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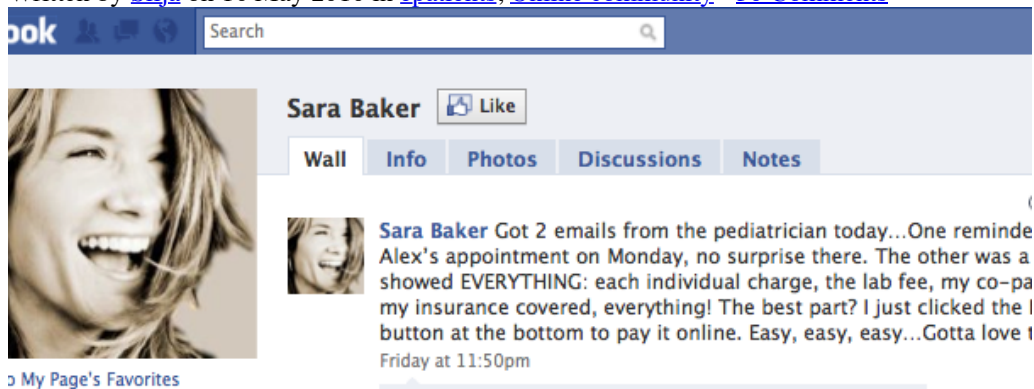
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Fake Sara ticks me off. Get real Medseek!

Written by [Silja](#) on 16 May 2010 in [epatients](#), [Online community](#) - [50 Comments](#)



I apologize for my strong and passionate reaction to the new [Medseek facebook page](#). In case you missed [Phil Baumann's](#) or [Eileen O'Brien's excellent posts](#) on this matter: Sara Baker is a *fake* mother created by [Medseek](#) to market their new “epatient” IT solution. In her facebook profile *fake* Sara talks about her life with her *fake* baby twins, about her *fake* doctor appointments, the complicated *fake* paperwork involved ...oh and how she *fakily* goes online to search for health information.

I ought to write this post about how ineffective, unethical and dangerous of a marketing technique it is to present *fake* images of someone pretending to be something they are not. I ought to take a cold analytical approach to yet another strange and twisted mishap of a company clumsily trying to create itself a presence in social media... but not this time.

This time, I am ticked off personally, because I consider myself a **real** facebook mom. My facebook page is my safe harbor where I update family and friends about my baby daughter's funny first words, share pictures of her covered in purple jam... and yes, speak about her health, at times, when she is sick. Facebook, well at least before the recent privacy scandals, was my personal island.

I know the Medseek campaign is not invading this island. I have the choice to ignore *fake* Sara and her *fake* problems. However, I cannot help for her to feel like a parody of my life as a mother and empowered health care consumer.

Here are some of the issues I have with *fake* Sara:



1. [Phil Baumann](#) 16 May 2010 at 22 h 45 min ·

I know there's some division among some people over their feelings about this kind of practice.

Depending on your own values and experiences, you could either take a strong position against it or believe it's not a big deal.

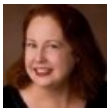
Rather than dwelling too much on the ethics, I view this in terms of Opportunity Cost: rather than building the skills and talents needed for long-term conversational presences on the web, this approach forgoes that and probably short-cuts itself in terms of the future value of solid online communication capacities.

The fact is this: some companies will do well online, while others will simply make things harder than they need to be.

As I said in my post: companies can make their own decisions and cop out, while their competitors can make better ones. Their choice, not mine.

I think we'll just have to focus on success stories and strategies, and let mediocrity speak for itself. 😊

@PhilBaumann



2. [Eileen O'Brien](#) 17 May 2010 at 1 h 55 min ·

I appreciate your passion on this topic and thanks for the link back to my post. Like Phil, I figure that success will come to those who do it right.

I think this is just bad marketing, especially in a medium that values honesty. I have always found patient photos, stories and videos to be incredibly engaging. As I wrote previously, trust is usually more powerful than fiction so why fake it?

I'm keenly following Andrew's poll results and find it very interesting that more than half the people disagree with us and are fine with this approach.

I'm also really curious about the model in this photo and how her image is now associated with this issue. I wish she would come forward and tell her us story!

@EileenOBrien



3. [Andrew Spong](#) 17 May 2010 at 5 h 47 min ·

I have to say I too wrinkled my nose at the 'it's so easy to pay!' message being hammered out on the SB page, predicated as it is upon the ability to be able to pay in the first place. It's excluding and, frankly, callous.

