



THE FUTURE OF PHARMA & MEDTECH: **A DIGITAL-FIRST APPROACH**

A Comprehensive Outlook on
the UAE and Saudi Arabia

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DIGITAL AT THE CORE: REVOLUTIONISING PHARMA AND MEDTECH IN THE UAE AND SAUDI ARABIA

As we step into an era where technology is reshaping industries at an unprecedented pace, the intersection of health and technology is proving to be one of the most transformative. The **UAE** and **Saudi Arabia**, renowned for their visionary approaches and ambitious development agendas, are emerging as **pioneers** in this **digital health transformation**. In this **report**, we explore how **digital health is not just augmenting the Pharma and MedTech sectors** in these nations but fundamentally transforming them, setting a benchmark for the rest of the world.

At its core, digital health refers to the integration of advanced technologies—such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, big data analytics, Internet of Things (IoT), and telemedicine—into health delivery and management. **For the Pharma and MedTech sectors, this means streamlining operations, enhancing patient outcomes, and ensuring more personalised and efficient care.** The UAE and Saudi Arabia have recognised that a robust digital health framework is no longer a luxury but a necessity. With rising health demands, the burden of chronic diseases, and an increasingly tech-savvy population, these nations are aligning their health ecosystems to be future-ready.

This is reflected in the UAE's **"We are the UAE 2031"** vision Economic Vision 2030. As stated in the plan, the UAE aims to become "a champion in innovative healthcare technologies, with the aim of ensuring readiness and responsiveness to future challenges, including those related to health security, predictive healthcare, biotechnology and genome sciences, and artificial intelligence." Similarly, Saudi Arabia's National Transformation Programme and Vision 2030 underscore the centrality of health reform in national progress. Both nations are leveraging their strong governance, public-private partnerships, and vast resources to accelerate digital health adoption.

WHY DOES DIGITAL HEALTH NEED TO BE AT THE CORE OF PHARMA AND MEDTECH?

The traditional approaches to health and medicine are no longer sufficient in a world where consumers are increasingly turning to digital platforms for information, connection, and empowerment. This enables predictive analytics, wearable devices for continuous monitoring, and AI-driven diagnostics for faster, more accurate results and aligns with how today's consumers engage with information and services.

Modern consumers are more informed, engaged, and proactive than ever before. They consume information from **diverse digital platforms** such as social media, health-focused apps, online forums, telehealth services, and even wearable devices connected to real-time health monitoring systems. With open communication on these platforms, people actively share experiences, seek advice, and make decisions based on peer reviews, expert opinions, and accessible data.

For Pharma companies, this means leveraging digital tools for shorter drug development cycles, enhanced clinical trials, and patient engagement strategies that align with the consumer's preferred modes of interaction. For MedTech, the focus expands to creating smarter, user-friendly devices integrated seamlessly with digital ecosystems.

The open exchange of information on digital platforms is another key driver of this transformation. Patients research symptoms, read about treatment options, and compare services with ease. Social media campaigns and community forums have made health information more accessible, encouraging conversations about wellness and prevention.



Indeed, the **UAE has experienced a substantial increase in social media usage**, with active users reaching **10.73 million in January 2024**, facilitating the dissemination of health information, enabling patients to research symptoms, explore treatment options, and compare healthcare services more efficiently. In response, the UAE government has been proactive in integrating digital health solutions, such as telemedicine and mobile health applications, to provide accessible healthcare services. These platforms have empowered patients to engage in discussions about wellness and preventive care, fostering a more informed community.

Similarly, Statista reports that Saudi Arabia's digital health sector generated approximately \$1 billion in revenue in 2024 – growth that included the development of online platforms where patients can access medical information, consult with healthcare professionals, and participate in community health discussions.

Pharma and MedTech companies must therefore adopt a digital-first approach to meet consumers where they are, leveraging a variety of digital platforms and tools. Social media platforms like X (formerly known as Twitter), YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn can be used for educational campaigns, spreading awareness about health conditions, treatment options, and medical technologies, while collaborating with influencers and healthcare professionals to build credibility. Engaging in online health forums fosters trust, improves insights, and enables companies to share valuable resources while learning from patient experiences. Additionally, data analytics allows for personalised marketing, tailoring content to individual consumers to ensure relevance and enhance engagement.

Pharma and MedTech companies must recognize and adapt to this consumer-driven era by **embedding digital health** at their core. Whether through personalised apps, social media engagement, or AI-powered tools, the opportunities to connect with today's digital-savvy consumers are endless.

This report serves as an exploration of this transformation, offering insights into the strategies, successes, and challenges shaping digital health in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. It is a story of vision and resilience, a testament to how technology, when placed at the heart of health services, can redefine possibilities and improve lives.



METHODOLOGY

To understand the **communication strategies** of the leading Pharma and MedTech companies in the Middle East, FINN Partners' Global Intelligence conducted an in-depth analysis of owned channel mentions, with a primary focus on X (formerly known as Twitter), which provided the richest dataset for examining how companies engage with their audiences and communicate key messages. The study encompassed a two-year period from 2022 to 2024, offering insights into trends, topics, and engagement strategies.

The analysis targeted **25 of the top Pharma and MedTech companies, including global giants such as Roche, GSK, and Pfizer, alongside regional leaders like Lunatus, SPIMACO, and Jamjoom.** This mix of multinational and regional players ensured a balanced perspective on both global strategies and localised efforts. Where regional accounts existed, they were prioritised to capture market-specific messaging. For companies without regional accounts, we analysed global accounts for discussions explicitly related to the Middle East.

Data collection involved leveraging advanced social listening tools to extract relevant content from X, using a combination of keywords, hashtags, and mentions. This allowed us to filter discussions that were pertinent to the region, focusing on posts and interactions that highlighted regional campaigns, partnerships, product launches, and health-related initiatives. We examined metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and overall audience engagement to gauge the effectiveness of these communications.

The analysis provided a nuanced understanding of how these companies are leveraging owned channels to connect with their Middle Eastern audiences. This comprehensive methodology served to identify both strengths and opportunities for improvement, offering actionable insights for enhanced regional engagement.



Aman Gupta,
Managing Partner,
SPAG FINN Partners

aman.gupta@finnpartners.com

FROM GENOMICS TO AI: THE MIDDLE EAST IS THE FUTURE OF HEALTH

The Middle East is rapidly emerging as a global powerhouse for health innovation. This transformation is evident in the growing Pharma and MedTech sectors, where innovation meets opportunity at an unparalleled scale. Driven by visionary national strategies like **Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's Vision 2031**, the region is transforming its health sector through unprecedented investments, strategic partnerships, and a relentless focus on innovation.

Pharma and MedTech leaders are not only entering the market but actively shaping it, catalysing the growth of robust ecosystems that foster technological innovation, research, and development while placing patient-centric care at the forefront. **According to a recent report, Saudi Arabia's digital health market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 19.3% from 2024 to 2030 and reach USD 6.8 billion.** Meanwhile, the UAE has been pioneering personalised medicine, with initiatives such as the Emirati Genome Programme aiming to tailor health solutions to individual genetic profiles.

