

Marketing to deciles and quintiles doesn't take into account the individual behavior of doctors. **Rick Rose** looks at how the marriage of new technology, data and interactive marketing can and underpin a better multichannel sales effort.

The true colors of PHYSICIANS

When young kids get their first pack of crayons, it's often a box of eight with a single red crayon. However, in the larger box of 64 crayons, in addition to red there is brick red, mulberry, mahogany and more — subtle, but distinct, differences between shades. This box of crayons is analogous to the pharmaceutical industry's prescriber market where each of these unique colors represents "segments of one."

Until recently, the limiting factor to this enhanced segmentation has been the ability to identify the segments. Convention marketing to deciles and quintiles does not take into account an individual physician's nuances; rather, it makes assumptions that each doctor in a particular group behaves and will react in a similar fashion — using our analogy, you could say it does not distinguish between different shades of the same color.

Today, through the marriage of technology, longitudinal prescription data and interactive marketing, these "shades" among the prescriber population may be better understood than ever. Armed with that knowledge, a multichannel marketing campaign may be created to support a pharmaceutical company's entire sales and marketing operations. By taking the latest in sales force automation and information technologies and adding interactive, multichannel marketing initiatives to bring it all together, a cohesive relationship can be created, allowing companies to achieve a greater return on their marketing dollar and drive more value into their business.

An idea whose time has come

Pharmaceutical marketing, perhaps more so than most other industries, reacts and responds to environmental pressures, external and internal issues and industry competition.

The Hatch-Waxman Act (1984), which enabled generic drugs to enter the market quickly based on the innovator's safety and efficacy, prompted pharmaceutical companies to adopt a new sales philosophy. To accelerate sales force productivity, they increasingly focused not on the quantity of physician calls or visits,

but on their quality — requiring sales representatives to be more knowledgeable about the wants and needs of their customers in order to be effective.

In the 1990s, sales force automation software enveloped global sales and field-force operations with promises of driving more and better sales and marketing data to reps in the field. Access to personalized marketing materials and presentations, coupled with real-time enterprise communications, empowered sales reps to deliver more targeted, product-related marketing messages to the segmented population.

Enter the new millennium: with more and more sales representatives attempting to reach a limited number of physicians who have precious little time to offer, the marketing message and medium have taken on even greater importance. sales force automation still remains a vital resource for the sales rep, but drug companies need to derive greater value from better-focused marketing efforts. They need deeper insights about their customers and must reach them with messages that appeal directly to their individual needs.

Today's interactive marketing can combine traditional methods of pharmaceutical marketing — including direct mail, collateral, physician-to-physician marketing, and sample distribution — with highly

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refined and comprehensive data about a physician's prescribing patterns and therapy focus. Data can be tracked longitudinally (over time) and indicate whether a particular physician is a high-value target based on his or her prescribing patterns, whether that physician's patients remain persistent and compliant with their therapies, and which message is more relevant at a particular point in time.

While multichannel interactive marketing offers innovative methods to reach target audiences, the key is knowing who these prospects are. There's no value-add from simply collecting customer data unless companies can use that information to draw conclusions about their target physicians, learning what messages and media are influencing their behavior and then turning those conclusions into meaningful actions.

Looking beyond deciles and quintiles

Maximizing multichannel marketing requires a precise understanding of the prescriber beyond data about the prescriptions they write. Longitudinal prescription data now gives a much more complete picture than traditional data sources that only allowed companies to evaluate prescription volume activity. Longitudinal prescription data permits companies to look at different sets of customers and prospects and gives sales and marketing researchers the ability to



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track these targets' responses.

Taking a page from the consumer credit card industry, pharmaceutical companies can go one step beyond understanding prescribing habits and gather and utilize information about a doctor's consumer spending patterns, then merge that with their prescribing data and speak to them in a language they understand. For instance, if a physician frequently makes purchases over the Web; a logical conclusion can be drawn: the Web may be a viable medium to interact with this prescriber. In many ways, this defines the arena where e-detailing has gained a foothold. This information also provides manufacturers with a unique ability to tailor promotions to a prescriber's interest.

With the ability to draw more inferences from longitudinal prescription data, pharmaceutical sales forces may need to redefine their notion of "high-value" prescribers. When reps talk high value, inevitably they're speaking in deciles and quintiles, in which physicians are classified into the five or ten groups deemed the most attractive prospects to target.

While some may still consider marketing to deciles and quintiles relevant, such targeting falls short by assuming that each doctor in a particular group behaves in a similar fashion. Analyzing data about individual physicians within the groupings can help companies determine the particular "shades" that make each physician a unique target market at the specific time that a certain behavior is relevant.

Once companies identify and understand these shades, they can begin determining which particular marketing channel to deploy.

