ABSTRACT

“An Analytical Study of the Administration of Pharmaceutical Marketing and Promotion in Selected Pharmaceutical Companies”

INTRODUCTION

The world pharmaceutical market is estimated to be around US$ 317 billion. The Indian pharmaceutical industry represents barely more than 1% of this market in value terms, i.e. around Rs. 414 billions¹.

The pharmaceutical sector has transformed a great deal over the past few decades. The top five companies, which were vibrant 20 years ago, are hardly so anymore. Glaxo, Sarabhai, Pfizer, and Hoechst, which were leaders, in 1980s, are not even in the top five.

The pharmaceutical sector, once the domain of multinational companies, is now being led by professionally managed Indian companies. The downfall of many erstwhile pharmaceutical leaders can be attributed to their rigid marketing practices. Pharmaceutical promotion and marketing expenditure averages 20-30% of sales turnover², which is about two to three times the expenditure on research and development. This expenditure is mainly directed at changing the prescribing behaviour of physicians.

Personal selling is the most widely employed method in pharmaceutical marketing the world over. Although a very costly method of promotion, it is most effective in generating prescriptions. The essence of every business is marketing, and the essence of pharmaceutical marketing is prescription generation. Marketers believe that the prescription decision is a combination of rational and emotional processes. A physician objectively evaluates all the alternative therapies and matches his needs with the need satisfying capabilities of the medicinal products and makes his choice accordingly.
While deciding the brand, he is swept away by product attributes and advertisement appeals that have no relevance with the need-satisfying capabilities of the product. Thus the physician’s choice of a drug molecule for drug therapy is a rational decision, while his choice of a brand is an emotional decision.\(^3\)

Every pharmaceutical company’s aim is to maximize return on investment (ROI), increase sales and earn decent profit for sustenance and growth of the company. Pharmaceutical companies have to primarily depend on personal selling to promote their products in the market as the target audience and customers are different, who are not the end users but merely influencers. These influencers are medical practitioners referred to as doctors or physicians by general public.

Companies direct all their efforts to sell the products to these distinct classes of customers i.e. doctors and train the field force to take on the task of promoting products to highly skilled and knowledgeable customers.

Hence pharmaceutical selling is distinct from other kinds of selling. It requires specialized efforts by the pharmaceutical companies to carve a niche for themselves in the marketplace with a great number of players in the market vying constantly and fiercely for better market share.\(^4\)

**THE STUDY: ITS NEED AND IMPORTANCE**

The Researcher felt the need for this study because his first hand experience in handling marketing and sales promotion functions while working in three pharmaceutical companies namely PCI, Kopran Ltd and Cadila pharmaceutical.

In view of Researcher’s exposure to pharmaceutical marketing in various capacities such as, ‘Medical representative and field manager in Cadila pharmaceuticals, ‘Area manager for PCI’ and ‘District manager for Kopran Ltd’. Researcher has gained good insight and understanding of Pharmaceutical marketing and promotions. This has tempted him to consider this topic for his research.

Above all, the importance of this topic can be gauged from the all-encompassing influence of Pharmaceutical companies in our healthcare set-up which cannot be ignored. It can also be said that those who had understood the operation of
pharmaceutical companies can understand the overall healthcare condition, importance given to human development index & healthcare industry. Pharmaceutical industry is the important part of the total healthcare and wellness sector.

**Pilot Study**

A pilot study conducted by the researcher reveals that one third of doctors mentioned that the visit of medical representative is nothing but waste of time as they do not contribute much to the knowledge of doctors. This is a very crucial issue to be studied. 

The falling standards of medical representatives have led to development of external agencies to promote the products. The emergence of agency-led promotion, which is fairly common in the US, is becoming more and more popular in India with companies like Lupin and Pfizer making use of it.

The once highly unionized and militant representatives have now mellowed down. But it is very difficult to get good talent for medical representatives as the youth have many more options today. This has been further complicated by doctors who do not give adequate time to medical representatives. Hence it’s become a challenging task for the Pharmaceutical companies to attract talent and also to train medical representatives.

It is difficult for a medical representative to detail multiple products in about three to five minutes. Advertisements in pharmaceuticals journals continue to be the last option. Samples, which were once a promotional too, have declined in importance. These days, many doctors prefer gifts instead of samples and top doctors expect better gifts than mere key chains, pens and so on. However, “patient centric” activities are emerging as an important tool in promoting the product. Hence the role of Medical Representative has become more important.

Doctors are becoming more demanding and demarcation of ethical practice has diluted. High expectation of the doctors towards such demand has led many companies to adopt the corrupt practices which may lead downward trend for marketing professional. This is quite disturbing. Hence the study will focus on the
administrative pattern followed by the pharmaceutical companies in marketing and promotion activities on one hand and parameters which are essential for the effective performance of the Medical representative.

Since the pharmaceutical marketing is dependent on a triangle that is medical representatives, doctors and chemists. The marketing oriented companies are keeping their major focus on doctors and medical representatives and spending fairly good amount of resources on the development of their valuable human resource i.e Medical Representatives.

