

# Programmatic Media: A Win-Win Proposition for Pharma



## Executive Summary

Programmatic media buying is on the rise across all industries — even in pharmaceutical marketing, which has been slower to adopt this type of buying.

In this POV, we discuss what programmatic is, one way it's now easier to understand, the benefits it can bring to campaigns, and why pharma marketers should be including it within their media plans.

## Understanding Programmatic Is Now a Little Easier

Simply, programmatic media buying is the automation of the advertising marketplace. Content and audiences are aggregated using technology to create economies of scale across media.

But of course, there's more to it than that. As with any new technology, there's a lot to digest. A great deal of specific terminology is used to describe the complexities of automating media buying.

The [Programmatic Health Council](#) (PHC) is an advocacy group, comprising dozens of programmatic and healthcare advertising experts — **including two from Intouch** — leading efforts to improve programmatic advertising among health brands, agencies and publishers. The PHC works to:

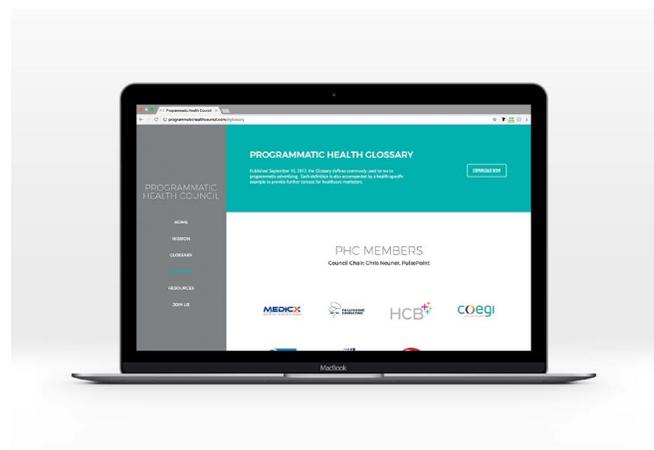
- Educate healthcare marketers about programmatic advertising
- Create materials to facilitate the use of programmatic advertising in the healthcare marketing community
- Connect constituents along the healthcare marketing spectrum to create a forum for the exchange of ideas to advance healthcare marketing

In late 2017, the PHC's first work product, the [Programmatic Health Glossary](#), was released. The 28-page collection defines 64 commonly used terms and offers

a specific example for each one relevant to healthcare.

**Intouch programmatic experts** Tina Breithaupt, Vice President, Media Services, and Tricia Savio, Associate Media Director, comprised half of the PHC sub-committee that created the glossary, which has been released throughout the industry.

As PHC Chair Chris Neuner said, "The Programmatic Health Glossary will help healthcare marketers gain a deeper understanding of how to use programmatic advertising technology to deliver relevant information to consumers."



## Overcoming Obstacles to Programmatic Success

In addition to the terminology, the concept of programmatic made many in pharma nervous, particularly during its introduction to the industry.

"It was a bit like watching cats investigate a new toy," says Breithaupt. "Programmatic looked interesting and promising, but people were wary of jumping on board."

"Today, though, the vibe couldn't be more different," says Savio. "Programmatic is no longer some *deux ex machina*.

Everyone has data and case studies. Which is wonderful, because programmatic is so well suited to what we do in pharma.”

For an industry whose brands are, by nature, aimed at clearly defined and limited target audiences, programmatic can be just what the doctor ordered.

But that doesn't mean it's a no-brainer. It does require rigorous planning, constant supervision, and adjustment specific to pharma regulations.

### Is Programmatic Safe for Brands?

Skeptics have wondered this, worried about ads being served automatically and concerned about where they might appear. What if they're mis-targeted — or what if they're too specific, upsetting a viewer? What if they appear next to unpleasant or contradictory content? This trepidation is a primary reason the usage rate of programmatic is still only about half that of other industries.

**The answer, however, is yes, programmatic is safe — if it's done correctly.** Although a programmatic platform is automated, experienced media teams apply their expertise and knowledge of regulatory considerations throughout the process to ensure compliance. Parameters are carefully set to ensure that ads don't appear on certain sites or types of sites. Even though automation is important, the presence of the programmatic trader is critical to evaluate performance by analyzing data and creating A/B tests and optimizations in order to channel positive outcomes back into campaign targeting.

“You have to think carefully, and well in advance, about the rules of engagement for any programmatic campaign,” says Breithaupt.

“Draw clear lines for inventory buyers about what is and is not acceptable. This goes beyond creating blacklists and whitelists of sites. To avoid embarrassment and possible legal consequences, we create clear and spectacularly detailed rules, make sure they're followed, and tweak them as necessary.”

“As the power of technology grows, some marketers might be tempted to let the algorithms make all the decisions,” says Savio. “But, at Intouch, we rely on the mix of technology along with human optimization. We're responsible for managing when and where our brands communicate with their audiences, and we feel it is extremely important to manage the campaigns with constant diligence.”

