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FLAWLESS EXECUTION IS CRITICAL TO MARKETING SUCCESS

The brand manager gives the “green light,” the creative is done, purchase orders are signed, the piece is produced, and the date that physicians will receive the recently published pivotal study has been agreed to. Everything is good to go. Right? Wrong.

It’s all about the brand. And the best way to get peak performance from your marketing budget is to work with your suppliers on innovative executions.

Pharmaceutical company marketing and brand managers know the important role flawless execution plays in getting their promotional and brand messages to key physicians on strategy, on time, and on budget.

For example, as part of a marketing initiative for one brand, the call was for a direct-mail campaign that included the results from a pivotal clinical study. The optimal target audience for the campaign was a base of 60,000-plus physicians. But because of budget pressures, the information could only be directly mailed to 40,000 physicians. The brand manager had to make some tough choices and decided to cover two-thirds of the optimal physician audience.

Rather than compromise the initiative, the brand manager could have achieved peak performance from the marketing budget and at the same time driven brand sales by working with suppliers and service providers that execute innovative solutions.

To achieve a successful and cost-effective outcome, some solutions to be considered might include:

- Cutting-edge technologies to achieve continuous process improvements;
- Consolidated handling, production, and delivery services to improve cost efficiencies;
- Best-in-class services that lower total costs and extend the program reach;
- Partner agreements that maintain quality, convenience, and speed.

PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS

In today’s competitive environment, product managers are looking to partner with suppliers that not only deliver excellent products and services, but that also have an in-depth understanding of the unique commercial and regulatory challenges facing the marketplace.

While brand managers and suppliers agree that cost efficiencies and savings are important, they can’t save enough money to drive top-line sales.

Rather, savvy suppliers consistently create economies of scale

through streamlined processes and work with brand managers to apply any additional resources created to extend the delivery of the brand message to the right amount of targeted physicians and the number of deliveries needed to create brand awareness at the point of prescribing.

DEVELOPING A STRONG DISTRIBUTION CHAIN

Every link in the creative, production, and distribution chain needs to be a champion for the brand.

Members of the team need to continuously look for opportunities to improve brand message delivery to targeted customers to help drive the success of the brand.

Today’s product managers are raising the bar regarding expectations for all of their suppliers. “Best in class” is defined by the supplier’s ability to provide excellent products and flawless execution, as well as their:

- Cost transparency, for example, all-inclusive turnkey services that provide whatever it takes to get the job done without any hidden extras;
- Ability to identify and manage second-tier suppliers who might be needed to complete the project;
- Strategic collaborations that help drive brand message delivery to targeted physicians, ideally down to the individual physician level to avoid unwanted duplications and waste.

LOOKING TOWARD 2008

As brand managers head into the final phases of their tactical planning and development for 2008, suppliers should not be wondering what the brand can do for them, but what they can do for their clients’ brands.

Now is the ideal time for brand managers to look to their suppliers as an extended team of brand champions committed to driving brand growth.

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