

# Compliant Chatbots on Social: Best Practices for Pharma



## Executive Summary

The potential for artificial intelligence (AI) in social media and healthcare is incredible, and AI can no longer be relegated to innovation groups. Pharma companies can leverage AI to impact many aspects of the industry, from helping users find and talk to doctors, using AI to [predict heart attack risk](#) with greater accuracy than cardiologists, and providing real-time customer support.

While AI is clearly not limited to chat interfaces known as “chatbots,” these tools are one of the easiest ways for brands to start implementing AI into their connected marketing ecosystems. As platforms like Facebook and Amazon add to their artificial intelligence teams and toolsets, it’s important for pharma marketers in the social space to revisit how AI can play a role in their marketing efforts.

This POV will address what AI is, how it integrates with social media, and best practices for marketers using AI to build compliant and effective chat interfaces for consumers.

## Background

Artificial intelligence in bot technology is generally thought to have two main components: natural language processing (NLP) to understand user inputs and machine learning to understand, analyze and deliver outputs. We’ve discussed how machine learning can impact pharma in depth [here](#), and outlined how AI can [change the overall patient experience](#).

There has been a lot of hype around AI over the past few years. Much of the hype is warranted, but unless AI is implemented with the right thinking and planning, it can easily return counterproductive results.

Artificial intelligence can be used as a tool to benefit marketers in a variety of business cases, but customer service is one of the main use cases to date and is top of mind for healthcare marketers.

For customer service, the line between human support and AI is blurring. In fact, last year, 27% of users weren’t sure whether their last interaction with a brand was from a human or a chatbot.



## Social Integration

In 2017, more than 200,000 bots were developed for [Facebook's Messenger platform](#), and more than two billion messages were sent between businesses and people each month.

Facebook's Messenger codes make it easy for users to start conversations with brands, and their recent Discover tab showcases bots already on Messenger. Discover is organized by category, recent activity and featured experiences.

In addition, Facebook's hiring of IBM Watson's creator, Yann LeCun, shows Facebook is dedicated to integrating AI into the platform.

Facebook is making it easier for brands to develop and manage Messenger chat interfaces. Marketers with Facebook Pages can build native, simple automated responses to assist human community managers. This is helpful, but a full AI solution is more effective and efficient. When these tools are available across a marketing ecosystem, they connect multiple parts of a patient's journey and create a seamless user experience.

### Messenger Plugin for Websites

One way Facebook hopes to connect these experiences is by offering brands the ability to embed Messenger chats into their websites with a plugin.

When added to a site, the Messenger window is personalized to the user and loads recent chat history between the user and the brand. When a conversation is started on the website, it can be picked up in the Messenger app, on Facebook, or on the website in the future.

This creates a single experience for customers, and makes it easier for brands to follow up with the user without having to capture additional information.

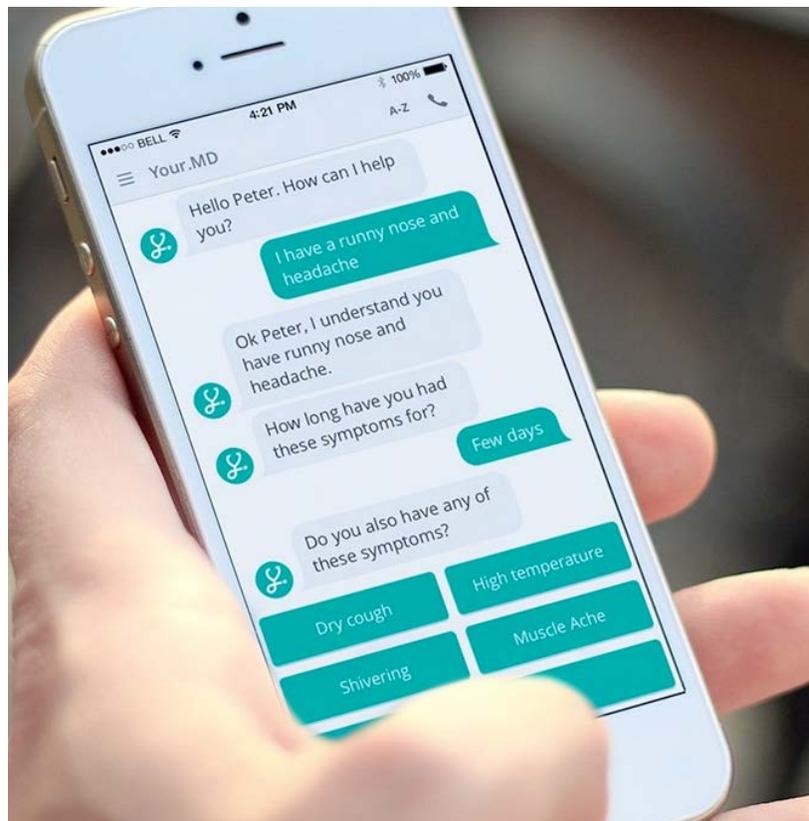
This plugin is currently in the beta stage, but Intouch is part of the beta and will work with our Facebook reps to be ready to implement when the tool is pushed live.

## Best Practices for Healthcare Chatbots on Social

Pharma marketers considering integrating chatbots into their ecosystem should keep in mind the following best practices.

### Pharma Focus

Ensure that your chatbot is trained and built with the pharma regulatory process in mind, and understands healthcare lingo and workflows. Google, Microsoft, IBM Watson and Facebook don't have this singular focus. It can be useful to apply their technologies as it fits business needs, but keep pharma compliance in mind.



### Customization

Every brand and patient population's needs are different. For example, patients in the 25-35 age group talk differently than patients in the 65-75 age group. Similarly, oncology patients may speak differently than patients in the diabetes community. The ability to train your NLP to differentiate between groups like patients and HCPs is important.

## Contextual Conversations

Chatbots should be able to understand context in conversations. For example, when a user says, "I have a headache and am feeling depressed," it's important that the system addresses both of those statements.

## Adverse Events and Product Complaints

In the healthcare space, monitoring conversations for adverse events (AEs) is a top priority. A chatbot should be able to detect AEs and product complaints in the input it receives. There are hundreds of ways to say that your arm hurts, but an AI detection engine can help identify when patients mention this AE regardless of the phrasing. Customized workflows can also be implemented and automated to meet individual needs for each drug or company.

## Learning System

Chatbots can learn from users based on conversations. Things like names, phone numbers, preferences, patients, caregivers, HCP status, and other personal information allow the bot to respond in a more natural, conversational manner. Referring to patients by their names allows for a more human experience. This level of learning also generates valuable data that can be used in other ways beyond a bot channel when appropriate.

## Multichannel Support

In order for these chat tools to provide comprehensive support throughout the patient's journey, chatbots should be available where the users are. A multichannel approach will help ensure that patients can receive support on a variety of platforms: websites, zero UI platforms (Alexa, Google Home), SMS, over the phone, and on social media platforms like Facebook Messenger.

## Cognitive Core

Intouch's predictive engine and "brain" for healthcare AI tools, known as Cognitive Core, can help with each of these use cases. In addition to being a multichannel tool built specifically for pharma, it can also be integrated into other proprietary systems and services such as Salesforce.

## Conclusion

Artificial intelligence is more than chatbots, but these chat interfaces can be a great way for marketers to get started implementing AI while also making their business more efficient.

Whether marketers use a pharma-specific AI system like Cognitive Core or choose to leverage out-of-the-box social tools, Intouch can help implement a solution to make one-on-one experiences more effective and help foster relationships with patients, HCPs and caregivers.

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