A pilot study of 30 respondents consisting of Doctors, Medical Representatives, chemist and Pharmaceutical executives revealed a mean of 4. This variable was measured using 5 point scale. (5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree). This pilot study result was translated into Null hypothesis and was tested using a larger sample size. The statistical technique used is one sample t test.

The Problems

The literature scan and the researcher’s personal experience brought out in sharp focus on various problems which can be summarized as under:

1. The prescription behaviour of doctors has always remained an enigma to the pharmaceutical marketer.
2. So far all the earlier studies only explored doctors’ opinion. However all the four major players’ i.e. doctors, Medical Representatives, Chemists and Pharmaceutical executives need to be considered while interpreting pharma marketing more specifically the promotion aspect.
3. Even today many pharmaceutical companies are still guided by tradition and past experience while budgeting allocations for marketing spend totally neglecting the change in the doctors’ prescription habits which is influenced by many factors. The doctors’ prescription habits may depend on number of variables. Pharmaceutical marketers have diagonally diverse opinions on these variables which influence doctors prescribing behaviour. There is therefore a need to explore these
variables role in enhancing the prescription rate specifically in the context of the role of Medical Representatives.

The Knowledge Gap

The researcher after reviewing available studies in the subject has identified the knowledge gap which can be summarized as under:

1. There was lack of studies available about various factors which influence doctors’ prescription habits. As a result of which the prescription generation as a major factor in product promotion in pharma marketing remained unexplored.

2. No knowledge was generated on integrated view of all the four major players’ i.e. Doctors, Medical representatives, Chemist & Pharma executives in pharma marketing. The knowledge of all above pooled together would pave the way for better and effective strategies for the pharma companies. This seems to be highly essential.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives of the study were set forth:

1. To study Marketing and promotional activities organised in pharmaceutical industry in general with the help of review of literature and with special reference to select companies.

2. To ascertain with the help of primary research, the factors leading to ‘prescription generation’ in select pharmaceutical companies.

3. To study the Personal competencies & professional skills of the Medical Representatives and its impact on the prescription generation.

4. To study the factors that motivates ‘prescription from physicians’. To suggest measures for improvement in the administration of marketing function in select pharma companies.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- The opinions and forward looking statements of diverse stake holders of the pharmaceutical industry would be captured in this study.
• The research is based on both secondary as well as primary survey research conducted by Researcher having extensive exposure to the pharmaceutical marketing and promotion.
• The research would cover data and analysis on various Pharmaceutical Promotional activities, and the effectiveness of Medical Representatives in generating prescriptions.
• Key topics that would be covered are Promotion, Prescription generation, Prescription behavior, and Personal competencies and professional skills of the Medical representatives.
• In the report doctors and other stakeholders identify what need to be done to maintain their business and the key actions being taken by industry players to overcome the leading business threats.
• The report would provide qualitative analysis of the key parameters with respect to Pharmaceutical marketing and promotion.
• The report would provide suggestions based on the findings which will be of great use to the Pharmaceutical industry in deciding their resource utilization with respect to Pharmaceutical marketing and promotion.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

On the basis of the pilot study the researcher has identified following hypothesis for the study:

1. **Hypothesis I**: The pharmaceutical branding activities influence the prescription by the doctors.

2. **Hypothesis II**: The pharmaceutical Promotional activities such as sampling, CME, use of internet, cause marketing, patient centric marketing, Public relation initiatives and partnering with advocacy group influences the prescription generation.

3. **Hypothesis III**: Doctors while prescribing give importance to product attributes such as price, efficacy, dosage convenience, patient like-dislike, safety and relationship with the patient.

4. **Hypothesis IV**: While prescribing medicines, doctors take into consideration the reputation and the corporate image of the company.
5. **Hypothesis V**: Personal competencies and professional skills of the Medical representatives play major role in generating prescriptions from doctors.

6. **Hypothesis VI**: Training imparted to the Medical representatives’ influence their ability to generate prescriptions from doctors

7. **Hypothesis VII**: Regular visits to Doctors and Chemists by the Medical Representatives influence prescriptions generation.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research is empirical in character, based on Data, collected through various sources. The researcher has used primary as well as secondary data for this study. The primary data is obtained by administering a questionnaire to the respondents which consist of doctors, Medical representatives, Chemist and Pharma executives. The research instrument in the form of “Structured questionnaire” was prepared to collect primary data for testing hypotheses.

The **Secondary data** was collected from different Reports, research journals, books, magazines and data from internet. (Please see Bibliography for details).

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

A Case Study research method has been used for data collection and analysis. Case studies have been used to explore causation in order to find underlying principles. Case studies also emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a few important variables affecting the pharma marketing like prescription generation, selection and training of Medical Representatives etc. The researcher through case study method has examined Prescription habits of the doctors.

**The following Pharmaceutical Companies are selected for the research**

1. Pfizer India
2. Ranbaxy Laboratories Limited (Ranbaxy)
3. AstraZeneca India
4. CIPLA
5. IPCA laboratories
SAMPLING METHOD

Purposive sampling targets a particular group of people. Since the desired population for the study is rare or very difficult to locate and recruit for a study, purposive sampling was the only option.

The power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich-cases for in-depth analysis related to the central issues being studied. Purposive sampling is used with both quantitative and qualitative studies.