### Be sure you have a pharma-specific programmatic team.

An experienced team that only manages programmatic campaigns **for pharma** provides an extra level of safety and ensures compliance, as opposed to one that manages campaigns across a variety of verticals such as CPG, QSR, travel, etc.

**Transparency is not “nice to have” — it's necessary.** There should be no mystery in your media buy. Is your agency buying the best inventory for your brand? Do you know what their mark-up is in any and all circumstances? Do you have access at any time to audit their processes and costs? If it feels like you're looking at a black box, that's a sign you should take your business elsewhere. An open dialogue ensures that you're included in planning discussions and always clearly understand cost, targeting and delivery.



**Make sure experts work together.** When all groups — programmatic, analytics, creative, social, paid search teams, etc. — can share knowledge and collaborate, strategy will be sound; plans will reflect the most detailed, extensive and up-to-date data; and your brand will have the best possible foundation for success.

## Data Fuels Programmatic

Smart marketers are always watching their campaigns, seeking ways to adjust elements to have the most impact. Programmatic offers the opportunity to do this beyond anything that's been available before — to optimize campaign launch tactics and targeting, analyze reporting, and make those optimization changes in real time. To get the most out of your programmatic investment, you must take advantage of the power of your data.

Intouch works with our data partners — both internally and externally — to create and onboard tools that identify those most likely to respond to your campaigns and specific HCP target lists for media execution and analytics. Some key questions to ask yourself, if you aren't sure what's happening with your data include:

- How are you leveraging first-, second- or third-party data?
- Do your targeting strategies ladder up to propensity, affinities and comorbidities?
- Is geography taken into consideration?
- Are your programmatic and your decision-science teams communicating?
- Is post-click and post-impression analysis showing you the quality of the response from each placement?
- Do you know which ad size, or time of day, or location, is doing the best?
- Is all that information informing the next round of buying?

**If not, you're missing out on one of the greatest potential benefits of programmatic: the ability to tie all these data points together into a self-improving tapestry of optimized communications.** So, when you invest in programmatic, be sure to concurrently invest in the data analysis that will make programmatic the most effective, linking data and placements in a loop of positive feedback.

## Leveraging Creative Strategy and Optimization Within Programmatic

One of the most powerful capabilities of programmatic is the ability to segment audiences into strategic groups and align messaging accordingly. With a careful buying strategy, we can speak to those with a high propensity to be newly diagnosed differently than we do to those with a high propensity to be long-time patients, or to people who have

## BENEFITS OF PROGRAMMATIC

- Performance-based multichannel optimization
- Data-based decision making
- Better user experience
- Precise audience analytics
- Creative and segmentation alignment
- Can be used for direct response and branding
- Rx data can be used to create propensity models for hypertargeting
- Online media can be tied to off-line Rx lift

## OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

- **All types of ad units.** In addition to standard banners, there are additional options, such as rising-star, native, and social units. Finding the right mix for your buy is an important part of media planning.
- **Programmatic TV.** It's possible to leverage advanced television solutions to accompany a current traditionally bought TV plan or to test TV and leverage budget to a more niche audience. National, local, video on demand and addressable campaigns are now possible.
- **Real-time bidding, and also other types of programmatic.** Consider private deals, programmatic direct and guaranteed. More and more endemic publishers within the pharma space are monetizing their inventory via the programmatic pipelines.

never seen the brand's website differently than to those who are frequent visitors. We can use programmatic to live up to the clichéd term, "customer-centric."

And then, we can tie the site experience back into message and audience, providing the most relevant experience for the user receiving each ad impression. This goes beyond just tying data back to the campaign. It's about getting granular and altering message in placement accordingly, segment by segment, across the patient and HCP journey touchpoints.

Niche, hyper-local targeting, granular attention to detail in set-up, quick results and programmatic flexibility make it possible to align your message with specificity and gain the ability to tell a sequenced, sophisticated story. Cross-device and sequential messaging can increase engagement and conversion, while offering more robust insights about what is working in terms of path to conversion and continuing a brand conversation.

## Conclusion

"When programmatic is executed properly, it can be a great complement to a media plan, bringing targeted scale and opportunities to maximize cross-device, sequential messaging, and a more holistic approach to execution," says Savio.

"Intouch has found that alignment with data science and analytics adds to our strategic toolset," says Breithaupt. "We can create and deploy a strategic campaign that can be managed in a circular fashion, putting insights back into the planning and buying part of the process for in-campaign optimization."

Proper planning and diligence makes programmatic a transformative method for pharma marketers. With its ability to target more accurately, spend more efficiently, and align creative messaging and site experience, programmatic holds the promise to create possibilities that should quicken the heartbeats of pharma marketers.

To read the Glossary, visit the Programmatic Health Council at [www.programmatichealthcouncil.com](http://www.programmatichealthcouncil.com)

Also, talk to your Intouch account team about how Intouch's in-house programmatic trading desk, INSIGHT, could help your brand. INSIGHT was built specifically for the healthcare industry and has been implemented with great success by numerous clients. INSIGHT is able to use Intouch's history in pharma to create the right mix for each client's objectives.

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