



HME Industry Professionals are Using Social Media for Events, Conferences, and Advocacy.

Are you one of the 1.44 billion active Facebook users, as of June 2015? It's likely you're one of the 350 million LinkedIn and you're your own personal Twitter handle by now. Each network has its own strengths and weaknesses, but they all add value to business professionals.

We probably don't need to tell you any longer that social media is an integral part of your personal and professional life. If you are not active on social media, you are missing out on valuable opportunities for the benefit of your company and growth in the HME Industry. Social media use is continuing to rise and has become a natural part of our every day lives. While there are many uses of social media, we are seeing an increase in the way HME Providers are using it today, especially when it comes to events and advocacy.

Social Media Adds Value to Events and Conferences

Medtrade, along with AA Homecare, state associations, and other member groups, see an increase in social media activity before, during, and after large events or gatherings. It's an excellent way to stay engaged and connected with industry leaders, fellow attendees, and exhibitors. By using hashtags (#) and key search terms, providers are able to

quickly find other members that are at the same event or having conversations on the same topic. You are able to connect and share ideas with those that are going through some of the same positive experiences or challenges.

In fact, according to a recent study from Sparks' exhibit survey, when asked whether or not business people who currently use social media for business purposes had used social media connected to a professional event (before, during or after) over the last two years, 83% of respondents indicated that they had in fact done so.

Event attendees also told Sparks that they use social media because they find it adds value to event experiences. When asked, "How valuable to you is the use of social media at events," 89% of respondents indicated that it was at least somewhat valuable. Only 11% said it failed to add any kind of value.

Social Media Provides Support for Political Movements and Advocacy

Social media also gives us the ability to make our voices heard during and in between visits to Capital Hill. Campaigns from AA Homecare and SaveMyMedicalSupplies.org make it easy to use social media for spreading a united message.

A recent example was the use of social media during the Washington Legislative Conference. AA Homecare was able to "come alive on Twitter" by providing frequent updates from the Legislative Conference on the Hill. This conversation united all attendees of the conference and made it possible to connect the state delegations as they went their separate ways to meet with their elected officials.

Through Twitter and social media, AA Homecare was able to instantly send out links to live feed of testimony videos. No matter where you were in the country at the time, through social media, you were able to still be in on the action and lend your voice to the campaign.

Other resources and movements like SaveMyMedicalSupplies.org, an educational resource for Medicare beneficiaries, provide a platform and community for seniors and their caregivers to share stories of impact on social media by Medicare's Competitive Bidding. These stories are no longer confined to a mailed letter to an elected official or held in by the impacted citizen, they can be broadcasted across a vast network of social media users and leaders that can use these stories to make a change.

Using social media to increase the reach of your voice on an advocacy topic or enrich your event experience is another way that HME providers are using this technology to improve our impact of our industry.

About the Author:

Christina Morrison is Social Media Director of Medtrade and the founder of Stina Bee Marketing & Events. Prior to joining the Medtrade team, Christina served on the Exhibitor Advisory Board for three years and was the recipient of two "Best Booth" awards. For more information on adding social media to your marketing mix, contact her at Christina@StinaBee.com or 321-662-6822.