Global health giants and innovative startups alike have recognised the region's immense

potential. Pharmaceutical giants like Pfizer and AstraZeneca have set up regional hubs, while MedTech leaders such as Medtronic and Siemens Healthineers are actively collaborating with local governments and health service providers. These partnerships have become the backbone of a knowledge-sharing culture that strengthens local capabilities while fostering global integration.

Investments in the sectors have soared, with venture capital and private equity firms recognising the Middle East's potential as a global health hub. Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) has announced substantial funding in health technology, while Dubai has launched initiatives like the Dubai healthcare strategy 2030, which aim to attract international companies. These developments have spurred the creation of research centres, innovation hubs, and state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities.

The case for a digital-first approach

While infrastructure and partnerships are pivotal, a digital-first marketing and engagement strategy is becoming a critical driver for business growth in the region. The Middle East boasts one of the world's highest digital adoption rates, with a tech-savvy population increasingly turning to digital channels for information and services. This makes the UAE and Saudi Arabia fertile ground for leveraging digital tools to enhance engagement and streamline operations.

WHY GO DIGITAL?



1 Enhanced engagement with HCPs and patients: A digital-first strategy enables Pharma and MedTech companies to connect more effectively with healthcare professionals (HCPs) and patients through personalised and targeted communication. AI-driven analytics can provide insights into patient behaviours, enabling companies to deliver tailored solutions that resonate with local needs.

2 Building trust and transparency: Companies that prioritise transparent communication through digital channels can build stronger relationships with stakeholders. Sharing real-time updates on clinical trials, product efficacy, and patient success stories foster credibility and trust.

3 Accelerating market entry: Digital platforms offer a faster and more cost-effective way to enter and expand within the market. Virtual events, webinars, and telemedicine solutions can bypass traditional barriers, allowing companies to reach a broader audience quickly.

4 Leveraging data for growth: Digital tools allow companies to harness big data for predictive analytics, enabling smarter decision-making in product development, marketing, and supply chain management. In a fast-evolving market, these insights can provide a significant competitive edge.

5 Localised strategies at scale: Digital platforms allow companies to craft messaging and campaigns tailored to the cultural, linguistic, and demographic nuances of the UAE and Saudi Arabia, ensuring maximum relevance and impact.



Success through digital integration

The success of health tech startups like **Altibbi and Okadoc** demonstrates the transformative power of digital-first solutions. From virtual consultations to AI-powered diagnostics, these companies have shown how digital innovation can bridge gaps in health access and improve patient outcomes.

Pharma and MedTech companies must also embrace this shift by expanding their digital footprints. For example, deploying AI-driven virtual assistants for patient queries or leveraging social media platforms to engage with younger demographics can significantly enhance market presence. Digital-first strategies not only enhance operational efficiency but also position companies as innovative and patient-centric, a crucial factor in gaining a competitive edge.

As global companies deepen their investments and partnerships, success will depend on forging **local partnerships**, investing in **regional expertise**, and developing digital-first strategies that prioritise **trust, transparency, and accessibility**. Now is the time for Pharma and MedTech companies to deepen their engagement, expand their digital footprints, and co-create transformative solutions that meet the region's evolving health needs.

For industry leaders, this is a call to action: there has never been a more exciting time to be part of this journey in shaping healthier, more resilient societies across the Middle East and beyond.





Thomas Morris,
UAE lead,
FINN Partners

thomas.morris@finnpartners.com

ACTING SMART IN THE MIDDLE EAST HEALTH MARKET



Ahmed, a 45-year-old resident of Khalifa City, Abu Dhabi, wakes up experiencing chest pain. Using the SEHA app, he consults an AI-powered symptom checker, books a telemedicine appointment, and undergoes same-day diagnostics. He gets his results immediately via the centralised Malaffi platform; even his prescription is electronically processed with medication delivered to his home. A wearable device monitors his vitals, syncing data in real-time with his doctor for continuous, personalised care.

This is not the start of some futuristic novel. It is here and now in the Middle East, where cutting-edge technology ensures early intervention, convenience, and superior patient outcomes. Given this benchmark, health companies need to be patient- and digital-first, which also applies to their marketing strategies.

A BOOMING MARKET

The health market in the Middle East, particularly in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, is booming, buoyed by rising life expectancy, growing interest in preventative care strategies, an openness to deploying emerging technologies, and increased investment in health infrastructure as governments prioritise health as part of their national visions. Indeed, Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's Centennial 2071 strategy both aim to establish world-class health systems. The result: health expenditure in the region is predicted to reach \$135.5 billion by 2027. Further, we are also seeing cities become medical tourism hubs – Dubai is ranked among the top health tourism destinations globally.

supports this strategy by investing in infrastructure, launching health tech initiatives, and promoting private-sector involvement in health innovation.

Smart health systems in Saudi Arabia are also dramatically altering how medical care is delivered in the kingdom. This movement towards intelligent health solutions leverages AI, blockchain, and IoT to provide care that is not only more efficient but also more personalised and accessible. Gazing ahead just a little, the integration of the Metaverse into Saudi Arabia's health landscape is poised to revolutionise patient engagement by offering immersive and interactive health experiences – but that discussion probably warrants an article of its own!

NO LONGER JUST DIGITAL, BUT SMART

You will hear people talking about “digital revolutions”. Yes, AI, telemedicine, and blockchain are reshaping the way health services are delivered in the region. But that revolution, frankly, is over – we are now moving towards smart health systems, which are highly interconnected and operate as digital-first, integrating technology across the care continuum.

It is great that Ahmed can use AI to check his symptoms and can access same-day diagnostics. But the real magic of these technologies is when they come together in an efficient and interoperable system. This is the way to realise the full potential of AI, robotics, intelligent automation, next-generation telecommunications, and edge computing.

The push for digital transformation clearly aligns with the UAE's goals for enhanced health service accessibility, catering to an increasingly tech-savvy population and creating a patient-centred health system with the help of advanced digital solutions. The UAE government actively

THE SHIFT TO PREVENTATIVE CARE AND WELLNESS

You will notice that not once do I mention “healthcare”, and this is for good reason. One of the most significant shifts in the region is from reactive to preventative care, with a growing emphasis on wellness. This transition aligns with the increasing awareness of the benefits of maintaining health rather than treating illnesses.

In the UAE, advanced hospitals, pioneering robotic technologies, innovative genomic research, and AI-supported health infrastructure are driving this, as well as initiatives such as the “Wellness Ambassadors” programme to promote health awareness and encourage residents to adopt healthier lifestyles. The programme focuses on preventive measures, including regular health screenings and promoting physical activity.

Similarly, Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 includes extensive public health campaigns aimed at combating chronic diseases like diabetes and hypertension through education and early intervention.