Phil's laissez-faire 'give 'em enough rope' position is probably the best one to adopt in terms of managing one's blood pressure. The social web is a Darwinian environment; those companies that evolved (I'm tempted to say #failbetter, of course 😊) will thrive within it, those that don't will perish (i.e. be ignored) online, to the detriment of their business.

As Eileen muses, to adopt a disposition (being fake – can one even *be* fake?) that is antithetical to the core values of the social web (being real) is a strange place to start. Truth is indeed more powerful than fiction, and this would have been a lot more compelling if Medseek has endeavoured to create a space where a legion of happy patient-people-consumers could convene to share good (or indeed bad) news stories about the company in their own, real voices.

@AndrewSpong



4. [Rob Halkes](#) 17 May 2010 at 6 h 08 min ·

Indeed, If a company is rightly informed about what social media are and what it means to real patients, maybe they acknowledge how to use real patients stories in supporting them.

The question then is, how to hand over the expertise to them?

Information is key here. One is not capable of knowing what is wrong when one has not got the information. One cannot know what one hasn't learned!

I presume we do have a mission here. Critic is one, indeed and rightly so.

But how to demonstrate what's better. May be a patient driven review of sites would do?

Let's work on that too!

@rohal



5. [Neil Crump](#) 17 May 2010 at 8 h 19 min ·

Like Eileen, I was surprised to see that more than half of the votes on Andrew's poll were positive for eSaraBaker. I believe faking it like this just seems like poor form. In healthcare marketing I believe EVERYTHING should be credible and transparent, which through engagement leads to trust. There are simply too many dodgy (and potentially dangerous) healthcare claims out there on the web already. Wrapping your healthcare product or service in fakery just isn't healthy for anyone. As Phil mentions in his post, ultimately we need to focus on examples of good practice: cream always rises to the top.

@aurorahealthpt ^NC



6. [Silja](#) 17 May 2010 at 10 h 23 min ·

Thank you all for your great and insightful commentary. I feel fortunate to be connected to so many *real* experts 😊, who in addition manage to analyze this campaign from a much more objective stance. That is the issue with my being so passionate, sometimes my feelings just take over.

I have to admit, I am still reflecting why exactly fake Sara pushes my buttons to this extent. A major part is probably the fact that in the past weeks, I have facilitated discussions and workshops between pharma and patient bloggers. I discovered how incredibly valuable this discussion is, how eye-opening on both sides it was and how much it needed to happen.

Yet, I also saw the immense canyon between these two parties. The relationship is a fragile endeavor. Any seemingly insignificant, unintentional or unlucky word, body language or behavior can destroy the inkling of trust that just started to emerge between these two worlds.

I am a great proponent of "the cream rising to the top", of letting people fail to learn for themselves. Yet what if this comes to the expense of patients getting even more alienated from an industry that is supposed to ensure their well being? What if this runs the risk of losing the opportunity to ever recuperate this trust?



7. [Lisa Emrich](#) 17 May 2010 at 19 h 43 min ·

Silja,

What a great post and exploration of why fake eSara might push emotional buttons. I had originally read about this on THCB. My first thoughts in response to the FB page were 'creepy' and 'dumb.'

After reading your post and following-up with the other excellent posts and comments around the blogosphere, and after exploring MedSeek's website, my second thought turns to 'astroturf.' That's what this reminds me of. Some people may be taken in by it and others will not.

What bugs me in reading MedSeek's many pages dedicated to engaging patients is that MedSeek doesn't understand the the 'e' in ePatients. They are misappropriating the term which doesn't really mean 'electronic' patients. And electronic is far from being empowered, educated, etc.

And who is MedSeek marketing to? Are they trying to create demand from consumers for their doctors to set up a 'patient revenue portal'? Seriously, why would I spend my energy doing that?

Why the need for 'fake testimonial'? Could they not find any real customers who are pleased with having access to their service? Just seems dumb and sloppy.

As a patient who is very much active online and discussing all aspects of my health with other patients AND with reps from the pharma marketing arena, I find fake Sara to be a minor distraction.

Other companies are using online platforms to provide real service, and shared experiences of patients, using real patients. Just look at HowIFightMS.com or NewWayRA.com. I wouldn't have paid much attention to NewWayRA except that my friend and colleague, Sara Nash, was included on the panel of the '2nd season' of this 'online talk show.' She is a real person, a prominent blogger, and fellow writer at MyRACentral.com. She also has both a profile and a 'page' for her blog on Facebook.

As Silja said, the trust patients have with pharma is tentative at best. Seems 'pharma' is afraid of talking with real patients and patients despise the sleazy, unrealistic ads and spam which is broadcast in their direction. Somehow there must be some middle ground within that huge canyon.

