



REVIEW ARTICLE

Marketing strategies in the pharmaceutical industry

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Abstract

Marketing is believed to maintain a steady supply of customers, which a business requires to survive. Pharmaceuticals are a global force; they include everything from domestic items to drugs and medical supplies that can save lives. Due to the dependence of the pharmaceutical industry on specialized training, pharmaceutical education is now a requirement for medical school. Distribution or marketing of pharmaceuticals makes drugs accessible to the public. Since most customers only actively seek out pharmaceuticals or medical supplies when they have an urgent need, pharma marketing is distinctive. Today, selling medications for a profit confronts this greatest obstacle. This review article will examine the fundamental values of pharmaceutical marketing to comprehend it better. The study will also evaluate marketing materials for pharmaceuticals. This study draws on the knowledge of various academics and pharmaceutical marketing executives. The research focuses on the marketing balance, consumer drug attitudes, eco-friendly marketing, and pharmaceutical product promotion. The author's choices and availability may necessitate that the examined articles and literature accurately reflect the study's implication, and the findings may be suggestive rather than conclusive.

Keywords: Marketing, Pharmaceutical industry, Strategies, Purchasing behavior, Products.

Introduction

The purpose of marketing is to improve consumer satisfaction and business success. It is a strategy of organizing activities to help a firm achieve its objectives. Providing a good or service to a target market in return for payment is the essence of marketing. This is true everywhere, including in the pharmaceutical industry. Finally, a doctor's prescription is required for your product. The only difference between pharmaceutical advertising and advertising for other products is the intended audience. Rarely is the word "customer" used in product sales. However, the pharmaceutical industry's target audience is not the patient but the physician or group of physicians who prescribe the patient's drug. Consequently, any promotional campaigns will consider the prescribing physician. Concentrate on

persuading and educating physicians, other healthcare professionals, and pharmaceutical businesses (Kulkarni *et al.*, 2023).

India is the world's third-largest pharmaceutical market by both volume and value. India is the leading exporter of generic medicines, exporting more than 20% of the global total. In the past decade, the pharmaceutical business has seen a substantial transformation. As a result of the expansion of global trade, the pharmaceutical sector is undergoing a consolidation period. Innovation is essential to the sector's survival owing to internal and external developments that have kept it on its toes. The pharmaceutical sector is known for combining operations under its marketing division. The marketing of pharmaceuticals has problems, yet the fundamental marketing concepts of recognizing and addressing customer requirements remain the same (Leonardo *et al.*, 2019).

Objectives

- To learn the fundamentals of pharmaceutical marketing.
- To disseminate the knowledge gathered through a literature evaluation of pharmaceutical marketing.

Literature Review

Pharma marketing, often known as pharmaceutical marketing, is a part of pharmaceutical management with several tasks, including advertising drugs to patients, pharmacists, and physicians. This book attempts to compile the studies conducted on this specific wing area. The report's

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authors split their findings into four categories: Current pharmaceutical marketing strategies, customer perceptions of these techniques, a proposed green marketing strategy for the pharmaceutical business, and implementation ideas for this strategy.

Pharma Marketing Mix

The pharmaceutical industry's core is called the "marketing mix." The "10 Ps" marketing strategy ranks each advertising campaign's ten most essential aspects. McCarthy's Four Core Ps (product, pricing, place, and marketing), Booms and Bitner's Three Additional Ps (people, process, and physical evidence), and the Three New Ps presented here (packaging, partnership, and policy) all reflect the intricacies of integrated care. A business-oriented strategy is necessary to better address the needs of customers (or patients), stakeholders, and segmentation options in the corporate environment (such as health and social care providers). This classification may benefit health and social care professionals, their target patients, and other stakeholders when marketing decisions to promote integrated care (Sadiku-Dushi *et al.*, 2019; Al Thabbah *et al.*, 2022).

The product must take precedence since it is the focal point of the marketing mix (Figure 1). The health and social care services that integrated care providers give their customers are called their "products." Either a traditional integrated care product (such as a drug) or an enhanced integrated care product (such as a health app) can be used to promote, restore, or preserve a patient's health (such as scheduling assistance, follow-up calls, interest-free financing, or security measures like closed-circuit television and armed guards). Products enable the administration of business procedures.



