Pharma Marketing
Trends to watch out for in 2013

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In recent times, we’ve seen the year of mobile, social, multichannel and somehow inexplicably omnichannel, being the major disruptive forces in the world of modern marketing. For the Pharma industry though, we at Blue Latitude don’t believe that 2013 will be ‘the year of’ anything. Instead, as a result of a plethora of recent changes to the industry, we believe 2013 will be a year of consolidation and optimisation, particularly within multichannel marketing.

We believe Pharma marketing teams should, and hopefully will, be focussing on four major areas in the coming year as they look to reach their audiences in an ever more fragmented market, whilst maximising the return value of every dollar invested. These areas are; a shift from marketing to medical, adding value to the pill, realigning business and customer impact, and further online and offline integration.

From marketing to medical: 2013’s big information source shift

Digital technologies act as the conduit to a two-way relationship between brand and customer. This brings certain benefits to marketers; however, these come at a price. Thanks to digital advancement, customers now expect their informational needs to be fulfilled instantaneously. On certain occasions, there may be questions asked which a rep cannot answer. The role of medical information functions in the communication pathway will therefore take on greater importance, as customers will not wait to hear back from your brand’s rep, they’ll source the information elsewhere. Regardless of internal structures and departments, customers will generally have one view of a company and as such will expect questions to be answered quickly and effectively from any source they come into contact with on their research/information collecting journey.

Adding value to the pill: enhancing the service offering around Pharma products

As a result of the saturation of many product categories as well as an ever increasing number of generic products available, there is a necessity to differentiate a brand by adding value beyond the pill. This is of importance not only for established brands in competitive markets but also to display credibility when entering products into new markets or therapy areas.

Realigning business goals whilst meeting customer needs

Continual budgetary pressures are leading to more stringent justification of money spent. The more prudent brand managers are promoting the long term benefits associated with owned platforms in multichannel marketing as a reason to secure budget. We believe the HCP portal will take on a larger role, potentially at the expense of activity hosted on third party commercial sites. This will allow for greater data collection, feeding into CRM systems which allow more personalised targeted marketing efforts in future. The key here though will be creating portals that meet customer’s needs and combining it with third party reach activity to ensure business objectives are being met. By always putting the customer first, Pharma marketers will be able to ensure these needs are met.
Continued and improved online and offline integration.

The use of digital channels amongst HCPs is now widely known and accepted. It is no longer a small part of an individual’s life but a mainstay of everyday living in the professional and personal domain. For this reason, we believe further steps will be taken with regard to multichannel marketing, to build on the pilots and trials which have already been run. A large part of this will be the continued digitisation of the rep. Due to the reduced frequency of rep visits in terms of amount and duration, the desire to boost the longevity of each contact will be ever more pronounced. High impact channels can be augmented through the use of digital tools as can be seen in this case study.

But what will the shiny new object of 2013 be?

Although we believe 2013 will be a year of optimisation and frugal budgetary distribution, no annual marketing prediction piece would be complete without speculation about a shiny new toy for marketers to play with. To this end, we believe there may be opportunities within the combination of gamification techniques and personal analytics. The quantifiable self is an interesting notion which could have lucrative benefits for a Pharma company; however it is fraught with challenges and opportunities for failure. If it wasn’t though, it wouldn’t be an attention demanding shiny object.

To find out more about how we can help you in 2013, please speak to Mark Walmsley at mark.walmsley@bluelatitude.net or 0203 328 1848. For more practical tips on how to better engage with your customers, sign up to our monthly newsletter.