

## Sanofi iPhone app offers diabetics carb counting

SANOFI-AVENTIS launched an iPhone application aimed at helping diabetics count calories on the go.

The free GoMeals app draws on the CalorieKing nutritional database to give carb counts for menu items at 200 chain restaurants as well as à la carte estimates for 25,000 dishes. The app's "Today's Plate" feature allows users to tally their daily caloric intake, along with the distribution of carbs, fats and proteins, as represented in a pie chart on the touch screen. Users can search by restaurant, based on current location, or by type of cuisine.

"Say you're at TGI Friday's, and there's hidden carbs in something like gravy. This app can tell you what that carb count is," said Lynn Crowe, senior marketing manager, metabolism at Sanofi-Aventis. "I used it last night in a Thai food restaurant



Today's Plate feature lets users tally their daily caloric intake

to look up red curry chicken. I don't know what's in there. App to the rescue."

The app, developed by Kansas shop InTouch Solutions, bears the Sanofi-Aventis name but not those of any of the company's diabetes products, which include

Lantus and Apidra. Sanofi-Aventis is promoting it through outreach to diabetes bloggers and tactical advertising, such as banners on diabetes sites.

"Mobile devices are where diabetes is moving," said Crowe. "It's no different from the gen-

eral patient population. We're looking at diabetes being a solution provider. It's way more complicated than just medication, and the company has made a commitment to remain focused on consumers."

Sanofi-Aventis is using Twitter as a feedback channel for the app, since the iTunes Store allows users to post comments but doesn't afford developers any means of responding.

The company launched a YouTube channel for diabetics, dubbed GoInsulin, last February. GoInsulin has garnered over 400,000 views and allowed the company to reach beyond its traditional audience, said Crowe.

"Diabetes is relentless," said Crowe, "the number of times of day you have to pay attention to this disease. Anything we can do to make the patient's life one iota easier, we're going to do it." — Matthew Arnold



## DDR on DTC BY DEBORAH DICK-RATH

One of the biggest problems for DTC marketers is that there is no packaging for consumers to bond with (remember the "eighth P" of the "seven P's" from business school?). Pharmacists still dispense Rx drugs into plastic bottles that all look alike. While the pills may have a distinctive shape, color or name embossed on them, that's about it for this "P." We know when we see a DTC ad featuring an Rx bottle that we're in for a promotional message with rational reasons to purchase or ask about the product.

Pfizer's Lipitor recently added a "pill bottle ad" to its DTC campaign. Fortunately, Pfizer also runs a testimonial campaign for the

brand, with real people explaining why it's a good choice. Without the humanistic execution accompanying the "pill bottle ads," it would



Abilify's pill bottle ads are used to show its combo effects

probably have trouble persuading people to do anything. BMS/Otsuka's "pill bottle ad" for Abilify is another stark example of a rational argument execution that does little to illuminate the end-benefit of the brand. Where the Lipitor ad uses brand colors and an artfully backlit photo of the bottle, the Abilify ad relies on drawings to make its point that people can use it in combination with antidepressants. I wonder if people even notice it in a busy consumer magazine.

In both cases, we are sorely reminded about the missing "P."

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## TV viewers suffer risk info overload

CONSUMERS TEND to block out risk info in TV and print ads for prescription drugs—particularly those over age 55—according to a study by ORC Guideline.

The research firm found that 41% of US consumers pay little or no attention to risk info presented by pharma companies in their TV commercials, and half did the same for disclosures in print ads. Respondents over the age of 55 were particularly likely to tune out risk info.

ORC Guideline's chief research officer, Morris Whitcup, said risk info overload is probably to blame.

The online survey of 1,045 US adults was conducted October 29-30. — MA