Figure 1: Pharmaceutical marketing mix

Uncontestable is the significance of price or pricing strategy in the business sector. Most pharmaceutical companies decide their costs using a value pricing model that considers the cost of research and development and the severity of the treated disease. When discussing healthcare, the monetary spend required for patients or customers to pay for medical or social services is commonly called the "price of care." Healthcare providers' fees affect patients' financial capability and perceptions of the value of medical and social services.

The distribution strategy of a corporation may either make or break the firm's chances of success. Health and social care commodities are delivered to patients by integrated care providers to meet and exceed patients' expectations when delivering health and social care solutions. Integrated care providers also provide patients access to health and social care commodities. Distribution is essential to businesses' success when consumers can purchase virtually anywhere, at an actual storefront or online marketplace.

Advertising for medications is seen differently from advertising for mass-market items. It is feasible that over-the-counter pharmaceuticals will use the same marketing methods as prescription drugs. An effective sales strategy begins with physicians, proceeds through pharmacies, and ends with the client. Examples of promotional activities and methods include advertisements, cold calling, personal selling, press releases, sales promotions, and networking.

People are unquestionably the most valuable target audience for ads. Those communicating with patients and other stakeholders throughout pharmaceutical product distribution, administration, and coordination are regarded as participating in integrated care. Employees in the healthcare business include physicians, nurses, paramedics, chiropractors, psychiatrists, radiologists, medical social workers, surgeons, and therapists, among many other specialisations.

Again, the pharmaceutical sector would be nonexistent without the marketing process. "Process of service" refers to the collection of operational and organisational steps that enable healthcare practitioners to provide health and social care services (together with any necessary follow-ups) in a timely, secure, and high-quality way for their patients. Consequently, the technique improves the efficacy of intermediaries and the pharmaceutical sector.

The marketing process is intrinsically linked to objective evidence. This evidence might be presented to the patient as part of the medical aid. Patients and other stakeholders can evaluate the quality of integrated care based on observable factors, such as the credentials and skills of the personnel, the condition of the facilities (including clinics, hospitals, and care centres), and the risk of patient harm (e.g., leaflets, awards, publications, media, signage, patient testimonies, and websites). Professional sales representatives (PSRs) regularly offered doctors physical proof, including catalogues and booklets, to boost their confidence in prescribing pharmaceuticals to patients.

Packaging is essential for ensuring product safety and supporting and encouraging healthy lifestyles. Packaging is a unique but equally important element of the marketing mix that promotes creativity above product qualities and is grouped with the product and advertising (and maybe the rest of the marketing mix). Goods and services have the closest relationship to marketing.

The pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors must collaborate and develop strategic partnerships to supply, manage, and coordinate health and social care services. By cooperative agreements, separate healthcare providers have the potential to work together to offer their respective patients improved treatment. In a structural sense, this may be accomplished by building a new, unified organisation; in a vertical sense, this can be accomplished by linking equal service provider levels; and in a digital sense, this can be accomplished by establishing a network of health and social service providers that collaborate (for example, interdisciplinary teams). Because of the agreement, patients will have access to medicines that treat not just the symptoms of their health conditions but also the underlying causes of such conditions. It is possible that more stakeholders, such as providers of integrated care and payers, may get involved as a direct result of the achieved savings and advantages. Predetermined policies create new healthcare collaborations and methods. The policy is vital in integrated care to consolidate and enhance health outcomes for the entire population since it logically connects the components of the marketing plan.

Customer Purchasing Behavior

Marketing increases demand for a particular product, service, or experience. Understanding the stages of a transaction is essential for marketers (Hua, 2019). Customers provide several decision signals, including what, why, when, how much, and how often. Consumers purchase goods for their consumption, as opposed to reselling them. Consumers can be categorized according to gender, age, race, and religion. Particularly influential is a person who can make buying decisions after exposure to marketing and advertising. Consumer purchasing behavior encompasses more than simply making purchases. As a result, marketers focus on their target demographic's products and purchasing procedures.

