

# STUDY OF NEW MARKETING STRATEGIES IN PHARMACEUTICAL MARKETING TO OVERCOME LIMITATIONS OF TRADITIONAL MARKETING IN INDIA

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**Abstract:** *This era is a technological era where doctors are update themselves by using technology through computers, smart phones and I pad. The emergence and use of internet based marketing has gained popularity among the doctors and they are using it day today through online consultation or seeking medical opinion, thus digital marketing in pharmaceutical industry can. It is ignored. This study focuses on new marketing strategies used by pharmaceutical companies to avoid limitations of traditional marketing.*

**Index Terms -** *Pharmaceutical Traditional Marketing, Digital Marketing, Social Media, Doctors prescription*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indian Pharma market is third largest market in terms of volume. Indian pharmaceutical sector is estimated to account for 3.1 – 3.6 per cent of the global pharmaceutical industry in value terms and 10 per cent in volume terms. It is expected to grow to US\$100 billion by 2025. The market is expected to grow to US\$ 55 billion by 2020, thereby emerging as the sixth largest pharmaceutical market globally by absolute size. Branded generics dominate the pharmaceuticals market, constituting nearly 80 per cent of the market share (in terms of revenues). The sector is expected to generate 58,000 additional job opportunities by the year 2025(4). Most pharma companies operating in India, even the multinationals, employ Indians almost exclusively from the lowest ranks to high level management.

The increase in the standard of living of an Indian, higher consciousness and awareness for better health coupled with healthcare medical policies have further added to the growth of pharmaceutical industry. Digitalisation has been at the core of marketing strategies across all the industries contributing towards maximising the profits and in increasing the market share. Pharmaceutical industry has been slow in recognising the potential of digitalisation and is still embracing the traditional marketing strategies that revolve round the field force specifically the Medical Representative.

## II DIFFERENT TRADITIONAL MARKETING APPROACH OF PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY

### I Advertising

Pharmaceutical product advertising, in India, is regulated mainly by ‘The Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954’ [1] and by ‘The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945’ [8]. These acts provide for the consistency of the advertisements with the approved prescribing information, prohibition of certain types of advertisements, and penalties against any instance of breach of these mandatory requirements [8,9,10]. These acts, however, do not provide for the requirement of ‘minimum essential information content’, to be present in the pharmaceutical advertisements. Thus, this minimum requirement of information for a pharmaceutical advertisement, which is an important consideration, remains ill-defined.

### II Sponsorships

Companies also try to make direct payments to the doctors by various indirect ways i.e. for clinical trails (entering patients in clinical trials against payment), national and international conferences and symposia sponsorships, free medical camps, and opinion leaders (to deliver lectures) for health care professionals. (6)

### III Personal selling

Medical Representative acts as a brand ambassador for the company and its brands or products. He/she is the one point contact between the company and the doctors.

Marketing department designs the marketing strategies to empower the field force Medical Representative with an objective to gain maximum market share for the existing products and to create demand for the new launches. The most important traditional marketing strategy that is considered to achieve maximum returns on the marketing investments made is Detailing. Detailing is face to face interactions of MR with the doctors that involve highlighting on the USPs of the products complimented by free samples, gifts with brand names and promotional literatures. However detailing fails to achieve the expected returns as it lacks proper engaging of all the stakeholders, also the cost involved doesn't justify the returns.

According to OECD, India has only 0.7 doctors per 1000 people, in addition the disease burden due to the life style changes, ambitions, work pressures have made today's doctor busier. A recent survey by Docplexus suggests that 80% of doctors check product information online. 74% of doctors wants to communicate with MR regarding new drugs, 68% wanted to limit the interaction to once in a month and only 33% thought that such interactions adds value to their practice. The planned implementation of UCPMP act will be bringing

restrictions on the present traditional strategies, enforcing strict ethical practices, activities like giving out product samples, gifts, paid vacations including ( travel & stay) or monetary grants will be made illegal.

Pharma companies need to explore new ethical avenues of effectively marketing their products, bridging the gap between doctor's expectations and MR offerings, making the interaction more desirable and interesting. This can be in some way achieved with prior detailing and announcements on social media, that will create awareness among the doctors for the product, giving way for more effective and informed communication.

MR should come across as an assistance provider for the doctor rather than as a seller in making the right decision on the products or services(5).

### III DIGITAL MARKETING TOOLS USED BY PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES FOR PROMOTION OF THEIR PRODUCTS

Digital Marketing engages all the stake holders, the Physicians, Sales Force and the Patients.

Physicians are constantly checking out for latest medical advances. Digitalisation assists in featuring the brands at the top of these searches, thus creating relationship with the physicians and keeping them engaged. Digitalisation empowers the sales force with the latest tools and technologies to offer their best enhancing sales. Digitalisation engages patients with the proper content creation, website management and social media expertise.

#### I. Website management:-

Websites assists in communicating with prospects and customers and is a convenient tool for establishing company and product identity. A website can make the business unique by demonstrating and showcasing content that is accessible and easy to understand by the target audience.

