



Edelman and CIC Reveal Hundreds of Thousands of Monthly Online Conversations about Healthcare in China

1,427,853 Chinese BBS posts in Q3 demonstrate a tremendous thirst for information within healthcare / pharmaceutical Internet Word of Mouth (IWOM) discussions

Shanghai, China – February 13, 2007 – *Word of Health: China*, the first-ever publication aimed at helping companies better understand and engage online healthcare / pharmaceutical discussion in China, was released today. *Word of Health: China* is the product of a strategic partnership between worldwide public relations firm Edelman and CIC, a Shanghai-based research consultancy that monitors and analyzes consumer discussions on Chinese-language blogs and bulletin boards (BBS). The publication represents the first coupling of Internet Word of Mouth (IWOM) expertise and healthcare / pharmaceutical communications experience in China.

Word of Health: China provides a top-line overview of online healthcare and pharmaceutical discussions generated by patients, potential patients, doctors, medical professionals, and “people just like you and me” in Chinese social media, including blogs and bulletin board systems (BBS). The publication also shares strategic insight and actionable conclusions essential for healthcare and pharmaceutical companies’ successfully integration of IWOM engagement into their public relations campaigns. Highlighting a single disease / treatment area with each edition, the first edition of *Word of Health: China* focuses on oncology (cancer) IWOM.

“The Chinese Internet is filled with consumer discussions and multimedia content related to brands, products, and services on online channels like BBS (online message boards) and blogs,” said Sam Flemming, CEO / Founder, CIC. “IWOM presents an unprecedented opportunity for companies to learn about their customers and how to appropriately participate in and contribute to the communities where their customers are talking.”

Companies have long relied on mainstream media (MSM) to engage key stakeholders. The practice of top-down, one-way communications through MSM is still influential and effective in reaching stakeholders – however, times are changing fast in China.

As with other markets, China is making a significant departure from the “vertical” model, in favor of a “horizontal” structure of peer-to-peer stakeholder communications. IWOM is facilitating “horizontal” communications by providing online platforms (blogs / BBS / social media) for user-generated content and peer-to-peer dialogue about companies, brands, services, product experiences, and corporate issues / crises.

“The recent explosion of Internet usage in China has given rise to a vibrant IWOM culture,” said Martin Alintuck, Managing Director, Edelman China. “This culture is impacting corporate communications and driving the imperative for companies to rethink the strategies behind their public relations and corporate reputation campaigns in China.”

IWOM discussions about the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries on Chinese BBS message boards are particularly plentiful, as are the opportunities for companies to listen to and learn from them.

“Healthcare and pharmaceutical companies in particular need to pay attention to these unsolicited online discussions,” said Helen Yan, Director, Healthcare / Pharmaceutical Communications, Edelman China. “They provide companies an opportunity to gauge levels of understanding about important disease and treatment areas. This will only become more important as Chinese people take greater ownership of their health, and continue to have informed discussions with doctors and healthcare professionals.”

About *Word of Health: China*

Word of Health: China is focused on helping companies better understand and engage online discussion related to the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries. Each edition will feature a single disease / treatment area, and will provide a top-line overview of healthcare and pharmaceutical-related online discussions generated by patients, potential patients, doctors, medical professionals, and “people just like you and me” in Chinese social media, including blogs and bulletin board systems (BBS). *Word of Health: China* also shares strategic insight and actionable conclusions essential for healthcare and pharmaceutical companies’ successful integration of IWOM engagement into their public relations campaigns.

Further specialized reports covering healthcare and pharmaceutical industry IWOM are also available from Edelman and CIC. For inquiries, please refer to the contact details below.

Methodology: Using CIC proprietary text-mining tools, *Word of Health: China* draws on BBS messages mined between July 1 and September 30, 2006 (Q3). During this process, 1,427,853 user-generated messages from 13 Chinese domains and 430 health-related BBS forums were collected from 176,373 unique posters. (No private or personally identifiable information was collected with the research.)

About Edelman (China)

Edelman China, which became one of the first multinational public relations firms to enter China in 1994, is a subsidiary of Edelman Worldwide. The world’s largest independent public relations consultancy, Edelman has more than 46 offices and 2,500 employees in 39 countries. Headquartered in Shanghai, Edelman China is one of the leading international public relations firms in the China market. The firm has additional offices in Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Taipei, and an affiliate network of agencies located in key second- and third-tier cities. With a staff of more than 160 Chinese and expatriate professional consultants, Edelman China provides local and international communications solutions to a diverse portfolio of domestic and foreign multinational clients. Edelman China’s main areas of expertise include corporate, financial / transactional, crisis / issues management, government relations / public affairs, healthcare / pharmaceutical, consumer / marketing, business-to-business (B2B) marketing, and information technology communications. Visit www.edelman.com or www.edelmanapac.com for more information.

About CIC

CIC is the leading Internet Word of Mouth (IWOM) research and consulting firm in China. CIC helps its clients make sense of the buzz found on Chinese blogs, BBS forums, and other social media channels using proprietary text mining technology developed specifically for the Chinese language. With sensitivity toward marketing, market research, media planning, public relations, and product development, CIC's team of social media analysts provide actionable insights for a stable of Fortune 500 retainer clients in China and around the world. CIC was founded in 2003 by a team of local and international professionals with experience in the Chinese public relations, market research, and brand consulting industries. Visit www.cicdata.com or www.seeisee.com for more information.

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