Purposive sampling is particularly relevant here as we are concerned with exploring the universe and understanding the target groups. Hence researcher has used his common sense and the best judgment in choosing the appropriate specialization, and meeting the right number of competent people for the purpose of this study.

The researcher has attempted to obtain sample that appears to be representative of the population and tried to ensure that a range from one extreme to the other is included.

Sample selected for empirical study:

a. Doctors: 65
b. Medical representatives: 100
c. Chemist & Druggist: 50
d. Executives of selected pharmaceutical companies: 5

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<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Survey Instrument</th>
<th>Proposed Response Schedule</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Physicians. self-administered questionnaire</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Medical Representatives self-administered questionnaire</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Chemist &amp; Druggist self-administered questionnaire</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Marketing Managers / Pharma executives self-administered question</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1. The researcher has limited his focus mainly on four important players in the pharmaceutical industry, i.e. Pharmaceutical companies, Medical Representatives and doctor. However, there are many more players involved in this industry, such as patients, regulators, insurers, etc. The omission of many of these players from the analysis is not only a limitation of my dissertation, but also applies to the pharmaceutical marketing literature in general.

2. Other gaps include the lack of evidence from pharmaceutical companies. Since the figures are not available as its a trade secret, the entire study is based on the opinion of the four major players mentioned above. Hence the quantitative tool used is Anova.

3. Inaccurate descriptions of previous studies are sometimes found in literature reviews at the beginning of articles, particularly inaccurate claims about the conclusions that can be drawn from these studies.

4. Because of the Pharmaceutical industry been highly regulated the information been very sensitive in nature many of the respondents hesitate in giving full information.

5. Sampling population is so widely dispersed that cluster sampling would not be efficient. Since sensitive information is required the researcher depends on those who were willing to cooperate with the research

6. There are various specialties of the doctors such as General practitioners, general surgeon, General Physicians, ENT Surgeon, Gynecologist, Pediatrician, Orthopedic Surgeon etc. Hence purpose sampling was used to select the sample.

How Limitations were Overcome

a. Using the work experience in Pharmaceutical companies, the researchers used his contacts and network in selecting the most appropriate samples

b. Because of personal relationship with the doctors, medical Representatives, Chemist and Pharmaceutical Companies executives the problems associated with getting sensitive information was overcome.

c. The sample includes representation from various specialties’.
The Five companies selected as the case studies have a different product portfolio and varied approach towards marketing and promotion.

PRESENTATION OF DATA & ANALYSIS

For this purpose the investigation adopted will be historical as well as descriptive method of research and ignored experimental type of research as the scope of the study was favourable for historical and descriptive method. Therefore as far as possible maximum information will be collected recorded, analyzed and interpreted logically, mathematically and graphically with their functional relationship.

Conclusion

Drug promotion strongly influences prescribing behaviour, but doctors underestimate this influence. Company funding of doctors, of educational events and of research are important elements in this influence. Research and policy questions to be addressed include the development of effective methods of educating doctors about drug promotion, the impact of guidelines on promotional gifts, and the development of effective guidelines for managing conflicts of interest in research. The effects of different regulatory frameworks also urgently need to be compared. Governments and other organizations that introduce policies to regulate promotional activities need good evidence of the advantages and drawbacks of different systems.

ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study is divided into following eight chapters plus Appendices.

I. Chapter One: INTRODUCTION: In this chapter, the topic is introduced, the problem of study, Objectives of the study, Scope of the study, Research Methodology, Data Collection, Sample selection, Analysis and Interpretation of Data, Limitations of the study, Organisation of the study etc. Have been discussed.

II. Chapter Two: REVIEW OF LITRATURE: This chapter covers the following:

i. Pharmaceutical marketing an overview

ii. Understanding Consumer Behavior in Pharmaceutical Marketing
III. Chapter Three: PHARMACEUTICAL MARKETING AND PROMOTION IN INDIA. This chapter covers the following:
   i. Overview
   ii. Pharma market in India: Growth, challenges and opportunities
   iii. Government policies
   iv. Pharma marketing: advantage India
   v. Conclusion

IV. Chapter Four: THE ROLE OF MEDICAL REPRESENTATIVES IN PHARMACEUTICAL PROMOTION. This chapter covers the following:
   i. Introduction
   ii. Techniques of pharma promotion
   iii. Factors influencing prescription
   iv. Medical representatives: position in sales force, training
   v. Conclusion

V. Chapter Five: CASE STUDIES OF THE SELECTED PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES: This chapter will deal with the five case studies.

VI. Chapter Six: Empirical Analysis and hypotheses testing:
   This chapter will deal with:
   i. Introducing variables
   ii. Methods

VII. Chapter Seven: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION: In this chapter efforts will be made to draw the findings from the data interpretation and to make suggestions.

