

## LifeMed Marketing launches dLife multimedia platform

By HOPE SALLEY

**H**oward Steinberg, founder and owner of LifeMed Marketing in Westport, knows what it is like to live with diabetes. He was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes when he was 10 years old.

Although he has been able to manage the disease successfully, for others it is more difficult. That is why he recently launched a business enterprise that could enable others to manage their diabetes, too. The project is called dLife - For Your Diabetes Life and is the first venture of the marketing firm since it opened a year ago.

The project is an integrated media network for people living with diabetes, their families and those at risk of developing the disease. It provides knowledge, insight and inspiration through television, the Internet, radio and a newsletter, dLife TV, dLife.com and dLife Radio & dLife Connect.

“The greatest weapon, short of a cure, is information and the motivation to use it,” Steinberg said. “People need to be engaged and take charge as best they can of their disease. That’s why I created dLife - For Your Diabetes Life,” which offers “a diabetes management resource with a sense of community for people living with diabetes, their caregivers and those at risk — using the media they access every day.”

### Watch on TV

The weekly television series, dLife TV, will combine health-care news and information. The series is hosted by a group of celebrities who live with diabetes, including Nicole Johnson Baker (Miss America 1999), Mother Love (TV personality), J. Anthony Brown (comedian) and Jim Turner (actor). All have either Type 1 or Type 2 Diabetes.

Dr. Bob Arnot, former NBC chief medical anchor and author, will serve as dLife’s medical correspondent and Emmy-award winner Erik Sorenson, former president of MSNBC, is one of the executive producers for the show. Pilot episodes for the show were shot in New York City’s Oxygen Studios in November.

The segments that were taped include the challenges

of blood-testing in public, carb-counting strategies, integrating exercise to the diabetes lifestyle, how to work with your doctor to create a personal management plan, painless insulin injection, growing up in a black diabetes culture and questions from the studio audience.

“There has never been a quality network show on diabetes,” Steinberg said.

He has a survival plan for the television show. “What you don’t do is make it a medical show. You let the audience join into a wide community. You take what works on TV and make it work here. You have friendly, likeable talent that also has diabetes talking and living with the condition, right before your eyes. You have real stories that work well on TV. You have star power — celebrities, athletes and other accomplished people with diabetes who inspire through their achievements. And, you have continuity, so that people want to watch week after week to see what’s new, what they can learn, who they will meet, what’s going to happen next, etc.

“TV is the sight, sound and motion medium and that’s how it will be used — the best way to bring people in and engage and entertain. It’s easy to access and easy to engage. Just lean back and enjoy.”

The show debuts on CNBC on Sunday, March 20 at 7 p.m.

### Diabetes on the Web

The Web site, dLife.com, features current information and exclusive content about diabetes from top experts throughout the world. Some of the topics include diagnosis, research, lifestyle and diabetes treatment and management information. Tips on health, fitness and nutrition will also be accessible through the Web site and the online medium will give the diabetes community a chance to connect with one another. Steinberg said the site offers something that is not attainable on TV or other media.

“If TV is the living room, Web is the whole house, where you can find help and information, engage with others, and even contribute to the TV show,” he said.

Paula Ford-Martin, the managing editor for dLife.com, has been the editor and content producer at the

About.com diabetes Web site for four years, which has allowed her to become familiar with diabetes education and support. “While there’s several terrific nonprofit advocacy

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and research sites and many home-grown support sites, dLife.com is really the first independent, full-service diabetes site dedicated solely to helping people with diabetes, and the people that care for and about them, live healthy and emotionally rewarding lives,” she said.

“There is a lot of information, but unfortunately much of it is inaccessible to the average American, either because it’s not presented in user-friendly language or because people simply don’t know where to find it.”

### **On the airwaves**

Radio and direct mail round out the rest of the multimedia endeavor of the business venture. “The dLife Diabetes Minute” is a 60-second feature that will offer facts and tips from experts and celebrities with diabetes. It will be aired on 400 stations in 170 markets, he said, and how often it will run will depend on sponsors, but he said it will more than likely be several times a week.

The direct-mail newsletter, dLife Connect, has a subscriber base of 2.5 million people nationwide. The newsletter will include information, products and services. Both will be introduced this year. The media launch is the first venture of LifeMedMarketing, the business Steinberg founded after selling a major interest in his former marketing agency, Source Marketing, to MDC Partners, one of the world’s leading marketing companies. Steinberg said his experience with diabetes let him notice a gap in the health-care market.

“Today, large, self-managed, chronic patient populations aren’t just a bunch of patients. They act as consumer lifestyle segments and they are becoming more self-reliant because of the inadequacies of our health-care system. The traditional DTC (direct-to-consumer) approach of marketing to these segments, or disease states, is both inadequate and grossly inefficient.”

LifeMed Marketing creates, collects and organizes specialized content and has a multichannel approach to provide a centralized model for advertisers to directly reach large, self-reliant and substantial patient population and segments, he said.

The marketing company employs nine people, and 11 people work for the dLife project. The dLife project has an advisory board of diabetes clinicians, educators and health-care professionals.

Steinberg said the business receives a dual stream of revenue from sponsors and consumers. He provided initial capital for the business, along with MDC Partners.

“We are completing a second round of fund raising now ... and are on trend for achieving revenue goals for 2005,” he said.

There were some challenges that came along with launching the business, he said.

“This is totally new territory; a lot of exploration and getting out into the market to find out what will work and what won’t. There was a lot of overcoming initial skepticism, getting past the gatekeepers who want to keep the status quo.”

The company is building partnerships with various key players, including JDRF, Rodale Publishing, MSN, NEC and Wal-Mart. Steinberg said his business approach is simply execution.

“We’ve built a better mousetrap. For sponsors, we provide the lowest cost to get a new customer and we reach more people with diabetes in more ways than all other diabetes media combined,” he said. “Now, we just have to over manage the quality implementation of content delivery and market the brand. Once the audience comes, the business momentum will be contagious.”