ENGAGING PATIENTS IN THE SMART ERA

The health sector in the UAE and Saudi Arabia is entering a transformative phase, driven by growth, innovation, and a shift toward wellness and prevention. In this environment, health brands must prioritise digital engagement to stay competitive and foster meaningful connections with their patients. By leveraging digital platforms and embracing patient-centric strategies, health providers in the Middle East are well-positioned to lead the global shift toward a more connected and proactive health system.



**WHAT "DIGITAL
FIRST" MEANS :**
A PARADIGM SHIFT
FOR PHARMA
AND MEDTECH



Understanding Digital-First Strategy

In the UAE and Saudi Arabia, where ambitious visions for the future converge with growing health demands, the digital-first approach is redefining how organisations operate, innovate, and deliver value. **A digital-first strategy is not merely about digitising existing processes; rather, it is a transformative approach that reimagines operations, customer experiences, and business models through the lens of digital capabilities.** Pharma companies can leverage AI to not only accelerate drug discovery and optimise clinical trials but also analyse consumer interactions on digital platforms to gather valuable insights. Similarly, MedTech firms can utilise IoT to develop connected medical devices that provide real-time patient data while also monitoring how consumers engage with these devices and related platforms. Digital health platforms offering telemedicine services can further help companies understand patient preferences and behaviours, enabling seamless patient-provider interactions that are more tailored and effective.

By analysing the usage patterns of these digital platforms, Pharma and MedTech companies can formulate data-driven digital marketing strategies, ensuring their efforts are aligned with consumer needs and preferences. This approach allows businesses to remain agile, personalised, and patient-centric in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Value of a robust digital presence

In an increasingly competitive and regulated sector, **a strong digital presence is no longer optional.** For Pharma and MedTech companies in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, it serves as a cornerstone for differentiation and compliance for the following reasons:



Enhanced accessibility and reach:

A digital-first approach breaks down geographical barriers, allowing companies to reach underserved populations and remote areas. This aligns with the broader goals of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's National Agenda, which emphasise equitable access to health services. Indeed, Saudi Arabia is home to the Middle East's first virtual hospital, Seha, which offers medical services to over 400,000 patients annually, including those in remote areas. The hospital provides telehealth consultations and employs AI tools, reflecting the kingdom's commitment to digitising 70% of patient activities by 2030.



Data-driven insights:

Digital platforms enable the collection and analysis of vast amounts of data, offering actionable insights into patient behaviour, market trends, and operational efficiency. This data-driven decision-making is critical for meeting regulatory requirements and optimising resources.



Patient empowerment:

By offering mobile apps, wearables, and online portals, companies empower patients to take control of their health. This enhances engagement and fosters loyalty in an era where patient expectations are higher than ever. Healthcare providers in the UAE are certainly increasingly utilising wearable technology to monitor patients' health in real-time. Devices such as fitness trackers and biosensors collect data on vital signs and physical activity, enabling patients to actively participate in their health management. This integration supports early detection of health issues and personalised care plans.



One of the most significant advantages of a digital-first strategy is its ability to offer agility and scalability.

For the Pharma and MedTech sectors, this translates to:

Agility and scalability in a dynamic landscape



Faster innovation cycles:

By analysing consumer interactions and behaviours on digital platforms, these companies can gain valuable insights into patient needs, preferences, and emerging health trends. Digital tools like AI and machine learning can then leverage this data to enable rapid prototyping and testing, aligning new products and treatments with consumer demands. This consumer-centric approach accelerates time-to-market and ensures that innovations are more targeted and effective in addressing emerging health challenges.



Scalable solutions:

By leveraging data from consumer interactions on digital platforms, companies can identify trends, predict demand, and design scalable solutions that address these needs effectively. Cloud-based technologies enable organisations to manage an influx of telemedicine appointments or expand the reach of connected devices based on consumer usage patterns and preferences. This data-driven approach ensures that companies can adapt to growing demands seamlessly, delivering personalised, high-quality services without compromising efficiency or reliability.



Resilience in crisis:

Companies with a digital-first strategy were better equipped to navigate disruptions, ensuring continuity of care and operations. The ability to gather real-time insights from consumer interactions enabled these companies to quickly adapt their strategies, address emerging needs, and ensure the uninterrupted delivery of critical services.



Long-Term Success in Pharma and MedTech

A digital-first strategy is not just about immediate gains; it lays the foundation for long-term success. Here's how:

Sustainable growth:

By analysing consumer behaviour on digital platforms, companies can identify key areas for improvement, automate repetitive tasks, and optimise workflows to align with consumer needs. This data-driven approach supports long-term sustainability and ensures that growth is aligned with evolving consumer expectations and market demands.

Compliance and security:

Digital solutions enhance the ability to comply with stringent regulations while ensuring data security and patient privacy.


Building ecosystems:

A digital-first approach fosters collaboration across the health ecosystem, from government entities and research institutions to tech startups and insurance providers. This interconnectedness accelerates innovation and amplifies impact.

What makes the digital-first strategy particularly impactful in the UAE and Saudi Arabia is the alignment with their national visions. Both countries have invested heavily in digital infrastructure, creating an enabling environment for innovation. Initiatives such as the UAE's

Artificial Intelligence Strategy and Saudi Arabia's Health Sector Transformation Programme demonstrate a commitment to integrating technology into health services. Cultural factors also play a role. With a young, tech-savvy population and high smartphone penetration rates, there is a natural inclination toward digital solutions. The governments' proactive policies and public-private partnerships further accelerate adoption, positioning the region as a leader in digital health.



A person in a white lab coat is pointing at a computer monitor. The monitor displays a complex data visualization, including a line graph, a bar chart, and a molecular structure diagram. The person is wearing a white lab coat and a blue hairnet. The background is dark, and the overall scene is dimly lit, with the monitor providing the primary light source.

DNA of 'Digital-First' Approach: Core Elements of Winning Strategy

The essence of a digital-first strategy goes beyond adopting new tools; it requires a fundamental rethinking of organisational priorities and processes. At its core, the digital-first approach is about embedding technology into every aspect of a company's operations, decision-making, and customer engagement. It requires a cultural shift that prioritises agility, data-driven insights, and seamless connectivity across systems. The DNA of a digital-first strategy comprises the following key elements



1) Patient-centric innovation: Understanding how consumers use digital platforms allows companies to craft more personalised and engaging communication strategies that place the patient at the centre of every initiative. By analysing consumer interactions, preferences, and feedback on social media, apps, and online forums, companies can identify unmet needs and design solutions that provide real-time health insights. Tailored messaging and interactive digital campaigns can further empower patients, fostering trust and enhancing their overall health experiences through consistent, meaningful engagement.

2) Data as a strategic asset: The ability to collect, analyse, and leverage data is a critical component of digital-first strategies. Advanced analytics, powered by AI and machine learning, enable companies to anticipate market trends, optimise supply chains, and personalise patient care.

3) Integration and interoperability: A successful digital-first approach depends on creating a cohesive ecosystem where platforms, devices, and stakeholders work seamlessly together. Interoperability ensures that data flows efficiently between different systems, enhancing decision-making and collaboration.