THE MAJOR FINDINGS ARE AS UNDER
I. Marketing and Promotional Activities
   1. The variables on which all the four major players i.e. Doctors, Medical Representatives, Chemist and Pharma executives, strongly agree are:
      a. Use of drugs sample
b. Continuous Medical education (CME)
c. Engaging the medical profession besides routine promotion and
detailing.
d. Product promotion factor
e. Use of Social Media or Social Networking websites and Blogs as tool
of engaging doctors and patients
f. Pharmaceutical funding of “Cause Marketing”, such as ‘Affordable
Healthcare programs’, and Disease awareness
g. Marketing with meaning
h. Public Relations (PR) is a potent tool of communication used to reach
patients and physicians.
i. Patient-Centric Marketing
j. An exclusive Promotion on Internet targeting medical fraternity
k. Drug companies Partnering with Advocacy Groups helps in building
brand equity
l. Medicines in our country are costly as cost of promotion is a major
factor contributing to the cost of the medicines
m. EFFICACY of the drug
n. Safety
o. Price
p. Dosage convenience
q. Patient’s likes and dislikes is not important while writing prescriptions
r. Relationship with patient

2. The variables on which there is difference of opinion between Doctors and
Chemist who agree and, Medical Representatives, and Pharma executives,
strongly agree are as follows:

a. PRODUCT INFORMATION from the authentic sources
b. The IMAGE of the product and the company
c. Doctors generally don’t get impressed by the corporate image of the
company

3. The variables on which there is difference of opinion between Doctors and
Medical Representatives who agree and, Chemist, and Pharma executives,
strongly agree are as follows:

a. Medical Representatives are the one of the major source of information
b. A medical representative possessing adequate product knowledge and having effective communication skills is favoured by the Doctors with prescriptions

c. Medical Representatives personal and professional attributes is one of the most important factors for doctors prescribing the drug

d. The falling standard with respect to their product knowledge, negative attitude, and the image of the medical representative in the eyes of the doctors as an information provider is disturbing.

4. The variables on which there is difference of opinion between Doctors and Chemist who agree and, Medical Representatives, and Pharma executives, strongly agree are as follows:

a. Training imparted to the Medical representatives and its influence on their ability to generate prescriptions.

b. Trained Medical Representatives are able to develop healthy relationships with Doctors influencing their prescription habit.

c. Training makes Medical Representatives developed a presentation styles suitable for the various specialties of Medical practioners hence able to influence prescription.

d. If a well trained Medical Representative regularly visits a Doctor, the Doctor is likely to oblige him with prescriptions.

5. The variables on which there is difference of opinion between Doctors and Chemist who agree and, Medical Representatives, and Pharma executives, strongly agree are as follows:

a. If Medical representative fails to show up for over a month, doctor suspects the availability of the products of that manufacturer and stop prescribing their drugs.

b. Regular visit by Medical Representative to chemist & druggist is essential to make the products available which are essential for prescription.

6. Pharmaceutical companies spend large sums of money on the promotion of their products. 57 % of the doctors have accepted that Product promotion is one of the most important for prescribing the drug. 63 % of all the respondents opine that Product promotions are important for generating prescription.
7. For pharmaceutical marketers, sampling is the single largest promotional investment, accounting for more than 50 percent of the total budget spent on promotion. 57 % physicians claim that samples help them provide care for patients who couldn't otherwise afford the new fangled, expensive drugs, thus influence their prescription. 63 % of the total respondents favour use of sampling to generate prescription.

8. CME are very popular with doctors. 89 % of the doctors consider CME as very important source of information as well as help them in keeping them updated about various developments in their field. Continuing medical education (CME) refers to a specific form of continuing education (CE) that helps those in the medical field maintain competence and learn about new and developing areas of their field. These activities may take place as live events, written publications, online programs, audio, video, or other electronic media. 88 % of the total respondents consider CME as one of the important tool of pharma promotion.

9. Relying exclusively on detailing through the medium of Medical Representatives no longer guarantee growth and Return on Investments. 69 % of the doctors and 76% of the total respondents opined that the Pharmaceutical companies need to do much more to engage with the medical profession besides routine promotion and detailing.

10. The stunning success of the pharmaceutical product in a crowded market depends on the way pharmaceutical company are able successfully give a distinct identity to their products. 71 % of the doctors and 83 % of the total respondents agree that branding should be integral part of the pharma Promotion.

11. Pharmaceutical marketing is highly regulated. Some pharma companies are doing good work in the Internet and social media space, finding ways to connect physicians via secure social networks to improve information sharing for example. Many Pharma companies are thinking beyond direct product promotion when using social tools. These companies have created an active social presence that utilizes a blog focused on stories of employees, wellness information, and corporate content. 71 % of the doctors and 83 % of all respondents believe that the Social Media or Social
Networking websites and Blogs on the Internet are up-and-coming as a potent promotional tool for the Pharmaceutical companies.

12. A Pharmaceutical company’s commitment to causes that appeal to both doctors and patients can help them in increasing the prescription share. 75% of doctors and 80% of the total respondents prefer Pharmaceutical funding of “Cause Marketing”, such as ‘Affordable Healthcare programs’, and Disease awareness’ is emerging as effective promotional tools.

13. 68% of the doctors and 77% of all respondents consider that pharmaceutical companies should engage in those marketing initiatives which improve people’s lives. Marketing with meaning adds value to people’s lives independent of purchase. It’s marketing that is often more meaningful than the product it aims to sell.

