

Compounding Pharmacy Sets Its Site High

By Dennis Arp
Contributing Editor

For those who order compounded medications from a pharmacy, the words “fun” and “easy” can sometimes seem far more than a click away.

But when Wedgewood Pharmacy officials decided to create a brand new website to serve the veterinary community, the concept of enjoyment was right beside efficiency at the front of their thinking, said Marcy Bliss, executive vice president of Wedgewood, a compounding with more than two decades of experience.

“We wanted it to be as fun and easy to make an appropriate selection as it is to buy shoes on Zappos,” said Bliss, referring to the online shoe seller famous for its customer service and the devotion of its clientele.

Like customers who shop on the best consumer websites, Wedgewood veterinary clients want to swiftly maneuver through a large number of choices, Bliss said. It’s just that instead of size, style, color and price, they navigate dosage forms, strengths, flavors and quantities. Oh yeah, and price.

“Our inventory includes 14,000 unique preparations and we’re adding a couple of hundred a month to meet veterinarians’ requests,” Bliss noted. “Any one chemical need might come in 10 dosage forms and 30 flavors. Those kinds of choices can be kind of hard to navigate over the phone.”

Depth of Service

It took five years of planning and execution, but Bliss and others at Wedgewood are convinced that the new Order.WedgewoodPetRx.com is the first of its kind in the industry, providing an ease and depth of service that will remind veterinarians and their staff of their best online experiences.

“For practices that have to call a compounding pharmacy regularly, this will provide a huge time savings,” said Phillip Barnes, social media and interactive marketing specialist for Wedgewood, based in Swedesboro, N.J.

And now that the website is live—launch came just before the July 4 holiday weekend—early testers are validating the pharmacy’s assertions that the site is a step forward for the industry.

Wedgewood prepared its telephone pharmacy technicians in case early users encountered problems finding what they needed on the site. So far, there have only been a few calls, company officials say.

Kathery McDaniel is among those who have tested the new site. As office manager for Hillside Veterinarian Associates in Covington, La., McDaniel places orders with compounding pharmacies at least once a week. Wedgewood says the latest research indicates that about 7 percent of veterinary prescriptions are for compounded medications, and like many veterinary

staff members placing such orders, McDaniel has typically made them by phone or fax.

That may change, however.

“I tried the new site, and I really like it,” she said. “I like that our most commonly used items are right there to see. And the way the pages are laid out, I had a really easy time finding what I was looking for.

“I like that you can choose a medication, then a dose form and strength and it narrows the search for you.”

McDaniel said she doesn’t yet feel comfortable using the site to order compounded medications for the first time. “I usually call those in because I want to make sure I’m getting the right thing,” she said. “With the new website, I’m not sure whether calling it in would still be the way to go.”

Like McDaniel, other customers testing the site appreciate getting a list of items they had ordered previously, said Dan Rowan, marketing manager for Wedgewood.

“One of the most common questions (to our call center) is, ‘The last time I ordered, what flavor did I get?’ or ‘What strength did I order?’ Now they can see that immediately and put it in their cart.”

Shortages Noted

Another feature earning customer praise is a section that lists manufacturers’ prescription medications that are on back order as well as the meds Wedgewood compounds as alternatives.

“Right now the industry is experiencing an unbelievable shortage of some medications, and it’s causing headaches,” Barnes said. “If we can compound an alternative, we can help maintain the continuity of care.”

But perhaps the biggest boon to clinicians is the chance to order compounded medications 24/7, as opposed to 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern time—the hours of the Wedgewood call center.

“Some equine veterinarians are on the road by 7 a.m.,” Rowan noted. “Some 24-hour emergency clinics may do inventory at 3 a.m., and they need to know a price and availability. In today’s world, we know just about all of our customers work beyond 8 to 8.”

The site’s features reflect the groundwork Wedgewood did in surveying customers as well as sampling websites the company sought to emulate.

“We looked at 30 different sites and 90 different levels of functionality,” Bliss said.

In addition to the sites prized by serious shoppers—particularly Land’s End and Zappos—Wedgewood



Order.WedgewoodPetRx.com allows veterinarians to easily place pharmacy orders online.

officials studied those of competitors and others in its classification—CVS, Drugstore.com, etc.

“We created a list of features and functions we thought were critical,” Bliss added. “Then we had to work out in our heads all the scenarios that would need to be programmed into the system.”

Sweating the Details

For example: What if someone ordered a refrigerated item on a Friday in summer? How best to program in workarounds so those meds don’t spend a hot weekend in the back of a truck?

“The other thing that took almost a year was taking our database of formulations and translating that into a new database, providing expanded information, like all indications on a class of drugs and any kind of cautionary information,” Bliss said. “All of this work had to be done by pharmacists, but we now have more than a million pieces of data on compounded medications.”

Looking ahead, when a veterinary customer prescribes a patient-specific medication, Wedgewood plans to also give pet owners access so they can refill prescriptions and have them shipped directly to their home. Right now, 30 percent of orders are shipped to patients, which is how some practitioners say they prefer it, Bliss noted.

Even after Wedgewood starts offering direct shipping to veterinary clients, practitioners will still drive the prescription and the process, Bliss emphasized.

And as it enters the second month with its new site up, Wedgewood is looking to drive newcomers to the site—and amass all the feedback it can get. As an enticement, it’s offering free standard shipping through the end of August.

That’s just in case the shopping fun isn’t enough of an attraction. ●

This Education Series article was underwritten by Wedgewood Pharmacy of Swedesboro, N.J.

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Easy ordering just got a whole lot easier with **Order.WedgewoodPetRx.com**

The screenshot displays the website's header with the Wedgewood Pharmacy logo, a navigation bar with 'WELCOME DR. ROWAN', 'MY ACCOUNT | LOG OUT', and contact information. Below the header is a search bar and a shopping cart icon. The main content area shows search results for 'Tiny Tabs' with filters for Medications, Dosage Forms, Strength, and Therapeutic Class. A table lists various medications and their specifications.

Medication	Strength	Size	Flavor	Price	Price Unit
Famciclovir Tiny Tabs					
Fludrocortisone Acetate Tiny Tabs					
Fluoxetine (as HCl) Tiny Tabs					
Megestrol Acetate Tiny Tabs					
Metronidazole (as Benzoate) Tiny Tabs					
	25 mg/tab	100 Tablet	-	\$22.	\$0.2 Select
	30 mg/tab	100 Tablet	-	\$22.	\$0.2 Select
	50 mg/tab	100 Tablet	-	\$22.	\$0.2 Select
	50 mg/tab	500 Tablet	-	\$10.	\$0.2 Select
	62.5 mg/tab	100 Tablet	-	\$22.	\$0.2 Select
Pimobendan Tiny Tabs					
Piroxicam Tiny Tabs					
Prazosin (as HCl) Tiny Tabs					
Tramadol HCl Tiny Tabs					
Trilostane Tiny Tabs					
Hydrocodone					

Our newly enhanced Order.WedgewoodPetRx.com website makes ordering your compounded medications simple, convenient and easier than ever. And it also gives you so much more, including:

- The most comprehensive online database of compounded veterinary preparations available.
- Easy and extensive search capability.
- Refine searches by strength, dosage form and other factors.
- Dosage form price comparisons.
- Innovative dosage forms that may help increase compliance.
- Quick access to compounded medication alternatives for backordered medications.
- Quantity price breaks.

Order.WedgewoodPetRx.com
877.405.2916

To speak to one of our customer care specialists or pharmacists, call Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Eastern) or Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Eastern).