#### II. Apps

Through Apps companies can motivate patients to continue with a treatment regime and gain a better control over the disease. Apps can assist Physicians to offer their services in a better way.

#### III. Social media platforms:-

##### 3.1 Facebook

Today's consumers seek for information on products including its side effects and risks which can be provided through facebook. Facebook gives opportunity to create relationships and assets of lasting value, both for consumers and pharmaceutical companies. Pharma companies can have real experts (scientists, MDs, etc.) answer questions and lead discussions with consumers through face book.

In communicating with existing and potential customers. In generating traffic for your website. In enhancing brand awareness. India centric page gives demographic advantage.

##### 3.2 Twitter

Pharma can use Twitter for identification and proactive engagement with opinion leaders. Twitter allows pharma to engage with an audience that is yearning for more information about healthcare, diseases and treatment options. Use of hash tags enables organizations to engage with much broader audiences. It enables more 'human' interaction with people. Tweet chats are the gateways to gain better understanding of issues relating to particular disease areas.

##### 3.3 LinkedIn

Helps promote the business, not just the brand  
 Helps promote thought leadership through LinkedIn groups  
 LinkedIn is the best social network for lead generation  
 Educate clients through the 'showcase' feature  
 LinkedIn ads are a great tool for advertising to the relevant audience, Sponsored updates help drive followers who are potential clients.  
 Gives access to influencers who can refer new clients  
 Helps promoting company culture to hire relevant talent.

##### 3.4 Google+

Google+ influences search results on Google Google+ can improve your click through rates  
 Google+ Circles allow you to segment your audience  
 For pharma, this could be a great way to educate patients on the places where they can seek assistance.  
 Moreover Pharma can even opt for sponsoring patient mapmakers to highlight disease-specific resources.

##### 3.5 Blogger

Blogs are important component of the social media  
 Blogs increases brand awareness thereby benefitting Pharma  
 Blogging gives room for increase search engine placement for keywords and help educate patients on a specific disease state  
 Blogging is an opportunity for pharma companies to share information more frequently than websites permit. A business Blog is a great opportunity to educate the readers and customers. The content will create interest in the business and offerings.

### 3.6 Slideshare

Slideshare has a huge audience that can drive traffic to the site on patient education. It acts as an effective platform for branding and to create top-of-mind awareness. It's another great avenue to build a patient and physician community. Patients can subscribe to a company's channel and be notified when a new presentation is uploaded. Slideshare has fruitful SEO benefits.

### 3.7 Instagram

Healthcare information's are difficult to explain however images make it faster and easier to understand. It's observed that images with texts are appreciated by people twice as compared to posts with only the texts. Effective conversation platform for creating healthcare and disease awareness. Instagram assists in formation of various support groups and attracts those who have suffered from the disease. Instagram offers new moderation abilities, making compliant engagement possible in a regulated industry.

### 3.8 Pinterest

Pinterest is the perfect place to share health info graphics. The popularity of health info graphics shows that it can be used for disease awareness and education. It allows companies to make multiple boards where contributors, influencers, employees can upload images hence shaping up a community. Themed boards on Patient education, Patient stories and Health days can be created.

### 3.9 Vine

It's a great platform for Pharma marketers to expand their brand. By making use of engaging content vine can have videos covering disease awareness and events. Such apps could be used by doctors for patient education hence improving medical compliance and persistency. It pushes communicators to come up with witty and innovative concepts that will be resonating in a few seconds.

### 3.10 YouTube

A gripping platform to post interviews with HCP's and patient group representatives. It would be interesting to feature inspirational interviews of patients with a particular condition. Patient's family and friends are always on a lookout for educational videos on coping with treatment. E-mails and bulletins are built-in tools that allow you to introduce your channel to other users with similar tastes and interests. Emails can be used to share links with people who have expressed interest in a particular therapeutic area.

## VI CONCLUSION

The limitations of Traditional Marketing in the Pharma industry have proposed the use of Digital marketing strategies to bridge all the gaps, engaging all the stakeholders towards maximizing profits and in gaining more market share. Integrated digital marketing strategy consisting of blogs, social media updates, mobile apps, discussion forums will contribute to a strong long term partnering between pharma and the physicians.

No other industry is as strictly regulated across the world as the Pharma. It is, after all, in the business of improving and, in many cases, saving the life of a human being. So the network of regulatory requirements across jurisdictions is onerous and complex with good reason. By using advanced marketing strategies and providing the proper training to the employees, smart pharma companies are thriving—not just surviving—in this regulatory environment.

This will provide pharma companies insight on doctor's expectations which can be incorporated into marketing and product development activities leading to Business growth. We must accept the fact that pharmaceutical industry in developing countries is driven by "quest of profit" and they can practice any thing to get their desired profit as medical director of Squibb quoted "The incidence of disease cannot be manipulated and so increased sales volume must depend at least in part on the use of drugs unrelated to their real utility or need"(7).

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