Healthcare professionals (HCPs), publishers and the pharmaceutical sector all work together to drive the development of new treatments and medical procedures. Through evaluations, longitudinal studies and observations, as well as details about specific medicines and treatments, authoritative and useful information is an essential aspect of this process.

A recent study [Lau, 2017] discovered that only 34% of physicians find pharmaceutical content on HCP sites to be trustworthy, making it clear that while there is more information about pharmaceuticals available than ever before, HCPs are discerning about the sources they use.
There are many online sources of information about pharmaceuticals but they vary hugely in quality. The British Medical Association advises medical students that [BMA, 2016] “A healthy, transparent relationship between the medical profession and the pharmaceutical industry is important so that patient trust is maintained and patients continue to receive the best possible care available”. This need for transparency extends to content that HCPs use to acquire knowledge. Educational content for HCPs that comes from reputable publishers enhances core pharmaceutical information and is supported by broad knowledge of the industry. The HCPs that engage with this can be confident that they are examining content that is accessible and credible.

**HCPs and the search for content**

HCPs are well practised in making clinical judgements and bring these evaluation skills to the search for reliable information sources. So where do they look when they are hunting for information? In one survey [Andrew, 2013] it was reported that many physicians rely on third-party unbranded websites, peer networks and professional bodies to get their information. A professional peer group is a powerful thing, and healthcare professionals clearly rely on one another for information.

But these networks may not always be up to date, especially if they are sharing PDF’s and links to unverified blog posts.

With some HCPs reporting that they are more likely to use their network than look at a pharmaceutical website [Andrew, 2013], access to the latest information may become a concern, especially for fast-moving medical fields with frequent updates to procedures and best practice. In fact, a 2016 study [The Holmes Report, 2016] showed that younger doctors in particular, (those born between 1982 and 2000 ‘the millennial generation’), look for third party sources to validate information before they act upon it. Indeed, 79% of millennial doctors only refer to information from pharmaceutical companies after they have found information elsewhere. This means it is important for both HCPs, and the pharmaceutical companies themselves, to note that where pharmaceutical companies do not place an emphasis on the provision of quality information through third parties, doctors may miss out on some developments because they use these sources as the main point of discoverability. Only then, when they have a context for information from the manufacturer, do they turn to the pharmaceutical companies to find the details they need.

**Innovative ways to reach HCPs**

Advertising has become known as a primary way in which pharmaceutical companies provide information to HCPs, but in an increasingly digital environment, there are many other ways in which educational and valuable information can be communicated.

For example, pharmaceutical companies partnering with publishers such as Wiley can take advantage of content feeds, e-learning modules, webinars, white papers and specialist microsites and more. These all have a part to play when HCPs are searching for information about the latest developments in their field. Access to these types of content allows HCPs to explore arguments, look at examples, and access contextualizing information. And for projects like e-learning modules, they can help to provide information in more than one language. Other added-value elements of these content services can be engaging for HCPs because of the more flexible formats available, including:

- multimedia content
- mobile optimized sites that provide the ability to conduct research from a mobile device, rather than struggle with a flat PDF that may not have been designed for mobile viewing
- short, practical guides that bring HCPs up to speed with latest developments.

These types of content services are provided by publishers in collaboration with the pharmaceutical companies, and because of this, can be viewed as being more independent than content that comes directly from pharmaceutical companies alone. The involvement of a publisher can also help the HCP who is reading a piece of content to trust that it is of high quality, often with editorial input and peer review that ensures the information is as up to date and accurate as it can be. The end result is content from pharmaceutical companies that HCPs can truly engage with is much, much, more than just advertising.

*Wiley Corporate Solutions*

Find out more about Wiley Corporate Solutions at [www.interface.wiley.com](http://www.interface.wiley.com)