To fulfill their wants and needs, customers participate in a process known as "consumer purchasing behavior." This process entails acquiring, utilizing, and eventually disposing of items, concepts, and experiences (Upadhyay & Sinha, 2022).

This is a crucial consideration if you are seeking to grasp client behavior. The "four Ps," which are "prizes," refer to consumer incentives. The status of the economy, technical advancements, the political atmosphere, and cultural standards all substantially affect consumers'

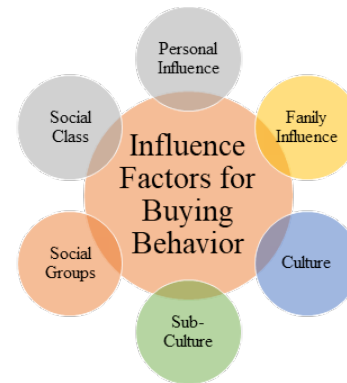


Figure 2: Influence factors for buying behavior

shopping habits. These minor ideas contribute to the buyer's experience quotient, which impacts the buyer's decisions on future purchases of certain goods, amounts, and dates (Eldrwish *et al.*, 2022) (Figure 2).

Consumer behavior research may be helpful in the evaluation of requests, the measurement of brand performance, the forecast of on-time product delivery, and the estimate of personal expenses. Consumer behavior draws from various academic fields, such as psychology, marketing, economics, and consumer politics (Hole *et al.*, 2021). In addition to the product itself, a consumer's purchasing decision is influenced by their thought processes, value systems, and level of self-actualization. A systematic and representative portrayal of customer behavior is required to comprehend the issue effectively. Pharmaceutical corporations must regularly study physician prescription patterns to build viable business strategies. As a result of rising rivalry in the pharmaceutical industry, doctors' prescription practices have undergone substantial changes. When physicians endorse a company, consumers are more inclined to try and like its products as they occur (Hamade, 2022).

Green Marketing

"Green marketing" refers to advertising products often seen as environmentally beneficial. Green marketing was developed in response to concerns about the effects of environmental deterioration on human health and the economy. To meet the needs of customers and society in a profitable and environmentally responsible manner, firms should adopt a "green marketing" strategy. Sustainable business practices are crucial for the present and a company's long-term growth and profitability. By researching the relevant literature, we get insight into customers' perceptions of green marketing in the Indian pharmaceutical business and practical advertising efforts that explicitly target these groups (Adkonkar *et al.*, 2022). How have the business world and the pharmaceutical industry adapted to green marketing? This survey of the relevant literature addresses these and other related themes. The pharmaceutical sector was especially interested in

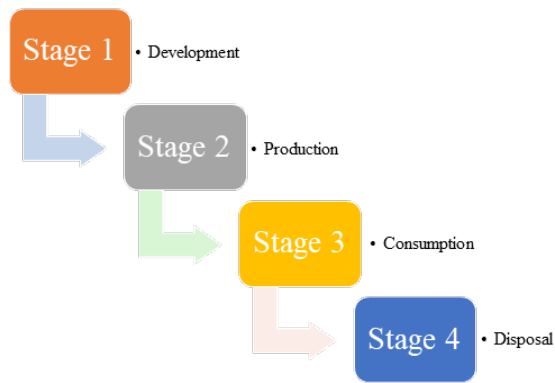


Figure 3: Different stages of marketing strategies of green marketing

respondents' opinions about ecologically friendly treatment choices (Azeem *et al.*, 2022; Bharskar & Siddheshwar, 2020). Numerous publications have been published on green marketing, but very few have addressed the pharmaceutical business (Figure 3).

In recent years, the need for ecologically friendly advertising has soared due to the tremendous strain caused by dwindling natural resources. Creating a sustainable market for "Green" or environmentally preferable products is vital. However, organizations may find it difficult to focus intently on the product and the surrounding marketing methods. This might be aided by analyzing the supply chain and the marketing mix (Pandey *et al.*, 2020). As a result of customers' growing concern for the environment, several products and services have been modified. To emphasise customer desires, businesses should transition away from traditional product sales and toward sales of environmentally friendly things. As an illustration, for instance, there is a consistent shift toward eco-friendly advertising (Sestino & Amatulli, 2022).