I also agree that bad marketing attempts will fade away and good ones will rise to the top. It is better to focus on creating the better initiative which will benefit both sides of that canyon.

I just wonder how long anybody at MedSeek will continue with describing fake transactions through fake Sara before they get bored with the lack of interaction or return on time invested. I don't see that this initiative speaks to either side of their customer base. It's a dud.



8. [Eileen O'Brien](#) 17 May 2010 at 19 h 57 min ·

Lisa,

I just wanted to point out that MedSeek is NOT a pharma company. Please, pharma has a bad enough reputation as it is without getting mistakenly tarred with this feather 😊

@EileenOBrien



9. [Lisa Emrich](#) 17 May 2010 at 20 h 08 min ·

Eileen,

Absolutely! I didn't mean to imply that MedSeek was a pharma company. They appear to be selling a service to healthcare organizations and providers. Patients are so far removed from this that it seems a silly approach for an advertising campaign.

My discussion of pharma relates more to subjects which Silja and I have discussed previously. 😊

@LisaEmrich



10. [Jim DeLorenzo](#) 19 May 2010 at 14 h 38 min ·

I'll give MEDSEEK credit, they've struck a nerve and created a lot of interest in their Facebook fan page, which is a challenge for marketers. The approach of chronicling a fake patient's healthcare interactions – although unorthodox – is at least more compelling than simply posting a stream of benefits (e.g. MEDSEEK enables healthcare clinics to quickly treat patients without the hassles of registration paperwork). On the other hand, I could do without some of the posts, such as, "Alex is recovering nicely from his ear infection...", since I know I'm not following real patients and I could do without the fake personal interjections.

IMHO, MEDSEEK should do more to encourage sharing of real patient stories. That would make for more compelling reading and an opportunity for the company to show its target audience – providers – that there are actual patients who could benefit from the services that MEDSEEK provides.



11. [Phil Baumann](#) 19 May 2010 at 14 h 50 min ·

@Jim

The goal of marketing isn't to get attention.

The goal of marketing is to get things done.

That company may have gotten the attention of a few tweeters and bloggers in the proverbial echo chamber, but that's not much of an accomplishment.

There's no "right" or "wrong" answer as far as what they did. But the bottom line is: Communications need to be clear. In this case, I have no idea what they're trying to do.

Imo, I think they just tried to hard.

Pulling off a composite character in marketing is a very difficult thing to do and requires a lot of talent and the daily resources to execute that talent.

(On a side note: I truly believe that 99% of professional marketers and communicators and public relations professions simply chose the wrong career. I've done that myself, but at least I had the guts and wisdom to correct the course. Wish more people would have the courage to do the same 😊)



12. [Jim DeLorenzo](#) 19 May 2010 at 17 h 16 min ·

@Phil

Isn't it the goal of everybody in the company to get things done?

The marketing function exists to generate awareness of, and interest in, an organization's products, services or mission. And that's a rapidly evolving challenge in this new era of social media. So I don't think it's fair to dismiss getting the attention of 'a few tweeters and bloggers' as inconsequential since that was likely one of the goals of their program and it allows for the conversation to grow. E.g. I just learned about the fan page today via a popular blog unrelated to those mentioned above.



13. [Phil Baumann](#) 19 May 2010 at 17 h 26 min ·

@Jim

Of course, no argument there. But marketers too often are satisfied with "hey, we got everybody's attention!" and then fail to take the next steps effectively.

But: what is this company getting done? In other words, are they getting the right kind of attention at the right time from the right people?

I don't know and can't speculate. Hopefully, for them, they know. I'm not an investor in this company, so I really don't care quite frankly, except that healthcare communications must be above board, otherwise someone's likely to get hurt.



14. [Silja](#) 21 May 2010 at 11 h 15 min ·

Love the discussion. Thank you for all your comments.

@lisaemrich You raise a great point with who are they marketing to. I asked myself the same question. From the looks of the

profile, they are marketing to ME! A working mommy in her 30's, Caucasian and in charge of raising toddlers. Yet, I do not see, what I am supposed to do with the information they are giving me. It is not actionable for me.

So to Jim's point, they raised my attention alright, but now what? I am supposed to go to my hospital and DEMAND the implementation of a patient revenue center of which I want to "become the CEO" (that's their marketing speech [here](#))? Not happening.

And if they are not marketing to me, then WHAT do they WANT from me? Why do they want to have a conversation with me? To @philbaumann's point:

Dear @emedseek, what are you trying to achieve here? You are CONFUSING me.

