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## Indian Pharmaceutical Marketing Trends

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### **Abstract:**

*Pharmaceutical companies in India were slow to marketing. The industry with its regulation towards advertising held pharmaceuticals back while marketers in manufacturing and services raced ahead in promoting their products. The paper highlights key steps every company should evaluate for boosting the effectiveness of their communications planning. For the companies this will be a useful checklist, to revolutionise the Promotion mix - and for finance department it could save marketing budget without any drop in results.*

**Keywords:** *Pharmaceutical, marketing, promotion mix*

### **1. Product Promotions in Indian Pharmaceutical Industry**

Pharmaceutical drugs are classified into prescription and non-prescription drugs according to Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940 and listed as schedules

Prescription-only medicines	Schedules H and X; Schedule G (mostly antihistamines) do not need a prescription to purchase but require the following mandatory text on the label: 'Caution: It is dangerous to take this preparation except under medical supervision.'
Non-prescription drugs	OTC, or over the counter drugs need no legal recognition in India

Mostly Indian market is for prescription-only medicines. In India prescription drugs are not permitted to advertise. Hence pharmaceutical companies need to convince the doctors to prescribe their medicine to increase sales. The medical representative plays an important role in this process. Medical Representative fixes an appointment with the doctor and explains the benefits of drug along with safety and efficacy of drugs. The Department of Pharmaceutics released a code of marketing practice for Indian pharmaceutical industry in June, 2011. The code has restricted the practices of companies while marketing drugs to the doctors.

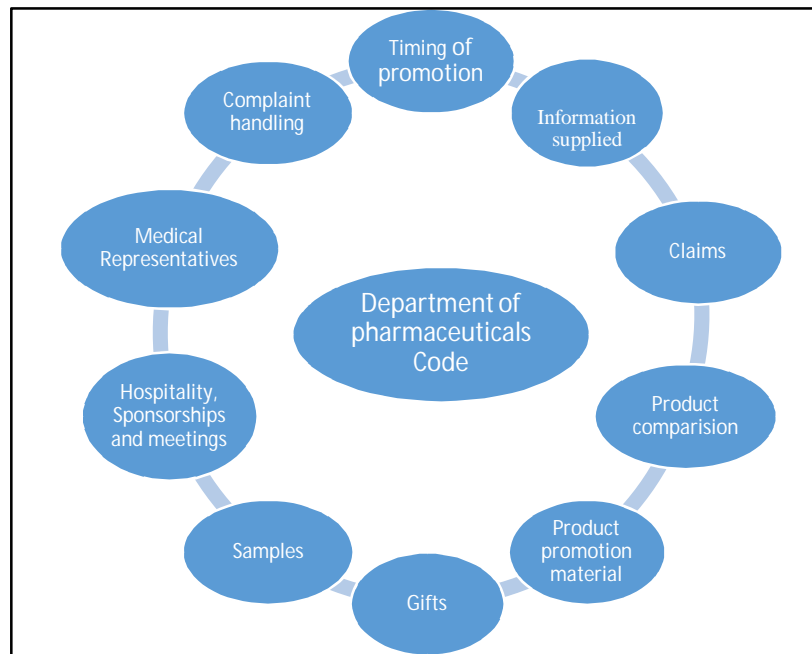


Figure 1: Features of DOP code

The features of DOP code is the product can be carried out for promotion only after the authorization by the drug controller general of India, the information supplied must be accurate, fair and verifiable. The department of pharmaceuticals claims of usage of terms in promotion and ensures that a due care must be taken that product comparison does not mislead by distortion or any other way. The promotion material used is verified, gifts to professionals in any form are restricted, samples should only be circulated only among qualified professional and the samples not available for sale. The DOP code permits for assistance of doctors for continuing their education with genuine attendance at events and insists the medical representatives handling sales with high standards of ethical conduct and also forms a committee to handle the complaints received by them.

- **Change in Marketing:** Marketing in pharmaceuticals is done mainly through the medical representatives (direct selling). The companies for years invested huge amounts of their revenue in promoting their products through the medical representatives. The representatives are the only prime channel of marketing for their products, with the growth in the various sectors of information technology the transformation in the process of marketing shaped up the new strategies that help them finish of their sale.

