a tactic or two to have that measurement plan so you really know what's working. Too often, the measurement plan is the last thing that's thought of—it should be the first thing. And, you should look beyond the number of people who attend, as we've talked about, or the type of decile category, and determine what is actually working.

Murali Gopal, MD, Chief Medical Officer

MURALI: As a healthcare provider who's worked with a lot of marketers, I would say know what clinicians need. Understand what that educational gap is, where the opportunities for educating clinicians are, and making them part of that initial fact-finding process. And, rather than going in with

“Too often, the measurement plan is the last thing that's thought of—it should be the first thing.”

**At the time of The State of Peer-to-Peer Marketing discussion, Ms. Eggers served as the Executive Director of DWA Healthcare Communications Group, the parent company of Avant Healthcare Marketing. In the time since, Ms. Eggers has accepted a position as Director of Community Outreach and Engagement at Indiana University Health. Throughout her remarkable tenure with Avant and DWA, Ms. Eggers embodied the spirit of “raising the bar” in healthcare education, and it is with extreme pride that we see our former colleague transition into a new role where her accomplishments and experience will advance the impact of quality healthcare in our community.*



preconceived notions, go in with, “Okay, why don’t you tell me what it is that we should be doing or how we should be doing this.” And, try to implement that in some creative process when you’re creating these deliverables. So, in the end, it actually speaks to the audience that you are trying to engage.

Rod Julian, Executive Director, Strategic Brand Network

ROD: One thing I would add is: while thinking about the peer-to-peer channel and how to do it and how much to do, ask yourself, “What happens if I don’t engage in the peer-to-peer channel? What impact could that have on the perception of my brand, my company, our commitment to a particular therapeutic area, how our message gets out, and the credibility of the deliverer of that message?” So, there are a number of variables that should be considered when going through a budgeting exercise and peer-to-peer comes up. And, critically ask yourself what happens overall to your brand; not just how we deliver this message, but overall.

Eric Prouty, Vice President

ERIC: As a former brand marketer, it’s critically important to comprehensively understand the overarching brand plan. It’s ensuring that your client is integrated, with peer-to-peer as a channel, if not *the* channel. It’s also critically important that you understand what are the overarching goals and objectives for the brand in that calendar year, and over the next three, five, seven years, etc. Then it’s about devising a plan that’s ultimately going to meet those goals. And, as Robin alluded to, it’s critically important that you’ve got the right tools and instruments in place to be able to measure the effectiveness of that plan at every stage. At the end of the day, it’s ensuring that that plan is integrated and deciding where, when, and how peer-to-peer fits.

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