14. Pharmaceutical companies are finding themselves in an era of seismic change. Power is shifting from the manufacturers and sellers to the empowered consumer. In today's technologically integrated world all the stakeholders are not only better informed but are becoming more demanding. In such scenario it’s imperative that pharmaceutical companies through its various Public relation initiatives not only should connect and engage them but also try to fulfill their expectations. 74% of the doctors and 78% of the total respondents consider Public Relations (PR) as a potent tool of communication used to reach patients and physicians.

15. With increased internet connectivity, and literacy rate patients are increasingly becoming inquisitive. Although doctors still remain the main source of information on diseases, patients are increasingly resorting to new avenues to find more detailed information, especially when the diseases are uncommon and serious. There has been an increase in patient demand for health information. All this clearly points out to the fact that patients are no longer solely depend on doctors; they are now educated enough to find answers for themselves and pharma companies are trying to leverage maximum mileage out of this trend by launching health based information sites that provide information on various diseases. Interestingly these websites are not intended for promotion of their products but contain information and research on diseases that create
patient awareness. Disease awareness sites not only provide knowledge, but they provide emotional support also. Patients gain confidence by learning about the experiences of others who have the same ailment. This seems to be latest strategy adopted by pharma companies to earn patients' respect and trust by positioning themselves as a sound medical resource and a champion for patients of a particular disease. Gradually even doctors have started accepting this change. 51% of the doctors and 74% of all the respondents are in favour of Patient-Centric Marketing which can evolve into an alternative promotional tool.

16. Pharmaceutical companies are trying to identify more efficient ways to reach doctors via internet instead of just relying on detailing and samples. From a marketing perspective, Pharmaceutical companies have an incredible opportunity to reach and impact physicians through the use of Internet media. In the future, pharma brands should re-focus and re-think marketing spend on reaching doctors through Internet. 62% of the doctors and 77% of the total respondents opine that an exclusive Promotion on Internet targeting medical fraternity is emerging as a potent tool to maximize the effectiveness of pharmaceutical Marketing.

17. The fact that patients regularly divert from medication plans, stop prescriptions early, take more or fewer pills than scheduled, or forget their medicines some days and costs the pharmaceutical industry millions in lost revenue every year. Education and support are the cornerstones to patient adherence. Thus its essential, to ensure patients understand why they’re starting a treatment, to manage their expectations once they’re in treatment, and to give them constant support. Patient advocacy groups can play a big part. One role patient advocacy groups can fulfill is to create better educational materials that clearly delineate the steps and goals of treatment and elucidate the nature of the disease. A second role patient advocacy groups can play, and perhaps their primary role, is to listen to patients and direct them to appropriate support. 69% of the doctors and 78% of the total respondents favoured Drug companies partnering with Advocacy Groups which will help in building brand equity as well as generating prescription.
II. Marketing Administration

18. In comparison to other countries, medicines are not very expensive because of the well developed Pharmaceutical industry. Only 25 % of the doctor and 12 % of the total respondents agree that Medicines in our country are costly as cost of promotion is a major factor contributing to the cost of the medicines.

19. No doctor will prescribe the medicine if its efficacy is not proven or communicated properly. 97 % of the doctors and 94 % of the total respondents opine that EFFICACY is the most important product attributes for prescribing the drugs.

20. 97 % of the doctors and 91 % of all the respondents opine that SAFETY is the most important product attributes for prescribing the drugs.

21. The PRICE of the drug is a factor that affects the prescribing behaviour of the doctors. 72 % of the doctors and 83 % of all the respondents agreed that price is very crucial for majority of the doctors.

22. 86 % of the doctors and 81 % of total respondents consider DOSAGE CONVENIENCE is one of the most important product attributes for prescribing the drugs.

23. Understanding the needs of the patient is the crucial for doctors before prescribing the drugs. But that does not mean that doctors compromise on the line of treatment. Majority of doctors will prescribe the medicine even if the particular drugs is not liked by the medicines if that particular medicine is of beneficial and important for the treatment therapy. Only 14 % of doctors and 18 % of the total respondents agree that Patients likes and dislikes is one of the most important factor for prescribing drugs.

III. Prescription Generation

24. Relationship with patient does not influence in selecting the drugs. Only 12 % of the doctors and 4 % of the total respondents believe that relationship with patients influence doctors selection of drugs.

25. Clearly doctors need to use drugs in order to deliver their services. Doctors mostly are looking for authentic sources of information. Many doctors are worried about their inability to identify inaccurate claims about medications. Doctors, who are getting more and busier with increasing patients,
do not have time to keep themselves updated. They are more inclined towards obtaining relevant information while they are practicing. It is the time for pharmaceutical companies to build their marketing strategies around providing relevant and authentic information through Medical representatives as well as other medium. Website marketing, online marketing, blogs, social media, forums, chat rooms and any other such media is an influential means to present the company's products information. 77 % of the doctors and 79 % of all the respondents accept that PRODUCT INFORMATION from the authentic sources positively affects the prescription behaviour of doctors.