4) Continuous innovation: Embracing emerging technologies like blockchain, IoT, and telemedicine platforms ensures that organisations stay ahead of the curve. Digital-first companies invest in research and development to explore novel solutions for complex health challenges.

Implementing a digital-first strategy involves aligning technological capabilities with business objectives by focusing on leadership commitment, talent development, robust digital infrastructure, regulatory alignment, customer-centric design, and partnerships. Leaders must champion the vision, foster innovation, and allocate resources while building a digitally skilled workforce adept in AI, data analytics, and cybersecurity. Investing in advanced IT systems and ensuring compliance with UAE and Saudi regulatory frameworks fosters trust and operational efficiency. **Prioritising user-friendly platforms enhances engagement, and collaborations with technology providers and institutions drive continuous innovation**



SOCIAL MEDIA,

AI, AND

STORYTELLING:

The New Age of Pharma

and MedTech Marketing

Digital communication has become the backbone of modern marketing strategies in the health sector. **The UAE and Saudi Arabia, with their tech-savvy populations and high smartphone penetration rates, offer fertile ground for digital innovation. For Pharma and MedTech companies, digital platforms provide an opportunity to engage directly with their audiences, address concerns in real time, and build long-term relationships.**

Unlike traditional methods, where the focus was primarily on product promotion, digital marketing allows companies to adopt a more holistic approach. They can educate patients, empower health service providers with data-driven insights, and highlight their commitment to improving public health outcomes. This shift is not just about staying relevant but also about addressing the evolving expectations of an audience that values transparency, accessibility, and personalisation.

Social media: A catalyst for engagement

Social media platforms have become indispensable tools for Pharma and MedTech brands to amplify their reach. Platforms like Instagram, LinkedIn, X, Facebook, and YouTube enable companies to share updates, launch campaigns, and engage with their audience in a conversational tone. In the UAE and Saudi Arabia, where social media usage is among the highest globally, these platforms are proving to be vital in connecting with professionals from the health sector, patients, and the broader community.

One example is X, in particular, which plays a significant role in this landscape by serving as a hub for real-time updates, industry news, and

professional discussions. It allows MedTech companies to engage directly with healthcare experts, policymakers, and patients, creating a dynamic exchange of ideas. Companies can leverage X to share research findings, host Q&A sessions, and foster transparency, while



hashtags and trending topics amplify their reach. With a focus on real-time engagement, X has become an invaluable resource for gathering insights and building thought leadership, complementing other platforms.

LinkedIn, on the other hand, is used to build thought leadership. MedTech companies often share white papers, case studies, and insights on emerging trends to establish credibility and foster professional relationships. Meanwhile, Instagram and Facebook are utilized for patient-centric campaigns, incorporating current trends like user-generated content, where patients share their experiences to foster community engagement and trust. Partnerships with health influencers and local celebrities add a cultural and personal endorsement that carries

significant weight, making campaigns more relatable and impactful. On YouTube, MedTech companies leverage long-form video content to share detailed patient stories, educational explainer videos, and live Q&A sessions with healthcare professionals, helping to demystify complex medical concepts and engage a broader audience in an authentic, visual medium.

Moreover, social media enables real-time feedback and interaction. Companies can monitor audience sentiment, respond to queries, and refine their messaging based on user engagement. This level of interactivity builds trust and enhances brand loyalty in an industry where credibility is paramount.





Overview

Digital communication is reshaping Pharma and MedTech marketing strategies throughout the UAE and Saudi Arabia.



AI Impact

Social media platforms enhance engagement and connectivity for Pharma and MedTech brands.



Storytelling

Digital storytelling bridges the gap, creating emotional connections through real narratives.



Social Media

Social media platforms enhance engagement and connectivity for Pharma and MedTech brands.



Campaign Reach

Diverse content strategies significantly enhance audience reach and interaction rates.



Integration

Integrated strategies across social media, AI, and storytelling maximize marketing effectiveness.



Challenges Ahead

Navigating regulatory landscapes and ensuring ethical practices will remain vital in Pharma marketing strategies.

Strategic Evolution:

Understanding the regulatory landscape



One of the key challenges in adopting a digital-first strategy in the UAE and Saudi Arabia is aligning with the region's regulatory frameworks. Both countries are proactive in shaping health policies that integrate digital solutions, but compliance remains a complex and critical aspect of the digital transformation journey.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia have made significant strides in creating regulatory frameworks that promote innovation while ensuring patient safety and data security. Also, stringent cybersecurity protocols protect sensitive medical data, while interoperability standards promote seamless data exchange among health platforms, fostering trust and enhancing efficiency.

For Pharma and MedTech companies, navigating these regulations requires a thorough understanding of local laws and a proactive approach to compliance. Adopting digital strategies that align with these frameworks is not just about avoiding penalties but about building trust with stakeholders and contributing to the region's broader health goals. Some of these strategies are:

1) Data privacy and security: Ensuring compliance with data protection laws, such as the UAE's Personal Data Protection Law (PDPL) and Saudi Arabia's Data Protection Regulation (DPR), is paramount. Companies must invest in robust cybersecurity measures and encryption technologies to safeguard sensitive information.



2) Interoperability standards: Developing digital solutions that integrate seamlessly with existing health systems is crucial. This involves adhering to standardised protocols for data exchange and ensuring compatibility across platforms.




3) Ethical AI usage: As AI becomes more prevalent in the health sector, companies must ensure that algorithms are transparent, unbiased, and accountable. This aligns with regional guidelines promoting ethical AI practices.





AI: Revolutionising personalisation and efficiency

AI has emerged as a game-changer in Pharma and MedTech marketing. AI-powered tools enable companies to analyse vast amounts of data, predict trends, and deliver personalised content that resonates with individual audiences.

The background of the page features a dark blue gradient. On the right side, a hand is shown pointing towards a glowing green 'AI' icon. Surrounding this are several faint, semi-transparent icons: a person's silhouette inside a hexagon, a circular medical symbol, and a stylized 'AI' in a circle. The overall theme is digital healthcare and artificial intelligence.

One of the most significant advantages of AI is its ability to segment audiences based on behaviour, preferences, and demographics. For example, a **Pharma company** can use AI to identify patients likely to benefit from a new drug and target them with tailored educational content. Similarly, **MedTech firms** can leverage AI-driven insights to create marketing campaigns that address the specific needs of health service providers, such as cost savings or operational efficiency. By analysing data on patient health needs and interests, companies can further personalise content to resonate with specific audience segments, thereby increasing engagement rates and fostering stronger connections with their target audiences.

Chatbots and virtual assistants are other applications of AI that are gaining traction. These tools provide instant responses to user queries, guide patients through symptom checkers, and even schedule appointments. By offering round-the-clock assistance, companies enhance user experience while optimising operational efficiency. AI also plays a crucial role in predictive analytics, enabling brands to anticipate market trends and adjust their strategies proactively.



