



Executive Insight

Why Now is the Perfect Time to Disrupt Dental Product Commerce **By Barry Wolfenson, vTail Co-Founder and CEO**

The World Changed in 2020

This is neither a controversial nor insightful statement. But the reality is that as we enter the post-COVID era, many of the changes forced upon us will not necessarily revert to what we considered “normal.” Possibly none of these shifts are more evident than the accelerated digitization of so many aspects of our lives.

Being forced to stay home meant shopping from home, working from home, and seeking medical help from home. In 2020, the rate of e-commerce grew at an astonishing 44% in the US, significantly greater than the 19% growth rate seen in 2019.

According to a Stanford University professor who studies remote work, Zoom and other remote work tools in one year brought employees 25 years further along in the steady path towards work-at-home.

While people are certainly looking forward to shopping in stores without worry and spending time at the office when they are able to do so, it’s clear the world won’t revert all the way back to its pre-COVID state after the pandemic fades.

The Digitization of Healthcare

Similarly, this trend towards remote solutions took hold in healthcare. Not surprisingly, the rate of growth of Telehealth claims in the US grew 2,980% from September of 2019 to September of 2020. While this growth has been slowing in recent months, it too will not go back down to pre-COVID levels.

Another area that grew rapidly in 2020 within healthcare was on the commercial side – in sales and promotional efforts. As sales representatives and other customer-facing employees (medical science liaisons, clinical support staff,

reimbursement specialists) from pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical device companies were not allowed to enter healthcare facilities, their companies turned towards almost 100% digital marketing and promotional efforts.

The Solution to Digital Noise

There are endless numbers of digital promotional and sales tactics companies can employ. With AI-fueled databases and sophisticated search engine tracking methods, companies can get their messages in front of clinicians in a wide variety of methods. All with good intentions.

The problem – as we have heard from both companies and clinicians alike – is that the sheer volume of digital promotional efforts from so many companies has created an environment where much of it is being viewed as “white noise” by clinicians, and they are disengaging from the conversation.

Based on the reality of the adoption of tele-health and Zoom/similar platforms in the healthcare industry, we believe that the time has come for a sustained and increased level of remote engagement between industry and clinicians. Additionally, given the need to find a way to best engage with clinicians, we built vTail with this contrarian position in mind:

Instead of focusing on the perspective of companies viewing clinicians as targets for promotional material, we believe digital technology should be used to create a relaxed and empowering environment for clinicians where they view companies as collaborative assets in their goal to provide optimal care to patients.

What does “Clinician-Friendly” Mean?

As users of the vTail platform, clinicians get the following advantages to ensure that they can’t be directly promoted to without their permission, and that they will never feel “bombarded” by promotional and sales efforts:

vTail Healthcare Telecommunications Limited

Company Number: 12646131

Registered Office: 264 Banbury Road Summertown, Oxford OX2 7DY, United Kingdom

VAT registration number 365102718



- **Opt-in Visibility:** Clinicians can see all the companies in their fields of clinical interest. But, until they “opt-in” to a connection with a company, they themselves are invisible on the platform.
- **Opt-in Communication:** Once they “connect” to a company – which they do anytime they want with as many (or as few) companies as they want – they can then be seen by that company (or those companies) and communications between them can start.
- **No Unwanted Inbound Calls:** Regarding those communications, clinicians can initiate texts, phone calls and video calls with their locally assigned representatives from the companies. But those representatives can only text the clinicians. Clinicians will never need to be concerned about their phones ringing off the hook due to vTail.
- **An Auto-Updating Digital Rolodex:** These company employees will be matched to clinicians through our matching system, such that clinicians will never have to keep track of who their representatives are from any company on the vTail platform. They will always have an updated personalized automated directory of employees within one or more of the following areas: sales, medical, clinical, reimbursement, marketing, purchasing, engineering, and executive.
- **Distraction-Free Innovation News:** Even the promotional side of vTail allows clinicians to view what they want when they want. Based on the matching criteria established during registration on the app, clinicians will get a curated Newsfeed with only industry-related stories within their clinical fields of interest. They will be able to see all stories – even from companies where they are not connected.
- **No Cost:** vTail is free to clinicians.

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This is Only the Beginning

We believe the launch of vTail represents a strong step towards the future of communications within the healthcare industry, helping to better connect companies, research organizations, distributors, associations, and other key stakeholders to healthcare professionals.

By giving clinicians the tools to engage with industry on their terms, we predict that the net result will be stronger relationships – driving improved outcomes for all.

About the Author:

Barry Wolfenson, Chief Executive Officer started his career at Andersen Consulting (Accenture), Barry helped to build Derma Sciences from a \$7M gauze and bandage company to an \$80M company with a focus on advanced wound care, resulting in its acquisition by Integra Life Sciences. He is thrilled to have the opportunity to work with old friends on a fun, dynamic, market-creating business.

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