26. Many pharmaceutical companies makes inappropriate product claims and don’t offer enough clarity. Many times drug promotion is misleading. False claim could affect doctors’ confidence in the company and he may acquire a negative image about the company. In fact not hiding even adverse information from the prescriber, about the drugs, lead to positive image about the company in the eyes of the doctors. 71 % of the doctors and 75 % of the total respondents opines that the IMAGE of the product and the company that a doctor forms is directly related to the degree of the honesty and professionalism exhibited by their Medical Representatives and Managers. Medical representative needs to be able to adjust his or her interactions to the available time, and these interactions must be engaging in style. A medical representative should also be a continuing source of unbiased product information, coupled with a varied message.

27. Pharmaceutical companies should continuously evolve and finds ways and means of impressing doctors rather then relying on their image alone. 66 % of the doctors and 82 % of all the respondents opines that doctors generally don’t get impressed by the corporate image of a company an MR represents.

28. A doctor would expect the ideal Medical Representative to be impressive. Make an impression, an impact, make a mark - and to make it again and again with every visit. Every pharmaceutical company employs and trains Medical Representatives to promote and sell drugs, using printed product literatures, drug samples and gifts. The most basic expectations by doctors
from the Medical Representatives is the authentic information. 68 % of the doctors and 71 % of all the respondents agree that Medical Representatives are the one of the major source of information

29. Some of the key value metrics shows that a modern Medical Representative needs to be able to adjust his or her interactions to the available time, and these interactions must be engaging in style. A Medical Representative should also be a continuing source of unbiased product information, coupled with a varied message. 69 % of the doctors and 76 % of the total respondents opines that a Medical Representative possessing adequate product knowledge and having effective communication skills is favoured by the Doctors with prescriptions.

30. India, it is estimated that Medical Representatives account for 5-10 per cent of total sales budget. Therefore, knowing and improving/optimising the effectiveness of MR will enable the company to march ahead. Medical Representatives are the key links for improving sales and this has been consistently confirmed. 73 % of the doctors and 85 % of the total respondents agree that Medical Representatives personal and professional attributes is one of the most important factors for doctors prescribing the drug.

31. In the survey, doctors reported various parameters leading the deterioration in the quality of Medical Representatives. Doctors claimed that Medical Representatives are lack product knowledge. Some of them said that Medical Representatives are unable to sometimes answer even simple things like side- effects and dosage recommendations of the product they are promoting. Doctors mentioned that sometimes representatives don’t visit for months. While in case of consultants, the reason they gave was very high frequency; every week or sometimes more which irritates them. 77 % of the doctors and 67 % of the total respondents concurred that the falling standard with respect to their product knowledge, negative attitude, and the image of the Medical Representative in the eyes of the doctors as an information provider is disturbing.

32. In this era of cut throat competition Medical Representatives are facing several problems when they are in the field for sales call. These problems are either associated with their Doctors or themselves. Problems associated
with Doctors are such variables (their busy schedule, own belief and their
different personalities) which are beyond the control of Medical
Representative. But what they can sort out their own problems like their
poor communication skills, inadequate product and market knowledge and
other technical skills which make a lot of difference inside the clinic of the
doctor. All these skills require regular training to be perfect. When a
fresher starts working in the field even after training she/he bears number
of inhibitions which prevent them from making an effective sales call.
Some of these inhibitions can be overcome by regular. 80 % of the doctors
and 83 % of all the respondents agree that Medical Representatives should
be exposed to professional training atleast once every six months to horn
their personal and professional attributes helpful in generating
prescriptions.

33. Medical Representatives now face a myriad of challenges which their
forerunners never even imagined. Moreover, they have to adapt and
respond quickly to the changes and the hurdles of the industry. Investment
in sales and marketing which includes Medical Representative cost,
promotion and marketing cost would escalate in the years to come, thereby
making it crucial to manage these expenses effectively. The plight has
been well documented: an unreceptive physician audience, tougher
guidelines on physician interaction, a plethora of me-too products, and
competition from hordes of Medical Representatives, scientific officers,
medico-marketing executives representing different companies with
competing products. Above all, Medical Representatives face a daunting
task of trying to obtain quality time with physicians. 74 % of the doctors
82 % of the total respondents concurs that Trained Medical
Representatives are able to develop healthy relationships with Doctors
influencing their prescription habit.

34. Earlier when competition was less, getting a few minutes of quality selling
time with each physician was a lot easier. But today Medical
Representatives get as little as one minute of detail time in which they
strive to make a mark. It becomes imperative to differentiate one self not
only in the crowded pharma market but also in the doctor's mind so as to
make a long-lasting impact, attain the mind-share and thereby prescription
share of doctors. Reaching out and communicating better with end-users or patients may also become a popular marketing technique in the future. A training programme organised by the Pharma Company he works for will help him get oriented to the product and its benefits and also how to market it in that perfect way. 65 % of the doctors and 74 % of the total respondents agree that Training makes Medical Representatives developed a presentation styles suitable for the various specialities of Medical practioners hence able to influence prescription generation.

35. Doctors mentioned that sometimes Medical Representatives don’t visit for months. Regular visit to doctors create positive perception about the company. 60 % of the doctors and 69 % of the total respondents concurs that if a well trained Medical Representative regularly visits a Doctor, the Doctor is likely to oblige him with prescriptions.