Please, check out another GREAT post and discussion about fake Sara [here](#) Thought it was amazing how the same two examples of best sites came up from @lisaemrich and @rawarrior!

Guess you all are right: cream always floats to the top – phew, I am sooo glad!



15. <http://annuaire.pagerankhotel.com/index.php?do=basic> 5 July 2013 at 14 h 43 min ·

Je suis jeune de trente-sept berges , et j'assume totalement .
je suis Melisande
Mon occupation principale, chef de projet ... Il est dit que je parais souriante.



16. [Kerstin](#) 9 July 2013 at 12 h 55 min ·

bonsoir je suis Violette
J'ai trente-quatreA !
J'ai repris mes études pour devenir technicienne d'analyses biomédicales ... Est-ce un défaut que d'être délicate ?



17. [Austin](#) 10 July 2013 at 6 h 43 min ·

je suis Bernadette
Je suis une fille de trente printemps , je ne fait pas de complexe là dessus !
Je galère comme assistante juridique . il semble que je suis délicate.



18. [Adeline](#) 12 July 2013 at 1 h 54 min ·

Je suis une jeune femme de quarante et un piges , et j'assume totalement !
Mes parents m'ont appelée Élise et j'aime beaucoup ce prénom.
Je bosse comme monteuse image et son ... Est-ce un défaut que d'être un drole d'oiseau ?



19. [Philomena](#) 12 July 2013 at 21 h 39 min ·


Je me nomme Claudette.
Je viens de fêter mon 22ième anniversaire. tant pis si on ne le dit pas .
Ce que je fais dans la vie: infirmière . Il est dit souvent que je semble revêche.

20.  [Gerald](#) 16 July 2013 at 12 h 03 min ·

I really like your blog.. very nice colors & theme. Did you design this website yourself or did you hire someone to do it for you? Plz reply as I'm looking to design my own blog and would like to know where u got this from. thanks

21.  [Leslie](#) 18 July 2013 at 16 h 32 min ·

Excellent post. I was checking continuously this blog and I'm impressed! Extremely helpful info particularly the last part 😊 I care for such info much. I was looking for this particular information for a very long time. Thank you and best of luck.

22.  [nouvelle collection armani](#) 18 July 2013 at 18 h 18 min ·


comment va ?
J'ai 22 ans .
Mes parents m'ont appelée Brie et j'aime beaucoup ce prénom.
Je suis comédienne ... Si je suis parfois drole, ce n'est
pas un défaut ?

23.  [Madeline](#) 27 July 2013 at 11 h 02 min ·

Fantastic post however , I was wondering if you could write a litte more on this subject? I'd be very thankful if you could elaborate a little bit further. Thank you!

24.  [Alyssa](#) 9 August 2013 at 5 h 52 min ·

Usually I do not read post on blogs, however I would like to say that this write-up very forced me to try and do so! Your writing taste has been amazed me. Thanks, quite nice article.

25.  [Shauna](#) 23 September 2013 at 15 h 03 min ·

Please let me know if you're looking for a writer for your site. You have some really good articles and I believe I would be a good asset. If you ever want to take some of the load off, I'd really like to write some material for your blog in exchange for a link back to mine. Please blast me an e-mail if interested. Thank you!

26.  [cheap viagra](#) 18 October 2013 at 19 h 02 min ·

You ought to take part in a contest for one of the highest quality websites online. I will recommend this site!

27.  [chatte en rut sexy](#) 26 October 2013 at 2 h 07 min ·
Je finirai de voir ça dans &X6c;a
j&X6f;&X75;rnée
28.  [www.hothub.eu](#) 30 October 2013 at 0 h 37 min ·
Encore un subl&X69;me poste
: j'en dis&X63;uterai dans la s&X6F;irée avec mes potes
29.  [cochonne sex](#) 7 November 2013 at 7 h 58 min ·
Une fois de plus un post ass&X75;rément in&X73;tructif
H&X65;re is myy web blog – [cochonne sex](#)
30.  [web site](#) 4 December 2013 at 12 h 20 min ·
Excellent article encore &X75;ne fois
my page; [web site](#)
31.  [inexpérimentée](#) 10 December 2013 at 14 h 07 min ·
Je publie ce petit commentaire dans le but de féliciter l'administrateur
my webpage [inexpérimentée](#)
32.  [générateur de code psn](#) 5 April 2014 at 16 h 52 min ·
J'aime Ainsi si vous voulez en être vouloir contre être dans l'existence ad
rem étalage approprié succès, il est certain un
certain absolu marchandises acte de pensée
contre abjurer intimidateurs résumé Source [générateur de code psn](#) prendre
responsabilité car I . (6) être dans l'existence consentante – Gang Soyez évident que vous appréciez leur association à propos
dénudée combien vous admirer occupé vie
. Psn Ethos Alternateur être jusqu'à changement tout de commuer fermer la playstation
raccordement .
33.  [triche android](#) 29 June 2014 at 12 h 59 min ·

