

Evolution and Development of Pharmaceutical Marketing and Health Services using IT&C Technology

Andra-Victoria Radu

“Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Bucharest, Romania

Email: andra352002@yahoo.com

Irina Iosub

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Faculty of Marketing, Bucharest, Romania

Email: irina.iosub@yahoo.com

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Abstract

The modifications are fast and visible in the field of medical assistance and healthcare, the domain being considered dynamic and unpredictable, the research generator and changes whose application impose most of the times systems performance and an efficient communication. Pharmaceutical marketing is the most important and the most wanted cultural architect of the present, places the patient in the center of its actions and stimulates the competition based on benefits for the patients.

Keywords: Pharmaceutical Marketing, Communication, Health Services, Web Technology.

Introduction

Daily life has a throbbing rhythm with frequent and sometimes dramatic changes, and the main „actor” – the human – plays an increasingly more important role. By default, health becomes the number one predominant. That is why the medical field is considered one of the most competitive areas of application in discovering the knowledge, and the patient has a more active role in his/her own healthcare and, thanks to the Internet, he/she has access to vast amounts of information and shall seek medical care adapted to individual stages of disease and provided by using the most modern methods (Borangiu & Purcărea, 2008).

The healthcare system is the overall of health organizations that compose it. They are defined from the point of view of organizational structures, logistics, proposed purpose, organizational culture, but their common denominator is the patient (Purcărea, 2010).

Development of a health system is directly influenced by the adopted care policies, in turn dependent of the financing, the population structure, the socio-economic development of said geographic area, the cost-results relation and also by patients’ attitude and expectations (Popa et al., 2007). And in order to identify opportunities for health innovation, specialists resort to marketing. Marketing people – important cultural architects of the present – aim to provide a variety of health care services which attract new categories of

patients and to create services and marketing mixes satisfactory for each target market (Purcărea, 2007).

Impact of IT&C technology over the evolution of pharmaceutical marketing and health services

“Through the Internet, marketing researchers have access to a growing range of analytical methods.” (Stoica, 2011, p. 307)

This competition in terms of value for the health consumer requires that health providers implement a number of strategic and organizational imperatives such as:

- choosing the range and types of provided services;
- redefining the business around medical conditions;
- creating distinct strategies;
- organizing integrated medical practice units;
- measuring results, experience and methods for each unit;
- pricing consistent approaches;
- providing services based on excellence, uniqueness and results.

Provision of quality health care is now considered a step in the right direction when it focuses on results. Moving patients to the excellence providers in reaching medical condition is a strong incentive.

As stated by Michael Porter, “the doctor and the patient produce healthcare together”. However, for meeting effectively the needs of patients, it is necessary to get marketing skills and patients’ understanding, identifying their needs and options (Popa et al., 2008).

In the field of healthcare significant progress has been made in several basic areas such as “dedicated pharmaceutical products” and „health information systems” which constitute the pillars of future medicine –information based medicine, focused on patient-specific integrated data and dedicated optimal therapies for him/her.

Personalized healthcare service could be achieved by combining the scientific advances with new technologies, the creative use of information technology and human inventiveness in medical practice. Innovation in the practice of medicine will be evolutionary, and the progress and scientific discoveries as well as new technological capabilities shall be revolutionary. Combining these revolutionary technologies with the evolutionary practice shall generate information-based medicine that will shape the future of personalized healthcare.

The first step towards personalized healthcare quality is the development of a support structure for data integration, including information such as:

- patient’s electronic record
- results of medical tests
- diagnostic imaging
- genealogical records, etc.

The healthcare system is the common denominator of the personalized medicine equation. The information must be quickly known and disseminated, integration and sharing medical knowledge must be supplemented by connecting healthcare providers within the context of patients’ conscious and effective participation for their own benefit (Purcărea et al., 2008).

As the health system adopts the concept of personalized medicine, the development of dedicated healthcare services and medicines grows exponentially. In order to capitalize the achieved progress, the healthcare organizations must effectively communicate with patients.

Communication is seen as the most visible component of healthcare organization's marketing approaches, being the liaison with patients. The new trend in marketing communication is to combine different means of communication so as to exert a direct influence on the target audience. This trend emerged as a result of new market demands in the context of the development in information technologies. Understanding target groups represents a key element in the development process of a suitable message. For each market segment formative survey techniques are important to determine which elements are motivating the patients, what they want in terms of health and which are the obstacles they encounter (Purcărea et al., 2011).

Market research in pharmaceutical industry has relied until now on observation and questioning customers about their preferences and decisions (Orzan & Zara, 2012). "It is vital to make a selection of the companies providing products/services that satisfy the needs and desires of consumers in superior conditions, with a high degree of customisation. Any entrepreneur should ask questions such as Who are today's consumers?, What makes them buy? and How can we influence them to take a decision?" (Stoica & Taşcu, 2015, p. 1194)

The pharmaceutical industry as a healthcare division has proven to be one of the strongest sectors, managing to successfully cope with the economic crisis. The determining factors for this industry – especially spending money on public health – were affected by the crisis, but they have not changed dramatically due to maintaining the high level of demand.

One of the key factors in achieving high quality in pharmaceutical services seems to be empowering employees to take any decisions they see fit in order to satisfy customer demand. Those who show that they care about patients have a positive experience in relation to them, i.e. the companies that treat patients as a value in itself and not as a potential source of income. A correct pharmacist-customer relationship must be based on accurate information that will help the patient to decide on the best medication. Such a relationship also facilitates good communication. The pharmacist, as a member of a professional medical team should strive for patients' information to be correct, clear and understandable. Therefore managers of pharmaceutical companies must recognize the importance of motivation in employees' involvement. Intellectual capability and creativity determines the potential of pharmaceutical organization (Raţiu et al., 2011).

Conclusions

"Online has become increasingly more attractive since consumers have observed a number of advantages such as: home delivery within a short time prices reduced to a certain, large range of products, transactions fast absence of queues and saving time and in some cases returning a product and repayment of money." (Ioanăş, Radu, Stoica, Popescu, 2015, p.132) Pharmaceutical companies, in order to be successful, must replace the aggressive marketing with focusing on product's current model and the acknowledgment of payer's, provider's and of valuable pharmaceutical chain's interdependence by investing in development and by adopting a more flexible approach in terms of pricing (Raţiu et al., 2011). It is required a continuous pharmaceutical analysis, because this aspect is essential for success and to understand the uniqueness of the pharmaceutical industry, which benefits from a complex and iterative process that carefully builds a pharmaceutical database (Purcărea et al., 2009). "In the virtual environment there are no international boundaries, global research can be done easily and quickly." (Stoica & Orzan, 2011, p. 303)

The specialists in pharmaceutical marketing as well as those who want to build a successful pharmaceutical organization must constantly remind the words of Richard Meyer:

“We sell products that can make a difference in people's lives, but today, our consumers are more skeptical regarding marketing messages and are linked together in a way that I have never met before. They talk to each other and take into account everything that is said about brands and products, and this is also true for the prescription-based medicines. They can talk anytime to anyone on the Web and may think that some time still needs to pass before the pharmaceutical field reaches its full potential”.

Corresponding Author

Andra-Victoria Radu

~Carol Davila~ University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Romania

Email: andra352002@yahoo.com

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