36. For doctors availability of the product is of prime importance. Regular visit by the Medical Representatives at least assure them that the products of the company are available. If doctors have any doubt about the availability of the particular company products they will not prescribe those products. 63 % of the doctors and 76 % of the total respondents agreed that if Medical Representative fails to show up for over a month, doctor suspects the availability of the products of that manufacturer and stop prescribing their drugs.

37. To make the product available, it is essential that retailers are also taken into confidence. Regular visits by the Medical Representatives to chemist help in assuring them that the company is active. Hence they will not hesitate the stock the products so that prescriptions don’t bounce. 71 % of doctors and 77 % of all the respondents agreed that Regular visit by Medical Representative to chemist & druggist is essential to make the products available which are essential for prescription.

SUGGESTIONS

I. Marketing and Promotional Activities

1. Exposure to promotion influences prescribing more than some doctors realise. With intense competition, it is becoming more important to build an emotional bonding and a relationship of trust and comfort with the
Doctors to ensure loyalty and hence consistent sales. Hence there is a need to differentiate a product from competition and establish a positive image of the drug and the company in the eyes of the customer. The pharma companies need to reserve budget for a minimum of 25-30 percent of sales as branding cost.

2. As pharmaceutical companies have sought ways to reduce promotion costs, sampling has followed suit. A closer look at just those doctors who have never prescribed the detailed product shows a marked advantage for products which details which did leave a sample. A well planned sampling strategy is required instead of just distributing drugs sample to doctors randomly.

3. Continuing medical education (CME) refers to a specific form of continuing education (CE) that helps those in the medical field maintain competence and learn about new and developing areas of their field. These activities should be organised as live events, written publications, online programs, audio, video, or other electronic media. Content for these programs must be developed, reviewed, and delivered by the faculty who are experts in their individual clinical areas with high credibility and trust with the peer circle of doctors.

4. Pharmaceutical promotion is persuasive communication and a major source of information to the health-professional. Each pharmaceutical company must have their in-house evaluating team ensuring that the message disseminated for the promotion should be factual, evidence based, unambiguous and balanced.

5. Pharmaceutical Companies should create their own un-branded sites like, silenceyourrooster.com or iwalkbecause.org, to foster relationship with patients' group through online activity. The contents of these sites could be been generated by the users themselves of the respective social medium. With the help of click-through links these sites lead to the branded sites of the concerned companies.

6. Pharmaceutical companies should increase their commitment and investment to causes that appeal to both doctors and patients which will increase the trust factor which is currently very low.
7. Instead of just focusing on marketing drugs, the pharmaceutical companies should launch initiatives that will improve patient’s lives and help doctors in improving their service to patient. These are the kinds of higher-level benefits that many pharmaceutical brands should aspire to provide, yet they can do so only by intimately understanding how not just their products and services but their marketing satisfies potential customers’ unfulfilled needs and fits into the overall experience of their lives.

8. The trust between Doctors and the Pharma Industry has decline. Thus in pharmaceutical marketing, Public Relations (PR) becomes an invaluable communications tool. It has the ability to deliver fairly balanced and objective information to enhance scientific exchange, and can be cost-effectively utilised throughout a product's life cycle, even for mature brands and those going off patent. This means that scientific data on investigational drugs can be included in press releases intended for physicians, patients and the public. In addition, companies conducting medical research can also meet with patient groups to update them on scientific developments with regard to both investigational and marketed drugs, as such information potentially may have value for their audience. These interactions, typically driven by the PR function, can take the form of educational information packs and personal meetings.

9. To satisfy the ever increasing hunger for information by patients, pharma companies must introduce their own disease management programmes for patients and doctors. This seems strategy will help pharma companies to burnish their image and prove that they put patients’ health above profits.

10. Using an alternate channel such as internet is essential for physician engagement that integrates education, virtual detailing, and information delivery based on specific customer profiles can help increase share of voice in a cost-effective manner.

11. Patient advocacy groups are an increasingly valuable resource for pharma manufacturers and FDA throughout the drug development process, since they provide, among other things, a crucial perspective. Pharmaceutical
companies should form a healthy relationship with few of them which has high credibility amongst Doctors.

II. Marketing Administration

12. Instead of wasting promotional budget on expensive gift for doctors, pharmaceutical companies should utilize the budget for improving the quality of service provided to doctors and help them in serving the patient in the most effective way.

13. While defining the detailing folder, efficacy should be mentioned for all the products communicated to doctors during briefing as Efficacy is one of the most important attributes for doctors.

14. Since safety is always on top of the mind of doctors while writing prescription, complete safety profile of the products including the risk and side effects, should be effectively communicated to doctors through flip chart, hand-overs, or emails.

15. One of the allegations against pharmaceutical companies that they keep unreasonable profit margin. Pharmaceutical companies should introduce an internal mechanism to avoid unjustified profit margin so that medicines become affordable.

16. In all forms of communication, doctors must be informed about the specific dosage about the individual products. Promotional material must give specific details about the product dosage with complete details.

17. While designing promotional literature the focus should be on the basics such as efficacy, safety and dosage rather then on colour, shape, size and packaging of the products.