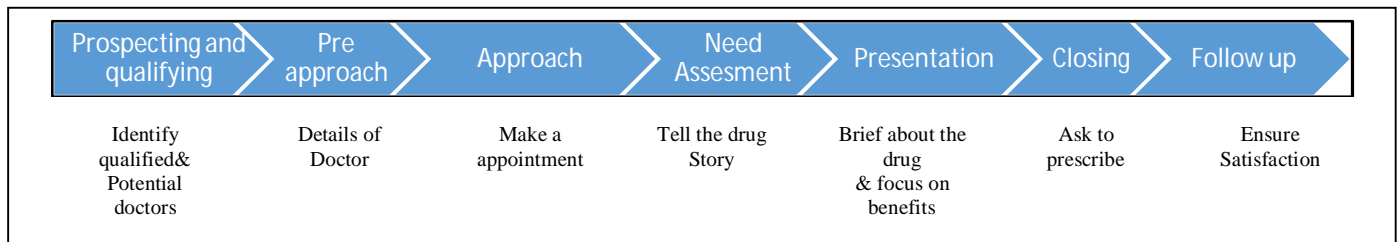


Figure 2: Physician Marketing through Medical Representative

**1.1. Medical Representatives and Technology**

Pharmaceutical companies spend huge amounts of money to market their drugs. To generate more sales and gain market share getting the doctor mind share is important to do so, the companies use their medical representatives and the companies do see that the reps spend quality seconds with the doctor .Winning is important for companies, Medical representatives with mobile technology do help in enhanced physician interactions which ultimately leads to the success of the company. The tools measure the reach, coverage, call frequency and call rate automatically using mobile technology which help in determining and improving the performance of representatives.

**2. Digital Marketing Trends**

Pharmaceutical Industry at its infancy in internet marketing. Organizations need to implement a wide range of channels so as to engage customers in a more personalized way. Digital Marketing trends that Pharmaceutical organizations need to embrace include:

### 2.1. Smart Phones

Business reports indicate that globally, smart phones play an important role when integrated with marketing campaigns. India, the second largest smart phone market globally, is expected to over 650 million in the next four years, a study by networking solutions giant Cisco . Pharmaceutical organisations need to optimize their online content for mobile devices as user base accessing the internet via smart phones increased. Smart phones has played a significant role in increasing physicians and patient dependency on online resources –doctors and patients own smart phones and are using them to supplement their desktop or laptop computer usage.” Also, mobile devices help physicians and patients to access additional resources regarding the disease, drugs and its after effects and many at multiple points throughout their day, even to at the point of care. Health Apps give a greater access to medical information, Pandemic and epidemic prevention will be more effective.

### 2.2. Mobile Strategies to Develop an App

It is very important for organisations to develop a strategy for their drugs as there is a huge competition, marketers have four ways to do so

- 1 Architect a Mobile Application
- 2 Participate directly in updating the information in the app
- 3 Sponsor or be associated with the community (Physicians and Patients)
- 4 Supply the Physicians and Patients with information, Observe and discuss in relation to the Products

### 2.3. Social Media

Pharmaceutical Organizations are focusing on engaging with customers through social media to offer real-time interactions. Social media acts as highly interactive platform by which individuals and communities help organizations to reach out a vast pool of potential customers by supplying them with medical and campaign-related information. Face book, Twitter, Wikepedia, You tube are the organisations with large number of user base and viewership. These organisations are highly informative and capable of detailing the patents regarding their illness. The number of active users has increased through better interaction by building trust among the physician and patient.

Social media strategies Marketers have five main ways to harness them:

1. Identify and architect their own communities
2. Participating directly within the community
3. Sponsoring or be in associated with specific communities
4. Supplying community participants with the relevant information
5. Observing, learning and modifying from how participants discuss and behave in relation to their products.