Digital storytelling: Creating emotional connections

In a sector often characterised by complex jargon and technical information, digital storytelling has emerged as a powerful tool to humanise brands and create emotional connections. Stories have the power to inspire, inform, and influence, making them an ideal medium for Pharma and MedTech companies to convey their impact.

Digital storytelling often revolves around real-life narratives. For example, a **MedTech** company might showcase how its innovative medical devices have improved the quality of life for patients. These stories, when combined with compelling visuals and testimonials, resonate deeply with audiences and foster a sense of trust.

Pharma companies are also using storytelling to demystify scientific concepts. Explainer videos, infographics, and interactive content such as live Q and A sessions and webinars make complex

medical information accessible to a broader audience. This educational approach enhances understanding and also positions the brand as a thought leader in its domain. Moreover, incorporating cultural nuances and sensitivity in messaging, by reflecting local customs, values, and languages, ensures that the content resonates with diverse audiences. This culturally tailored approach fosters trust, engagement, and inclusivity, making the information more relatable and impactful for various communities.



The power of integrated strategies and navigating challenges

The true potential of **social media, AI, and storytelling** lies in their **integration** into a **cohesive marketing strategy**. Companies that successfully combine these elements can create campaigns that are innovative and deeply impactful. This integrated approach ensures that every touchpoint in the marketing journey is aligned, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the campaign.

While the opportunities are immense, marketing comes with its challenges, particularly in navigating regulatory landscapes.

In the UAE and Saudi Arabia, governments have established stringent guidelines to ensure ethical practices and safeguard patient data.

For instance, social media campaigns must comply with local advertising standards, which often require transparency about the claims made. AI tools must align with ethical guidelines to avoid biases and maintain the integrity of health decisions. Moreover, storytelling campaigns need to respect cultural sensitivities and present information in a manner that is both accurate and respectful.

THE VANGUARD OF DIGITAL HEALTH: TOP GLOBAL BRANDS LEADING THE WAY

Our analysis explored owned social mentions from a variety of Pharma and MedTech companies (both global channels posting about Middle Eastern topics and specific Middle Eastern handles). There is a significant difference in performance metrics across the brands. Companies have demonstrated contrasting strategies and outcomes in terms of volumes of mentions and engagement levels.

سبيماكو الدوائية SPIMACO ADDWAEIH

SPIMACO : With only 7% of mentions, it achieved a disproportionately high share of engagement at 36%, indicating that their audience highly valued their posts. Their focus on localised content (posting exclusively in Arabic), such as recruitment campaigns and partnerships within the Middle East, demonstrated relevance to regional audiences.

Here is a breakdown of the insights:

PHILIPS

Philips : It accounted for 63% of the total mentions but only garnered 5% of total engagement. Similarly, while it dominated share of reach (87%), this did not necessarily translate into proportional audience interaction, indicating a content strategy heavily focused on broad visibility through campaigns or announcements, potentially at the expense of more interactive, audience-specific engagement.

What this means: While visibility is important, the lack of interaction suggests that Philips' content might not be resonating emotionally or providing actionable value to its audience. The strategic approach emphasises quantity over quality, leading to diluted engagement despite high awareness.

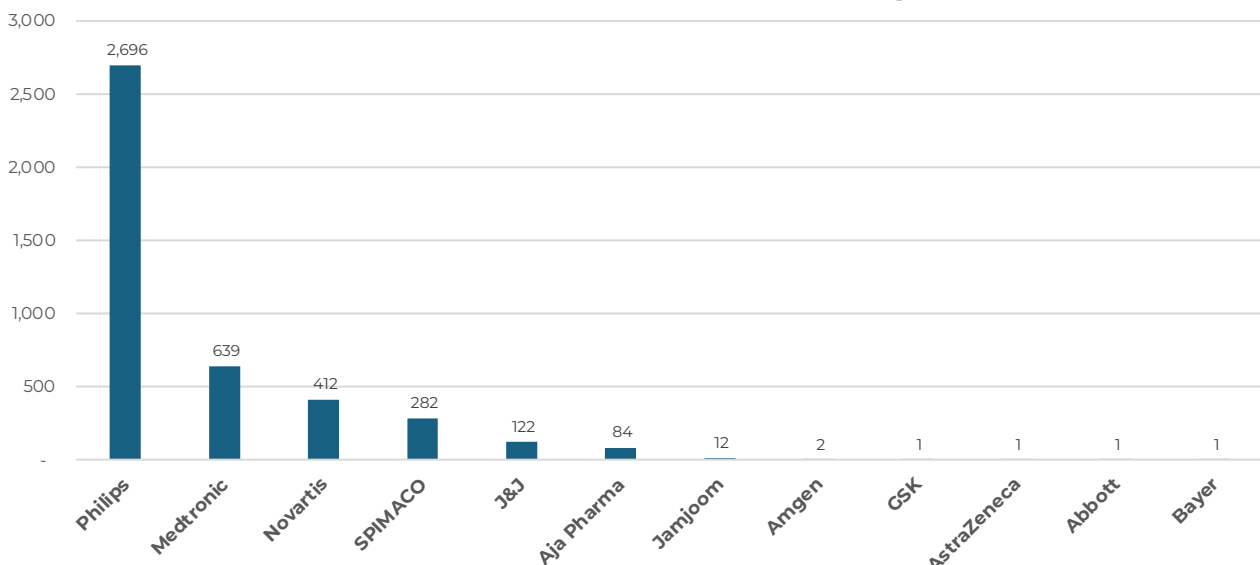
What this means: SPIMACO benefits from targeted, culturally relevant messaging that resonates deeply within its niche audience. Unlike Philips, their strategy focuses on fewer but highly impactful posts that maximise engagement.

NOVARTIS

Novartis : Despite having a moderate number of mentions (9.7%), it accounted for only 2% of engagement, suggesting a lack of resonance.

What this means: This indicates potential inefficiencies in their content strategy. They may benefit from incorporating interactive elements or emphasising educational and emotionally engaging posts to connect more deeply with their audience.

Volume of owned social coverage





Medtronic : Despite having fewer mentions (15%), it contributed to 42% of total engagement, making it the most engaging brand in this analysis. This suggests a focused content strategy that prioritises interactive and emotionally resonant posts.