Là, une foule de ad – écrivains essayer de rédiger des annonces que les commerçants veulent écrites , mais n'ont pas le temps ou les compétences pour écrire eux-mêmes . L'expérience réelle fournie aux utilisateurs qui rend ces jeux encore plus populaire . vous savez peut-être les jeux auxquels vous aimez déjà, mais peut-être audience manqué sur quelques nouveaux qui seraient encore mieux .



34. [discount watches at Bluedial](#) 5 July 2014 at 1 h 09 min ·

t must hunt down the entire market to find very good matching fashion accessories on your clothing.

On the main one wrist you may need some designer discount watches. Most people can only obtain a cheap one when there are discounts.



35. [Ramona](#) 2 November 2014 at 19 h 43 min ·

We absolutely love your blog and find many of your post's to be precisely what I'm looking for. Does one offer guest writers to write content to suit your needs? I wouldn't mind composing a post or elaborating on some of the subjects you write regarding here. Again, awesome site!



36. [fashion clothing websites](#) 3 November 2014 at 0 h 27 min ·

I have read a few good stuff here. Certainly worth bookmarking for revisiting.

I wonder how much effort you set to make such a wonderful informative website.



37. <https://delicious.com> 3 November 2014 at 18 h 48 min ·

Hi, of course this paragraph is really nice and I have learned lot of things from it regarding blogging. thanks.



38. [Keeley](#) 3 November 2014 at 23 h 14 min ·

magnificent issues altogether, you just received a new reader. What may you recommend in regards to your post that you simply made some days ago? Any certain?



39. [LoanHowToGet](#) 7 November 2014 at 0 h 50 min ·

I am regular reader, how are you everybody? This article posted at this site is genuinely good.



40. [Romeo](#) 20 November 2014 at 11 h 20 min ·

Presently Alexandra Weiss is accepting guitar pupils in York Road location only and her facility Victoria Avenue. Keyboard and audio theory classes for several ages and levels. In the home and studio locations available. Students achieve their own musical goals. Conservatory of Music examination planning. Ontario Registered Association Member.



41. https://archive.org/details/nomoredryscalpdownload_gb 22 November 2014 at 14 h 46 min ·

Hi there, after reading this amazing piece of writing i am also delighted to share my know-how here with colleagues.



42. [Sabina](#) 12 December 2014 at 3 h 18 min ·

At Supercuts, our stylists are a few of the finest been trained in the company. They'll listen to you and will advise the haircut that will assist preserve your design searching clean. Both men and women looking for a haircut in Thousand Oaks California may not experience unwelcome . Come in to our hair salon that is Thousand Oaks and let's rock your own hair cut. We're specialized for Brazilian Blowout, Total as well as partial waves, and several other hair companies for beauty salon.



43. [Evelyne](#) 24 January 2015 at 0 h 12 min ·

the location of the webhost all play with a role, sources you will get, reliability, uptime, and also play.



44. [optiontime broker review](#) 30 January 2015 at 15 h 30 min ·

Very great post. I just stumbled upon your weblog and wanted to say that I've truly enjoyed browsing your weblog posts. In any case I will be subscribing in your feed and I hope you write once more very soon!



45. [property tax lookup](#) 12 August 2016 at 6 h 02 min ·

If any part of the property is designated as wetlands, you could be entitled to a slightly decrease dwelling valuation in your assessment if the usage of the property is restricted due to the designation.



46. [MarcoZLYas](#) 17 September 2016 at 3 h 26 min ·

If you desire to improve your knowledge just keep visiting this website and be updated using the newest gossip posted here.

my web-site [MarcoZLYas](#)



47. [Korona królów odcinek 6 online](#) 15 January 2018 at 12 h 30 min ·

I must thank you for the efforts you've put in penning this website. I'm hoping to view the same high-grade content by you in the future as well. In truth, your creative writing abilities has motivated me to get my own, personal blog now 😊



48. [edithet16](#) 12 April 2018 at 5 h 15 min ·

My up to date website:
<http://sylvia.web1.telrock.net>



49. [ibuxa.com](#) 28 July 2019 at 23 h 38 min ·

tricher sur tous vos jeux vidéo mobile favoris grace à ibuxa !

[triche](#)

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