To E or Not to E...
SHOULD YOUR COMPANY E-DETAIL?

Contributed by

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Many pharma and healthcare companies are implementing e-detailing initiatives, but only after spending much money and time do they realize that sometimes their efforts fall short. Now that e-detailing has been in use for some time, Ogilvy Healthworld Marketing Analytics & Consulting conducted a review to see where the key challenges to implementation arise and what best practices have emerged to inform the most successful e-detail launches in the future.

Aware of the various benefits of e-detailing, many pharmaceutical firms are arming their sales representatives with iPads and other tablets to guide their meetings with healthcare professionals. Despite their best efforts, many still struggle to understand how to implement e-details effectively, finding themselves either oversimplifying (viewing this as just another marketing tactic) or overcomplicating (involving too many stakeholders and having too many objectives). A recent review of e-detailing practices by the Ogilvy Healthworld Marketing Analytics & Consulting team highlighted several key findings for firms to bear in mind when determining how to launch an e-detail.

Cost

The cost of new technology always presents a conundrum: you expect it will pay off in the long run, but how "long" is that run? When, exactly, will the ROI be in your favor? While unfortunately there is no one right answer, the cost of switching to an e-detail can be contained since the flashiness of your program is up to you. In fact, our evaluation found that the decision not to develop an e-detail can prove to be the most costly of all. Compliance is and continues to be a critically important issue for pharmaceutical firms. Reps, particularly seasoned ones, often carry multiple versions of product and safety information. During a visit to a physician where they are discussing a portfolio of products, it may be difficult for them to keep track of which version of a brochure they left. Even worse, they may provide an old version, because the new print copies have not reached them yet or perhaps the piles got mixed up. When they can instead access this information digitally, compliance and version control are no longer issues because updates are received in real time. Thus, you can be assured that the correct information is being passed along and risks are mitigated.

Integration

This is a great advantage of digital tools: seamless integration. Leverage this opportunity by making sure your e-detail is tagged and tracked appropriately and then fully integrated with your CRM database. The result is a newer, 360-degree view of your marketing mix that now includes the detailing program. You will be able to better understand the linkage between sales and your detail efforts, data that was previously only anecdotal, at best. You'll even be able to see which sections of the detail resonated most with different audiences, and this has vast implications for your firm's marketing future.

Beware of incorporating too many technical elements just because they seem "cool." With one client, we observed the wise decision to accept only four of 12 proposed features from a software vendor, because the brand manager realized she did not have the resources to incorporate the benefits of the other eight functionalities. Have a vision for your product roadmap, and stick to it.

Accountability

We have already mentioned that the beauty of an e-detail is its ability to be tracked and combined with other program data. At the very moment the rep is taking a physician through the detail, on the back-end you are collecting information such as total pages viewed and the time spent per page. Though you could compare metrics like these against the numbers you are seeing on your website and call it a day, unless your detail is expected to provide the same experience as your website (and it shouldn't — this is a very different opportunity), you need specific e-detailing benchmarks. When a rep delivers an e-detail, it is a hyper-targeted opportunity to send across your brand's most salient points. Thus, even brand by brand, specific benchmarks need to be created based on what would be reasonable expectations in performance for that messaging. In our review, we found the average time-on-detail to range from 5 to 15 minutes, but you will have to determine what is right for your program.

Remember, though, that just because metrics are measured does not mean they are actionable. The advantage of the e-detail platform is that when it is linked to other enterprise databases, it can provide a truly closed-loop marketing effort by allowing the organization to map out the experience during the e-detail on a very granular level and tie those activities to script behavior.

If, using the data in your CRM database, you find that a longer time on site does not have any impact on behavior, then tracking it serves no purpose other than as part of data collection. Consider instead patterns suggesting that those who view a certain page or doctors who accept savings cards to hand to patients might be the people whose actions drive the greatest impact on your bottom line. If that is the case, move those key pages to the front of

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the detail or instruct the sales force to begin the detail conversation by handing out savings cards and explaining their usage. Look outside the norm for key performance indicators that, when addressed, lead to some desired outcome. And take time to develop the right benchmarks for these KPIs so you can evaluate performance over time and know when you need to make a change.

Rep-HCP Relationship

Since rep visits are often a company's sole chance to engage physicians in a two-way dialogue, the importance of the rep-HCP relationship cannot be overstated. The deeper the bond, the more value you will get out of these interactions, and an e-detail can help enhance this relationship. To begin with, an e-detail is customizable. During a visit, reps may encounter several individuals in addition to the physician; an e-detail allows them to more smoothly transition between HCPs and office managers with different promotional material. Furthermore, while ideally a physician would sit down for a detailed conversation, more often than not, a rep must detail the physician in the hallway or on his or her short break. Arming the rep with digital visual aids allows him or her to be prepared with the right message and materials for the audience at hand, making the most productive use of the HCP's time. Reps have also told us that tablet detailing is still novel enough to get the attention of doctors who normally would not stop to listen.

Sales Reps

Perhaps the most critical success factor for an e-detail is the channel in which it is delivered. No, not the brand of tablet, but the sales representative. Sales reps are your delivery channel and they also happen to be under a tremendous amount of pressure. Set them up for success by creating a detail that adds real value to the conversation they are having. Then, make sure they are trained on how and when to use it properly: the reps need to understand all of the program's features as well as have a voiceover presentation that brings the content on-screen to life. Ask the reps for feedback on how the detail is being received by HCPs and use that to optimize the program, whether that means changing the content, making it longer or shorter, adding in a video, or more.

Most importantly, review with the sales reps how they are being evaluated and what the KPIs and goals are for the detail and the sales call. It is not fair to hold them accountable for metrics they are not familiar with, and this can be especially daunting if an e-detail is a completely new idea for your organization. Again, help your team succeed by sharing with them the methods by which certain reps may be exceeding goals so that others know how to improve.

Content

Lastly, keep the e-detail content compelling and refresh it often. In addition to our review, the Ogilvy Healthworld Analytics & Consulting team has had multiple conversations with different firms who use e-detailing and we've observed that program usage will drop off after the first sales call under practically all circumstances. In one case, usage dropped by an average of 18% from one quarter to the next across multiple brands. While you may be tempted to view your program as a failure if it is not used more than once, keep in mind that it is just a conversation guide—a way to pique the interest of the physician with clinical results or a mechanism of action demonstration—and that single usage often means that the message was delivered clearly. But your organization needs to be cognizant of this decline and put in place a system that allows for updates and new versions to be loaded to the sales rep quickly and at reasonable cost. For brand managers, it is important to set the expectations of the team that a decline in usage is reasonable and should not be cause for alarm.

Ultimately, e-detailing can breathe new life into your marketing mix by providing a cost-effective, customizable, and visually appealing way to guide the sales rep/HCP interaction. However, in order for this new and innovative marketing tactic and channel to be successful, firms must make a real commitment in both resources and time across business units to truly create a program that drives business value and offers learnings to multiple stakeholders. Don't rush to develop an e-detail because you might feel "behind" your competitors or colleagues who are using one already. Take care with the creation of a program, keeping in mind the best practices listed above, and whether an e-detail is really the right step for your brand or product. As the (Shakespeare-inspired) title of this article suggests, it is a question you need to ask yourself: all things considered, is an e-detail or tablet aid the right next step for your business? PV

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