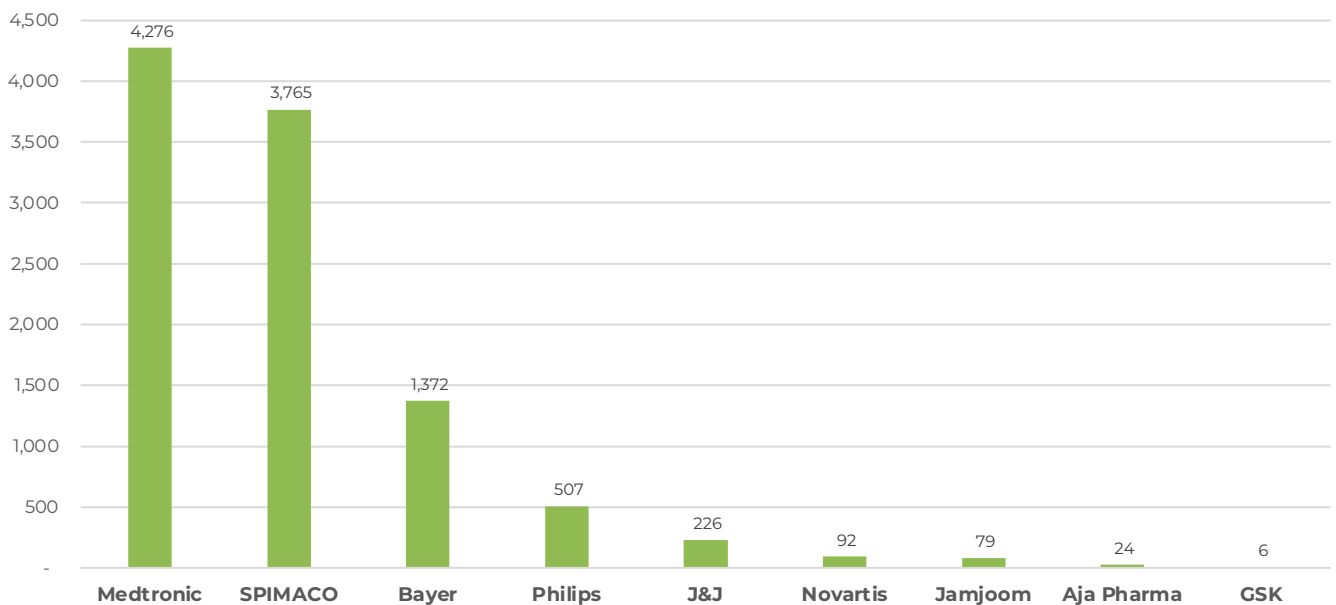
What this means: Medtronic excels by creating value-driven content with clear calls-to-action and relatable themes. The brand’s ability to humanise its innovations and connect with stakeholders demonstrates the power of tailoring messages to audience needs.



Bayer: With only a single mention, focused on family planning being a human right, it surprisingly generated 1,372 engagements, showcasing the potential of highly targeted, impactful posts.

What this means: This indicates that even brands with a smaller footprint can achieve strong results by focusing on specific, high-value campaigns or collaborations. Bayer’s performance highlights the importance of precision and strategic planning in content creation.

Engagement



A high volume of mentions, as seen with Philips, does not necessarily translate into meaningful engagement, emphasising the importance of content relevance and actionable value. In contrast, Medtronic and SPIMACO demonstrate the power of focused strategies that prioritise quality over quantity, with fewer but highly impactful posts that resonate deeply. Medtronic’s ability to blend innovation with relatability, and SPIMACO’s success in leveraging localised and culturally relevant messaging, showcase the effectiveness of tailored content.

To optimise for impact, brands must strike a balance between visibility and depth, ensuring that high reach is matched by strong audience connection and interaction. This approach not only enhances engagement but also strengthens brand authority in a highly competitive digital landscape.

KEY THEMES

AMPLIFYING POWERFUL PERSPECTIVE

In the Pharma and MedTech sectors, adopting a digital-first approach is essential to engage stakeholders effectively. By analysing content themes, we have identified strategies that maximise impact, build trust, and can help position brands as thought leaders.

THEME 1:

EDUCATIONAL CONTENT ON GLOBAL HEALTH ISSUE

Why it resonates:

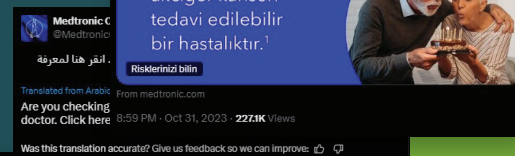
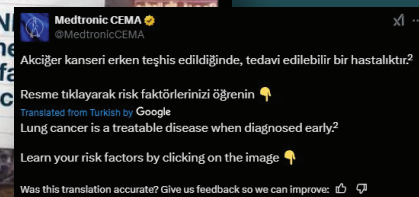
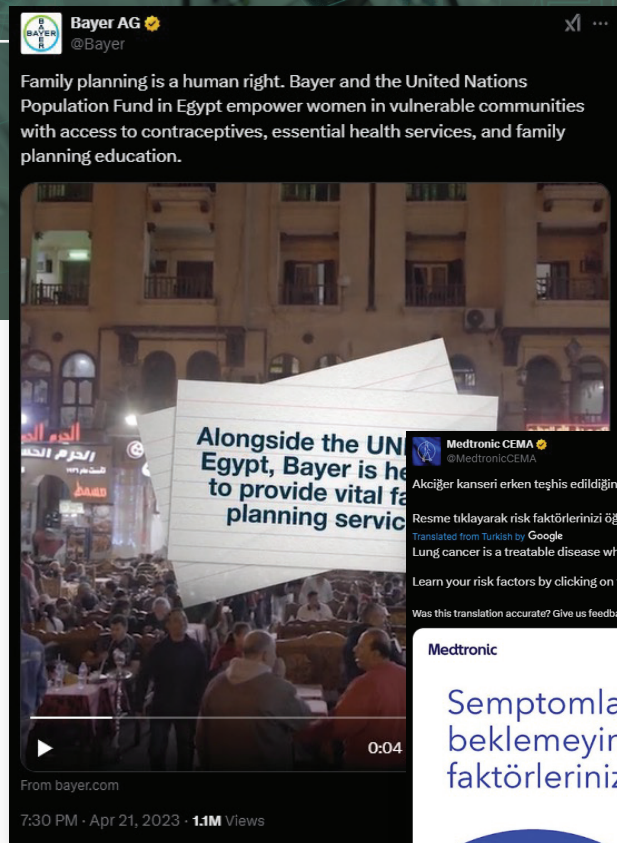
This type of educational content fosters awareness about global health initiatives, positioning the brands as socially responsible. By addressing common health challenges, brands position themselves as socially responsible thought leaders dedicated to improving health outcomes. This type of content is highly relatable and actionable, offering practical advice or insights that audiences can apply in their personal or professional lives.

Engagement insights:

This resonates well, but slightly lower than customer engagement posts, suggesting audiences value actionable solutions.

Strategies for higher engagement:

- Adding clear **calls-to-action** (e.g., “Learn more,” “Visit our website for tips,” or “Talk to your doctor today”) significantly boosts engagement.
- **Visual aids**, such as infographics or short videos explaining complex medical conditions, enhance comprehension and shareability.
- Incorporating multilingual posts ensures accessibility for diverse audiences, which is particularly relevant in regions like the Middle East.



THEME 2:

PRODUCT-FOCUSED LAUNCHES AND CAMPAIGNS

Why it resonates:

These are introductions to innovative solutions while showcasing the brand's expertise in health and technology. They serve both informational and promotional purposes, **helping audiences stay updated about cutting-edge products while demonstrating commitment to addressing critical health issues.** Posts that include visuals, videos, or demos of new products tend to create excitement, while campaign posts highlighting their benefits make them relatable and actionable.

