

Reaching the Empowered Patient -- Opportunities and Challenges in DTC Marketing

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Abstracts

Direct marketing restrictions are everywhere. Consumers are suspicious. Physicians are shutting their doors to reps and the market is changing.

Bottom line: Lackluster profits across the industry.

But where one door closes, a window opens.

While the \$5 billion Direct to Consumer Advertising (DTCA) still faces considerable hurdles and legislative obstacles everywhere but in the US and New Zealand, DTCA is nevertheless a promising growth area for pharmaceutical marketing.

Legislators in the European Union — who've long held a stranglehold on DTCA — are now considering loosening their grip. In doing so, they'll open a portal through which pharmaceutical companies can market non-promotional information such as safety and dosage. According to the British Medicines and Health Care products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), the resulting boost in patient awareness of disease symptomatology and prevention could save the UK up to £630 million a year.

And although the industry as a whole pulled back from DTC marketing in 2008, there are signs of renewed investment — Pfizer increased spending on Lipitor by 319 per cent in the first half of 2009 — and renewed interest in emerging platforms like social media, direct email and the internet. While there are moves afoot by the Food and Drug Administration to publish draft guidelines governing web-based marketing by the end of 2010, the opportunities afforded by new media still hold great promise. But will it be enough?

Key insights into a changing environment

FirstWord's insightful overview of the current and future DTCA environment both in the US and Europe offers critical analysis for an industry in flux. Covering key case studies examining how DTCA budgeting can affect the financial performance of drugs, examples of great — and not so great — ads, as well as highlights of the companies leading the way in social media marketing, the report is a concise, astute summary of where DTCA is, and where it's heading.

The report investigates the current direct to consumer marketing environment to establish:

A detailed scan of the current and future regulatory environment in the US and Europe

The net benefits of reinvestment in DTCA, especially in emerging communication platforms

The report

Offers a snapshot of the current DTCA market in the US and Europe

Overviews the successes and failures of the main players, including Pfizer, GSK, Sanofi-aventis, Eli Lilly and Roche

Details anticipated regulatory hurdles and critical paths to overcome them

Discusses promising DTCA strategies, challenges and options

Focuses on opportunities and concerns surrounding emerging communications platforms, such as the internet, social media, web advertising, direct email marketing and YouTube

Establishes which drug classes grab the most consumer advertising — and details key DTCA competitors

Key comments

Access to “high-quality, non-promotional information on diseases and treatments” would allow patients to take responsibility for their own health, according to Arthur Higgins, president of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA).

Pharmaceutical companies need to be transparent while providing information about a drug. A recent study by Jatin Shah, from Duke University, US, established that no fair balance exists on the pharmaceutical brand websites between the information related to drug efficacy and its side effects.

Consumers are increasingly using the internet as a potential source of health related information. Some of the main information people search for online includes the benefits and risks of a medicine, how the medicine works, and its effectiveness compared to other drugs.

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