The right medium for the right message

Each marketing channel has a role in the doctor relationship: personal promotions (details) or non-personal promotions, direct-to-consumer methods in which the consumer drives the doctor to the desired behavior. Determining which channel or combination of channels to use depends on the understanding of what motivates the prescriber and what role each channel plays in driving the doctor to the behavior the pharmaceutical marketer desires.

The numerous no-see or hard-to-see doctors pose another challenge. In these instances, the quality of data about the physician's prescribing

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habits, potential influencers and other behaviors is of even greater importance in delivering a successful marketing effort that meets a company's objectives.

A dimensional mailer targeted to hard-to-see and no-see doctors offers a strong potential return on investment (ROI). The mailer's message is that the sales rep recognizes the value of the prescriber's time and offers product samples as well as educational and marketing materials for the physician to peruse at his leisure. Cost-benefit analysis has determined that one year's worth of this particular relationship kit (one mailing per quarter) equates to the cost of a single rep's visit. Companies can complement this activity with other predetermined multichannel marketing efforts to drive their messages to prescribers in a cost-effective manner. The goal of this campaign is not only to improve market behavior, but also drive rep access to the prescriber.

Putting drug samples into the hands of their targeted physicians is another powerful marketing initiative. Using information about the physician, companies can easily provide product samples and educational materials specific to that prescriber practice. Yet a sample management program's return is often undercut by the complexity brought on by increasing federal and state regulations and strict compliance enforcement. As a result, a growing number of pharmaceutical companies are looking to outsource their sample management activities in order to focus on other core competencies. While sampling is the bulk of most companies' marketing spend, the industry has done far too little to track its return. Critical to this analysis is aligning indigent care with sampling in a manner that permits easy analysis.

Classical marketing efforts and many dollars have been spent on direct mail, dimensional mailers, and DTC efforts in varying degrees of success and failure. In recent years, telemarketing services, through peer-to-peer dialogue, have been introduced to the mix and quickly gained popularity. Medical professionals staff a peer-to-peer call center and conduct conversations with prescribers, answering questions and making recommendations, with the ultimate goal of increasing awareness and usage of a pharmaceutical company's products.

These are all great channels, but unless they are used in the right location with the right frequency, chances are the desired results won't be achieved.

With frequency playing an important role, companies need to employ alternate marketing tactics based on their understanding of what prescribers are doing with different products at various times. These tactics are usually specific to the doctor; therefore tracking their response is key to understanding exactly what it is that influences that doctor's behavior.

Specific tactics at specific times for specific doctors requires deter-

mining a combination of marketing channels that increases effectiveness and penetration. In some instances, it starts with a direct mailer, followed by telemarketing, and then proceeding to detail. But if one piece of the marketing mix is not viable, then another more effective combination must be determined to enable the sales rep to reach that physician. Regardless of the marketing mix, it's critical that the pharmaceutical company takes control of all this data regarding which initiatives achieved results, good or bad. The cumulative knowledge will enable the sales force to react more effectively to their prescribers' needs and behaviors in the future.

Empowering your sales team

Historically, while empowering the pharmaceutical sales rep, much of the non-personal promotion performed by marketers has not been communicated to the field sales team. This is clearly not a situation in which companies want to operate in a vacuum.

Companies often spend a considerable amount of time and money marketing to prescribers outside the sales force channel. However, if the company fails to educate or inform its sales force about these marketing efforts or their results, it creates a disjointed relationship as it relates to multichannel marketing and customer relationship management (CRM). Therefore, the goal is to supplement sales reps' efforts with effective marketing activities that will further engage reps with their customers.

For effective multichannel marketing to be a viable component of a company's CRM solution — the ultimate goal of merging sales force automation and interactive marketing — marketing activities should be treated as another mirrored sales force. Drawing all data and marketing channels together with the sales force and giving reps access to the comprehensive marketing information will ultimately drive more value to the organization. After all, an educated sales force with clear knowledge of their targets is properly motivated to meet and exceed expectations.

All this comes as an advantage to the physician. Effective and knowledgeable reps do more than prompt the physician to simply write prescriptions. With a thorough understanding of the doctor's practices, pharmaceutical companies are giving physicians the products they need for more effective healthcare, enabling them to enhance the well being of their patients.

A multi-hued marketing plan

There's hardly an industry that doesn't rely on multiple channels of marketing to reach customers and prospects. Having a solid understanding of the intended targets significantly improves the odds of driving the target audience's behavior to the company's products.

For a pharmaceutical company's marketing initiatives to appeal to its prescriber audience, the company must recognize each distinct shade of color. There's no mistaking maroon and chestnut, though both are shades of red. Understanding the subtleties of customers' shades will make a company's multichannel marketing picture a work of art.

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