Engagement insights:

Posts that showcase how products solve real-world problems or improve health outcomes tend to perform best. Engagement in this theme can be boosted by clear calls-to-action, such as visiting product pages or scheduling demos as well as the multilingualism of posts, which expand reach and appeal to diverse audiences.

Strategies for higher engagement:

- Posts that showcase **how products solve real-world problems or improve health outcomes tend to perform best.** For instance, a Medtronic post about a cardiac device coupled with a patient success story drives higher engagement by humanising the product's impact.
- Clear **calls-to-action**, such as visiting product pages or scheduling demos and multilingual posts, which expand reach and appeal to diverse audiences can help increase engagement in this theme.

THEME 3:

EVENTS, SUMMITS AND EXHIBITIONS

Why it resonates:

Such content highlights the **company's thought leadership** by showcasing their participation in prestigious industry events, while also **positioning the brand as a proactive innovator, collaborating with experts and stakeholders to address pressing health challenges.** This also provides audiences with behind-the-scenes glimpses or updates from live events, which build excitement and foster a sense of inclusion for those unable to attend.

Engagement insights:

Posts that announce participation in major events generate pre-event excitement and attract engagement from industry professionals. Live updates or photos/videos from exhibitions create real-time interaction opportunities. Posts that recap key moments or highlight major takeaways resonate with those who seek to stay informed without attending.

Strategies for higher engagement:

- **Announcing participation** in major events can generate pre-event excitement and attract engagement from industry professionals.
- **Live updates/photos/videos** from exhibitions help create real-time interaction opportunities with posts that recap key moments or highlight major takeaways that resonate with audiences who seek to stay informed without attending.
- Engagement can increase when including links to registration pages, virtual event portals, or session recordings, offering tangible value, while brands incorporating personal stories or executive viewpoints (e.g., quotes from CEOs or researchers) perform even better, as they humanise corporate participation.



A digital-first approach empowers Pharma and MedTech brands to strengthen engagement, build trust, and showcase leadership by addressing audience needs with precision and purpose. Prioritising relatable value through content that tackles tangible health concerns while offering actionable solutions ensures relevance and impact. Driving emotional connections through storytelling and testimonials highlights the real-life impact of products and campaigns, fostering deeper resonance. Additionally, maximising the impact of events by transforming them into digital engagement opportunities extends their reach and keeps audiences engaged beyond the event itself. By combining educational value, innovation, and event-driven strategies, companies can align with audience expectations and elevate their influence in an increasingly competitive and digitally driven landscape.



ANALYSIS: A STRATEGIC ROADMAP

In the UAE and Saudi Arabia, where innovation and growth are at the forefront of national agendas, embracing a digital-first strategy is both a challenge and an opportunity. For companies in the Pharma and MedTech sectors, the stakes are high. **Success depends on their ability to leverage digital tools and strategies to enhance brand presence, build credibility, and expand market share.** Here are some actionable recommendations to help companies thrive in these dynamic markets.

1 PRIORITISE LEADERSHIP ALIGNMENT AND VISION

Digital transformation begins at the top. Leadership must champion a clear, unified vision for the organisation's digital-first strategy.

This involves:

- Allocating sufficient resources for digital initiatives
- Establishing cross-functional teams to bridge the gap between traditional and digital operations.
- Communicating the long-term benefits of a digital-first approach to stakeholders, including investors, employees, and partners.

This can be done by creating a leadership taskforce focused on driving digital innovation and fostering a culture of adaptability and learning within the organisation.

2 BUILD A ROBUST DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Investing in the right technology is the foundation of a successful digital-first strategy.

Companies must prioritise the following:

- Leverage cloud-based platforms to enable real-time data sharing and scalable solutions for operational efficiency
- Incorporate advanced analytics to gain data insights into market trends, optimise supply chains, and personalise customer experiences
- Implement cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive patient data and maintain compliance with regional regulations.

Companies can conduct a comprehensive audit of existing digital infrastructure and identify gaps that need immediate attention. They can also partner with leading technology providers to implement state-of-the-art solution.

3 EMBRACE DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

Data is the lifeblood of digital strategies. Companies should focus on harnessing the power of data to gain actionable insights such as:

- Analyse consumer behaviours and preferences through market research to tailor offerings.
- Forecast trends, identify risks, and capitalise on opportunities via predictive analytics.
- Continuously measure the impact of digital campaigns and refine strategies accordingly.

Companies can use AI-powered tools to segment audiences and deliver personalised content that resonates with their specific needs.



4

FOCUS ON REGULATORY ALIGNMENT

Compliance with local regulations is critical for maintaining credibility and avoiding penalties.

In the UAE and Saudi Arabia, companies must:

- Adhere to data protection laws like the UAE's PDPL and Saudi Arabia's DPR.
- Ensure that AI applications in the health sector comply with ethical guidelines for transparency and fairness.
- Develop telemedicine solutions in alignment with regional licensing and communication security standards.

The organisations should establish a dedicated compliance team to stay updated on regulatory changes and integrate them seamlessly into their digital strategies.

5 LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BRAND ENGAGEMENT

Social media is a powerful tool for building brand presence and credibility. To maximise its potential, companies should:

- Develop platforms for direct engagement with company spokespersons, health sector professionals, patients, and partners. Participation in industry events like Arab Health and HIMSS strengthens credibility and positions companies as proactive leaders. Companies engaging in this theme effectively extend event value through live updates and post-event recaps.
- Share patient success stories, educational content, and thought leadership articles to position the brand as an industry leader. Educational posts addressing global health challenges resonate strongly by offering actionable insights and positioning brands as trusted authorities. Campaigns from Bayer on family planning and Medtronic on atrial fibrillation exemplify this.
- Use targeted ads to reach specific demographics and expand market reach. Highlighting innovation through product launches connects audiences with cutting-edge solutions. Medtronic's GI Genius and SPIMACO's biosimilar campaigns effectively demonstrate the life-changing potential of their offerings.

Businesses can build a content calendar tailored to regional preferences and cultural nuances, ensuring their messaging is relevant and impactful.

6 Integrate AI for personalisation and efficiency

- AI can revolutionise how Pharma and MedTech companies interact with their stakeholders.

Key applications include:

- Provide 24/7 support for patient queries, product information, and appointment scheduling.
- Optimise supply chain operations and improve demand forecasting with machine learning models.
- Tailor campaigns based on individual behaviours and preferences, increasing engagement and return on investment (ROI).

Firms can partner with AI specialists to design solutions that enhance operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.



7 INVEST IN TALENT DEVELOPMENT

A digital-first strategy requires a workforce equipped with the right skills. Companies should:

- Launch training programmes focused on digital technologies like AI, data analytics, and cybersecurity
- Recruit talent with expertise in digital marketing and health technology
- Foster a culture of continuous learning to keep pace with technological advancements.

