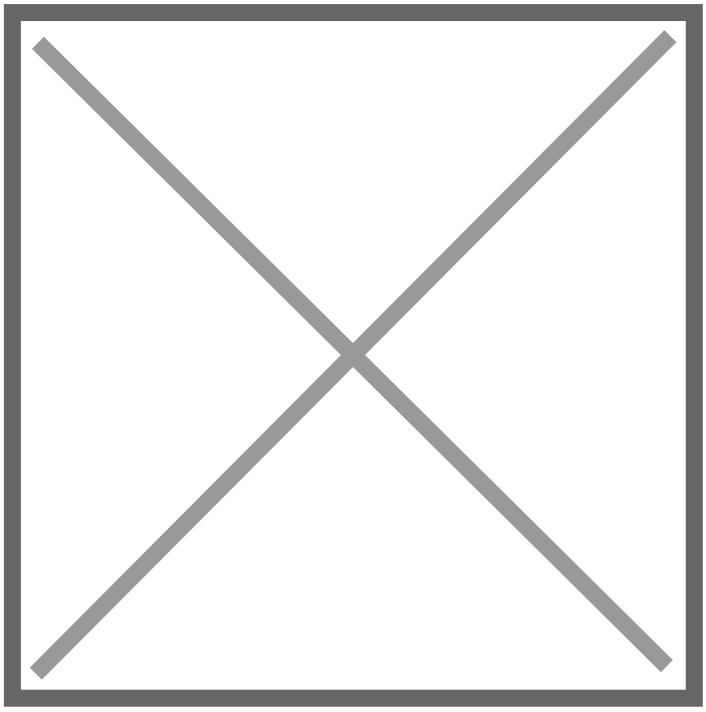
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Marketing strategies for pharma companies

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As pharma industry steps into the 'global local era' of marketing, it will witness its own share of changes that would indicate the paradigm shift for pharma marketers
Rajesh-jain

Traditional pharma marketing has focused on 'prescribing doctors' with huge sales forces that were often directed to follow the carpet bombing method. Promotional budgets were high as those times were unknown of the phenomenon called recession. Mass communication was the norm and money was poured in to reach out to a huge number of largely scattered mass. Marketing plans are centered on product features and benefits in addition to sales force strength.

Days of traditional pharma marketing are nearly over. In order to make present era successful and profitable, marketing strategies have to be realigned. Marketing and commercialization strategies are developed on the strong foundation of targeting and segmentation of customers and markets, to accommodate the evolving marketing dynamics and customer feedback.

From initial concept development to post launch assessment, customer inputs on design and positioning of a product are essential. Attempting to bring a product to market without sufficient customer feedback will ultimately limit product acceptance in the market place.

Customer feedback should be holistic and include the parameters like validating the market assumptions, assessment of the competitive environment, input on product specifications, determining the product value proposition, developing and testing the product positioning and obtaining product feedback on product's effectiveness and compliance. It is important to develop a decision making process which can be followed through to the customer feedback for further development of product to analyze manufacturing costs, redesigning the communication strategy, value-added services, product availability through efficient logistic network and sometimes even the timeline for product launch.

The companies themselves need to bring in brand developers and health marketing experts to their organizations, and allow them to make a change. At the same time, support measures are required to start focusing much more on means to elevate the marketing and commercialization capabilities and implementation of those activities.

In contrast to traditional norm of mass communication, today, the product is promoted through personalized communication strategy and media like web-based initiatives, interactive teleconferencing and text messaging. The broad idea remains to tap as many technologically enhanced communication ways as possible. Further, companies are training their field forces for a two–way communication with the customers. We can say that consultative marketing is gaining importance.

With advances in science and technology, we have to keep in mind the pace needed to keep up in the industry which is entering a critical period in its development. A failed product launch can be disastrous from a financial perspective and to the reputation of the product's brand in the marketplace.

Meticulously prepared comprehensive marketing strategy is essential for the successful commercialization of a brand. Highly pro-active marketing leadership would be instrumental in taking timely initiatives in response to the customer feedback and

evolving market dynamics resulting in greater potential for overall market success.