

Multi-channel Prescriber Marketing

New Solutions for a **Waiting Market**

“An organization’s ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage.”

— Jack Welch, author and former chairman and CEO of General Electric

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hile the healthcare market has seen dramatic changes, the impact has been especially significant on prescribers, many of whom are now employees of larger delivery networks that limit or prohibit sales rep access. Additionally, there is growing payer influence on prescribing behavior, and providers have asked prescribers to follow defined treatment pathways to deliver lower costs and improved outcomes. This makes it more difficult for pharma companies to educate and influence prescribers.

Brad Sitler, principal industry consultant, SAS, Center for Health Analytics and Insights, says in response to these difficulties, life-science companies are embracing multi-channel marketing to interact with prescribers.

“The multichannel marketing can take the form of any targeted communication, such as direct mail, email, tele- and video-detailing, text messaging, and one-to-one landing sites,” he says. “The traditional approach to executing these targeted outreach campaigns involves the use of marketing service providers (MSPs). The MSPs manage the campaign data mart that tracks all of the promotional outreach data to prescribers and the response data from the prescribers. Additionally, the MSP will generate target lists for each campaign by channel and wave and provide strategy as to which combinations of tactics, frequency, and cadence deliver the greatest number of incremental scripts.”

Life-sciences companies have developed a better understanding of the operational requirements of multichannel marketing and increased their own internal competencies to better leverage these capabilities and complement the field salesforce to extend reach and frequency.

Unfortunately, the available multi-channel

offerings in the market have left them wanting.

Mr. Sitler says as MSPs evaluate new approaches to delivering their core services, new technologies have been released and new vendors have entered the multi-channel prescriber marketing arena.

For efforts to be successful, he says it’s important to take into consideration key issues that must be faced with the traditional solutions for multi-channel prescriber marketing:

- » Significant up-front hardware/software investments are required. In many instances there is an internal capital expenditure process the pharma company must follow, which may include a multi-year planning cycle between budgeting and executive level approvals. And, this model may not even fit their IT/finance operations for depreciating these hardware/software assets.
- » There are long lead times for installation and set-up of the infrastructure as every channel vendor must use a common data model when providing promotion and response data to the MSP for loading into the campaign database. Not only does the install and set-up take significant lead time, it places the onus on the channel vendors to create files in a particular layout that may or may not be a skill-set that the channel vendor has in-house. More often than not, these costs are pushed onto the pharma company and not taken into the total costs of ownership of the traditional multi-channel marketing solutions.
- » Overhead management for the infrastructure is costly, with ongoing operations and maintenance of the infrastructure requiring multiple brands from the life-sciences company to be on-boarded to a centralized campaign data mart to be cost-effective. This leaves mid-tier pharma companies



Brad Sitler

largely unaddressed as the cost for one or two brands is prohibitive.

- » A brand’s successful execution is largely tied to the quality of the MSPs assigned operations support team. Multi-channel marketing programs are largely dependent upon the resource team that was deployed to the life-sciences companies with significant variability in experience and delivery across different teams.
- » Revising target lists and assessing campaign performance requires a very labor intensive, time-consuming, and expensive process of moving data from the campaign data mart to a separate analytics environment and, in most instances also requires moving prescriber scores back to the data-mart.

Technology Solutions

It's not all gloom and doom, Mr. Sitler says, as there are multiple new technology solutions in the market that address many, if not all, of these issues.

"These new software and service solutions range from basic multi-channel marketing campaign management capabilities, with canned reporting, and basic data integration/preparation application program interface (APIs) to sophisticated one-to-one multi-channel marketing solutions that include robust digital marketing capabilities," he says.

Many of these new solutions enable a pharma company to have a single brand onboarded without a multi-year commitment or having to "bet the farm" by moving all brands onto the platform like the old technology. Additionally, these new solutions include embedded analytics capabilities within the campaign management function enabling the data to drive the selection of messages, channels, frequency, and cadence of the outreach to prescribers.

"Embedded analytics in the campaign management eliminates the historic approach of extracting the promotion and response data and moves that data to a separate analytics environment for analyses, eliminating the needs

to extract data from the customer relationship management database, hand-off of the data to the analytic consultant, and associated training to bring the consultant up to speed on the data," he says. "This hands-off approach removes the opportunity for mistakes, as well as costs and time for this work."

Another benefit of embedded analytics, according to Mr. Sitler, is the ability to conduct "optimization" analyses to provide a brand with insight on how to spend the "next dollar."

"The optimization capability enables continual refinement of the target list, channels, cadence, and frequency of communications," he says. "Additionally, since the optimization is built-in, it doesn't require the disjointed hand-off of the marketing and script data to an analyst who is removed from the day-to-day involvement of the project. The drop-and-drag graphical user interface enables business analysts to optimize contact strategy for either top-line sales growth or net revenue."

Mr. Sitler warns that a significant challenge in leveraging the promotional and prescription data for creating the campaign strategy is the integration of the various data. Historically, the integration of the data was a time-consuming laborious process with basic APIs in-

tegrated into the campaign management tools. This left the analyst struggling to merge prescriber data, CRM data, and claims data for decisions on targeting and messaging. New multi-channel prescriber marketing solutions include enterprise-grade data integration and data quality products, enabling faster integration of the data, supporting a repeatable process, and providing higher quality data for the surfacing of insights to drive campaign strategy and optimization.

Finally, he says the new technologies for multi-channel prescriber marketing are more cost-effective; have a faster time to market for the brand; include embedded analytics for data-driven investment of marketing budgets for returns that are optimized for top-line growth or net revenue; and enable visibility into program performance without the typical black-box program measurement.

As Jack Welch said: "An organization's ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage."

The ability to learn and execute faster has now come of age in the operations field of multi-channel marketing. How will your organization or your competitor's leverage these new capabilities? **PV**

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