### 2.4. Content Marketing

Content Marketing as “Customer engagement, acquisition and retention with the delivery of unique, personalized, and relevant messages through identified digital channels like news, video, whitepapers, e-books, infographics, case studies, how-to guides, Q&A articles, photos, etc. Apart from selling it focuses on communicating with customers and prospects. The idea is to inspire business and loyalty from buyers by delivering ‘consistent, ongoing valuable information. The way to get popularised through content marketing is just only through monitoring the performance of your content .You tube, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr still play a greater role in content marketing.

## 3. Content Marketing Strategies

No social campaign is perfect from the get-go. Always tactics just don’t work. So, formulation of a planned strategy is essential.

- 1 Study your business and plan for content marketing
- 2 Understand your physicians and patients personas to built a relation
- 3 Describe the brand, channel plan and measure the result

### 3.1. Search Engine Marketing (SEM) / Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Google, Bing ,Yahoo are the major players of the industry broken-down to two segments as free and paid services focusing on productivity, relevance and value advertising in enhancing the visibility of their products and services. Search engine marketing is a broad term which has its focus on search engine optimization.SEM has an unbelievable return on investment (ROI) and has huge potential for Lead generation, increased sales revenue, unprecedented brand attentiveness and better corporate visibility.

### 3.2. Search Engine Marketing Strategies to Optimise Return on Investment

- 1 Define the interest of your targeted audience through content strategy and target keyword discovery
- 2 Categorise keyword research
- 3 Finding gaps and opportunities
- 4 Define and learn from your competitors
- 5 Customised SEO strategies and recommendation
- 6 Prioritise and summarise

### 3.3. Advanced Analytics

A large volume of customer behavioural data is being generated by increasing adoption of digital channels. Advanced actionable analytics can help organizations define targeted marketing strategies. Pharmaceuticals organisations utilise the data in areas of manufacturing, clinical trials, sales and marketing, supply chain and logistics, patient care quality and improvement. With the evolution of storage technology the cost of storing data has been consistently decreased. The huge IT infrastructure necessary for implementing solutions was being relieved by Cloud computing technology. Organizations are no longer worried about storing huge data sets, but rather, expect to undertake advanced analytics. By using larger data sets Companies recognize that they can generate better insights regarding their customers and partners.

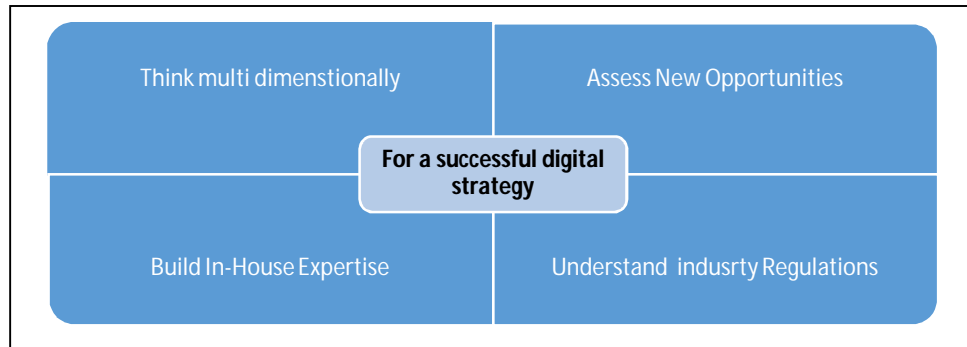


Figure 3: Formulation of a digital strategy through

- 1 Identification of the needs of the physicians and patients, then investing in the processes that ensure long term relationships.
- 2 Assessing the new opportunities in the healthcare system that has a potential to get back the investments invested.
- 3 For consistent results encouraging in house expertise is very important which even saves time and cost.
- 4 To avoid the issues of infringement against the companies understanding digital regulations is necessary for successful implementation of the strategy.

### 4. Conclusion

The paper indicates that necessary advancements in Indian pharmaceuticals have the capacity to transform healthcare. New digital marketing trends will allow people to be more proactive in taking care of their health and in assuring their well-being, especially in India. These technologies promise to improve outcomes and cut costs, while also improving the efficiency of the healthcare industry. They can help bring quality care to people and make them ready to fight against deadly epidemics. In parts of the developing world, where people are currently willing to transform integrating new mobile devices and services into healthcare may be easiest

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