Pharma Marketing Execution

Despite the importance of having a well-thought-out marketing plan, the findings demonstrate that putting it into practice makes all the difference. There are parallels between the interactions between market vendors and customers and those between physicians and patients (Figure 4). This broadens the context in which marketing concepts are created and shifts the dominant logic of marketing to encompass both commodities and services (Limbu & Huhmann, 2022). Effective utilization of the marketing mix and the green marketing strategy is required. There appears to be an inverse relationship between the quantity of advertising a medicine receives and the indications for drug descriptions. Distribution of free pharmaceutical samples is a standard commercial practice that may be highly advantageous for introducing new products or unseating an existing market leader. Since they are complimentary,

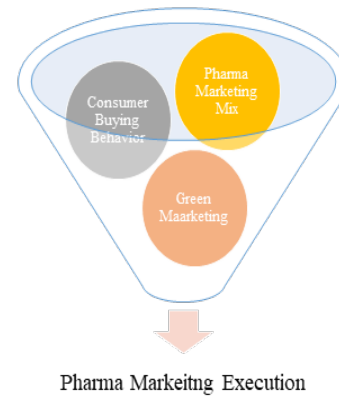


Figure 4: Execution of pharmaceutical marketing

detailing and product sampling account for approximately 80% of the total cost of promoting pharmaceuticals. These well-executed advertising techniques are prevalent in the pharmaceutical industry (Lim, 2023).

Primary sales representatives (PSRs), or medical representatives (MRs), are the frontline staff responsible for launching promotional initiatives. In addition to marketing techniques, distribution methods are vital. Plan execution includes sales calls, sales representative skills, call follow-up, etc. (Qureshi & Raza, 2022).

A Way Forward – Pharma Marketing

Advertising strategies in the pharmaceutical industry are comparable to those of other sectors. However, marketing's future is bright across all industries. In addition, the prevalence of pharmaceutical marketing has increased (Tallawy & Noha, 2023). These figures indicate that the pharmaceutical sector is evolving toward ecologically responsible advertising. The "Green" designation represents an eco-friendly approach. Due to your commitment to these issues, pharmaceutical marketers will be interested in your eco-friendly packaging materials, medical waste management methods, and branding activities (Nandy & Nandy, 2022).

Increased Pharma Marketing Intermediary Role

The marketing sector has identified intermediary conflicts as a primary concern. Despite the importance of distributorship management, the pharmaceutical industry's marketing faces a distinct set of challenges. The resolution has increased channel participant communication. No one denies the future significance of data management and integrity for pharmaceutical companies; gradually, even smaller businesses may become digital. Using intermediaries to manage the brand is a common alternative for over-the-counter (OTC) products. Distributors might benefit from stocking stores with over-the-counter products. We can manage our brand more successfully if we formally recognize these external partners as business partners.

Conclusion

Pharmaceutical product marketing will always be riddled with challenges and opportunities. Pharmaceutical advertising is distinct from advertising in other industries. The marketing principle may help businesses manage the difficulties and risks posed by increasing competition, globalization, and the pursuit of market dominance. The green marketing approach illustrates how technological innovation may lead to higher industrial productivity. Different types of individuals frequent the local drugstore. Patients are the customers, but physicians and pharmacists make the first purchases. A pharmaceutical product, such as a life-saving treatment, necessitates a unique set of marketing strategies since consumers are expected to demand the product, and physicians prescribe it. Selling an OTC product is like marketing any other product. In contrast to marketing fast-moving consumer items, the pharmaceutical sector markets to customers' "wants" rather than their "needs." The subsequent phases of the study will focus on enhancing the efficacy of intermediaries. In contrast to their previous position as passive conduits for the conveyance of products, intermediaries are now expected to participate actively in the delivery process as collaborative partners. The present foundations of green marketing essentially initiate ad hoc marketing channels with public and environmental moral duties. The marketing of pharmaceuticals affects the company's ability to capitalize on market possibilities and sets its business strategy.

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