18. The quality of the patient-physician relationship is important to both parties. The better the relationship in terms of mutual respect, knowledge, trust, shared values and perspectives about disease and life, and time available, the better will be the amount and quality of information about the patient's disease transferred in both directions, enhancing accuracy of diagnosis and increasing the patient's knowledge about the disease. The pharmaceutical companies should promote better understanding between
patient, doctors and pharmaceutical trade to improve the over all image of the industry.

19. The fact that because of the advancement of Information technology and the availability of information through internet the importance of Medical Representatives depends on the quality of authentic information provided by them on every visit to the doctors. The product management team of the pharmaceutical should conduct thorough research, scanning all the available medical research journal and other sources and only provide the most authentic information to doctors.

20. The pharmaceutical companies should strive to create a positive image in the mind of the doctors by launching initiatives benefiting the patients, which will attach positive attributes such as caring, respect, honest, sincere, devotion etc to the company’s image.

21. Doctors are not impressed by the name of the company even if it’s multinational. Size of the operation, number of products and turn-over does not impress doctors. Instead on relying on their image, Pharmaceutical companies should focus on providing better service to both doctors and patients.

III. Prescription Generation

22. Medical Representatives is a vital link between doctors and Pharmaceutical Company. They are the most important face representing the company. Recruitment process needs to be made stringent, also offering better salary and over all package to attract the best talent.

23. Before any promotional material goes to doctors, a team of Medical Representatives should be consulted and their feed back taken as they are the one who are continuously interacting with doctors and know their requirements.

24. Not enough research is done on the various personal and professional attributes which are essential for the optimum performance from Medical Representatives. The Pharmaceutical companies need to conduct an in-depth research on these aspects and include them in their HR Policy for recruitment and training of Medical Representatives.
25. There is no mechanism to monitor the performance of Medical Representatives inside the Doctors chamber. This is the Achilles heels of the pharmaceutical promotional strategy. The industry desperately needs to evolve a system to effectively evaluate the performance of Medical Representatives inside the Doctors chamber.

26. Medical Representatives training schedule in the industry is not taken very seriously as they are expected to be on the field and generate prescription. Atleast twice in a year, seven days training programmes should be arrange for making them effective in generating prescription from doctors.

27. For developing healthy relationship between Doctors and Medical Representatives, Pharmaceutical companies should increase the budget for imparting training to them and enhancing their personal and professional competency.

28. Since Medical Representatives have to meet doctors having different specialisation, the pharmaceutical companies instead of relying on external consultants or trainers should develop a customised training module keeping in mind their product portfolio so that Medical Representatives developed a presentation styles suitable for the specific products and specialisation.

29. The Doctors call list should be upgraded periodically keeping in mind the season and product promotion schedule ensuring that important doctors are not missed.

30. Missed call list (Visits missed by the MR to doctors) should be maintained for every promotional cycle to ensure that important doctors are not missed for a long period which might results in decline in prescription as doctors start suspecting the availability of the products at the retailers level.

31. Chemists have limited space and finance. A proper planning should be done ensuring regular visit by the Medical representative to chemist ensuring enough inventories of the products, so that no prescription bounces. Doctors immediately stop prescribing a particular brand if any of the prescription of that brand bounces because of the lack of availability.
32. The need of the hour is to adopt a fresh approach to reach physicians through communication strategies that adapt to their clinical interests and needs. In the current multichannel environment, based on the preferences, it is important to successfully engage physicians on their own terms using an alternate channel that provides them control over when, where, and how they get information. With media fragmentation on the rise, it is critical to offer physicians a variety of content format options and use all available communication channels in an integrated manner. A transition from a predominantly “push” model to one where a mix of “push” and “pull” elements are judiciously leveraged is critical for success.

33. The ideal solution would be one that provides the infrastructure to deliver high-quality rich content in an interactive manner. Product management team should focus on collecting most authentic data that can be analysed to refine the physician engagement process to make it more meaningful for the physician as well as the company.

34. The pharmaceutical companies should seriously think of adopting an Alternate channel. The guiding principle of the Alternate channel is that the medical information should be “pulled” by physicians when they need it rather than “pushed” at them by pharma companies. It is aligned toward the goal of physician education and skill enhancement. It should provides physicians with pertinent, contextual information tailored to their immediate needs and access to multiple knowledge access points, including on-demand live video detailing sessions with medical representatives and a scientific discussion with medical science liaison (MSLs).

35. Managerial Implications: This study will not only help managers to draw out factors that motivate prescriptions from physicians so as to properly allocate the resources but also draw a analysis of present resource utilization practices in the pharmaceutical industry for prescription generation.
CONCLUSIONS

The world of pharmaceutical marketing is continuing to evolve with changes in the pipeline, the sales force and among the physicians themselves.

A perfect storm is brewing that will force a major course shift for pharmaceutical marketers. The trends shaping this change are: the end of the era of blockbuster drugs, growth in specialist-driven drug development and a shift in the information needs of physicians.

Together, these variables have changed the game for companies that had been focused on traditional Medical Representatives models for the past decade. In their place, Pharma is embracing novel ways of engaging physicians through sophisticated multi-channel marketing programs that incorporate e-mail, handheld devices, desktop computers, direct mail and face-time.

As these tactics continue to gain traction, marketers will find significant efficiency increases. But before these results can be realized, the industry will have to further embrace the multi-channel mindset.