Companies can collaborate with academic institutions and government programmes to develop industry-specific training initiatives.

8 ENCOURAGE PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

A Collaboration is a key driver of innovation in the digital age. Pharma and MedTech companies can benefit from:

- Partnering with technology providers to access cutting-edge tools and platforms
- Collaborating with government agencies to align with national health priorities
- Engaging with research institutions to co-develop solutions that address regional health challenges.

Corporations can establish innovation hubs or incubators to foster collaboration and accelerate the development of new technologies.

Pharma and MedTech companies must act now to embrace a digital-first mindset. The path forward requires agility, creativity, and a commitment to continuous improvement. In a region defined by its drive for excellence, those who innovate and adapt will set the standard for the transformation of the health sector.



HOW WE CAN SUPPORT

The Pharma and MedTech sectors in the UAE and Saudi Arabia are navigating a rapidly evolving landscape shaped by technological advancements, regulatory shifts, and changing consumer behaviours. As **an Integrated Marketing and Communications Agency**, we are uniquely positioned to empower these companies in the region to expand their footprint by leveraging innovative, data-driven, and customer-centric approaches. Here's how we can partner with companies to drive success and growth:

01 | CRAFTING A DIGITAL-FIRST STRATEGY TAILORED TO REGIONAL NEEDS

The UAE and Saudi Arabia possess unique cultural, regulatory, and market dynamics, requiring tailored digital strategies for success. We craft bespoke digital-first approaches by developing localised content that resonates with regional audiences, incorporating cultural sensitivities, language preferences, and local health priorities. Leveraging data-driven insights, we identify untapped opportunities, emerging trends, and target demographics to refine strategies. Our integrated campaigns span social media, telehealth platforms, and other digital touchpoints, ensuring cohesive messaging that amplifies brand impact across diverse channels.

Our approach: A deep understanding of the region's health landscape enables us to craft strategies that are not only innovative but also effective.

02 | AMPLIFYING BRAND VISIBILITY THROUGH DIGITAL STORYTELLING

In the competitive Pharma and MedTech sectors, storytelling is a powerful tool for differentiation, enabling brands to connect with audiences on a human level. By highlighting patient success stories and showcasing the impact of innovative treatments, we build trust and foster emotional engagement. We position executives as thought leaders through impactful content such as blogs, whitepapers, and webinars, enhancing credibility and industry presence. Utilising diverse multimedia formats like videos, infographics, podcasts, and virtual reality, we make complex health concepts more accessible and engaging, ensuring the brand's message resonates effectively with its audience.

Why it works: People remember stories, not statistics. By humanising your brand, we foster deeper connections with stakeholders.

03 | OPTIMISING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR ENGAGEMENT AND GROWTH

Social media is now a cornerstone of health communication, providing unmatched opportunities for reach and engagement. We design platform-specific strategies to maximise impact, leveraging LinkedIn for professional networking, Instagram for visual storytelling, and X for real-time updates. Collaborating with health influencers and medical professionals enhances credibility and helps connect with niche audiences. Additionally, we foster online communities where patients, caregivers, and professionals can interact, share experiences, and build lasting brand loyalty, creating meaningful connections that amplify engagement.

Case in point: A targeted LinkedIn campaign could engage health sector professionals, while Instagram stories might resonate with younger, health-conscious audiences.

04 | HARNESSING THE POWER OF AI AND ANALYTICS

AI and analytics are transforming health marketing by enabling unparalleled precision and personalisation. As a communications partner, we leverage AI-powered tools to analyse user behaviour and preferences, delivering tailored campaigns that drive meaningful conversions. Real-time analytics provide actionable insights, allowing us to monitor performance and optimise strategies for maximum ROI. By analysing historical data, we also help companies anticipate emerging market trends and evolving consumer expectations, ensuring they stay ahead.

Result: Data-driven decision-making enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing efforts, ensuring long-term success.

05 | BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS

Collaboration is essential for success in the digital-first era, and we empower Pharma and MedTech companies to build meaningful partnerships that drive innovation and growth. By securing speaking opportunities, sponsorships, and visibility at key regional industry events, we enhance brand recognition and influence. Additionally, we help engage stakeholders, including health sector professionals, patients, and policymakers, through meaningful dialogues that build trust, credibility, and long-term relationships.

Outcome: Partnerships enhance brand reputation and create opportunities for co-innovation and market expansion.

06 | ENHANCING CRISIS COMMUNICATION READINESS

In the health sector, crises such as product recalls or data breaches can emerge unexpectedly, making robust **crisis communication strategies** essential for protecting your brand. We focus on proactive planning by **identifying potential risks and preparing pre-emptive responses to mitigate impact**. With round-the-clock monitoring and rapid response capabilities, we ensure timely management of emerging issues. Our approach emphasises transparent communication, addressing concerns openly and honestly to maintain trust and confidence among stakeholders during challenging times.

Impact: Effective crisis management minimises reputational damage and strengthens stakeholder confidence.

07 | DRIVING PATIENT ENGAGEMENT THROUGH INNOVATIVE PLATFORMS

Patient-centricity lies at the core of modern health marketing, and we help companies put patients first through innovative solutions. By creating educational content such as informative videos, blogs, and FAQs, we empower patients to make informed decisions about their health. Additionally, we foster feedback loops, encouraging patients to share their experiences.

Result: Engaged patients are more likely to trust and advocate for your brand, driving long-term growth.

As a communications agency, we offer the expertise, tools, and creativity to help your brand navigate this digital transformation successfully. Together, we can build a roadmap for success that enhances your brand's visibility, credibility, and market share. Partner with us to shape the future of health sector in the UAE and Saudi Arabia.



ABOUT FINN PARTNERS

Founded in 2011 on the core principles of innovation and collaborative partnership, FINN Partners has grown from about \$24 million in fees to almost \$170 million in fees over ten years, becoming one of the fastest growing independent public relations agencies in the world. The full-service marketing and communications company's record setting pace is a result of organic growth and integrating new companies and new people into the FINN world through a common philosophy. With more than 1,500 professionals across 34 offices, FINN provides clients with global access and capabilities in the Americas, Europe, Middle East and Asia.

FINN Partners clients are also supported through longstanding partner agencies and its membership in the PROI network of leading agencies around the world. Headquartered in New York, FINN has offices in: Abu Dhabi, Atlanta, Bangalore, Beijing, Boston, Chicago, Delhi, Denver, Detroit, Dublin, Fort Lauderdale, Frankfurt, Guam, Hong Kong, Honolulu, Jerusalem, Kuala Lumpur, London, Los Angeles, Manila, Mumbai, Munich, Nashville, Orange County, Paris, Portland, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Shanghai, Singapore, Vancouver and Washington D.C.

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The logo for FINN PARTNERS. The word "FINN" is in a bold, sans-serif font, with the 'F' and 'N' in red and the 'I' and 'N' in white. Below it, the word "PARTNERS" is in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

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