

# Marketing/Promotional Initiatives by Pharmaceutical Companies-”Doctor’s Perspective”

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## Abstract

The study was aimed to obtain the current perception of the different specialities of doctors about the promotional/engagement initiatives established and implemented by the Pharmaceutical firms. The objective was to understand the need gaps and doctor’s preferences in the area of promotional/engagement initiatives, by conducting face-to-face interviews. Analysis of Sales force/ Sales Representatives effectiveness was also a part of the project. This was an attempt to understand the relationship between the sales representatives and the physicians, which weights to influence the prescription generation. The preference of the physician towards the traits of a Sales Representative where identified. The behavioural and professional characteristics of the representatives were the area of focus. This feedback was employed to improve the approach by the representatives towards the Physicians.

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*Index terms*— e-detailing, Pharmaceutical promotion.

## 1 Introduction

The paper was aimed to understand the need gaps and the potential opportunities that are available in the marketing/promotional initiatives for the medical fraternity. This was done by conducting a primary market research which involved face-to-face interviews with the physicians of different specialities. 11 specialities of doctors were chosen to have holistic and a representative result/feedback. Along with the initiatives the doctors were asked to give feedback on the performance and effectiveness of sales representatives, where the doctors preference of how sales reps should approach the doctors could be mapped. Feedback on the digital initiatives, the technology based advancements in the engagement approaches by the pharmaceutical companies.

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## 2 Literature Review

Many countries have measures in place to limit advertising by pharmaceutical companies. In India, the direct to user/consumer advertisement i.e. ”Patient” is not allowed according to the law. Hence the promotion and advertisements are channelized towards the doctors, as they have a direct relationship with the patients. The Pharmaceutical firms communicate and send the message about their products to the Patients Via Doctors. This is accounted as ”Marketing to healthcare providers”.

? Marketing to health-care providers takes three main forms: activity by pharmaceutical sales representatives, provision of drug samples, and sponsoring continuing medical education (CME).

? The pattern has evolved witnessing a shift from these traditional initiatives to the new age digital initiatives. ? However, a blend of traditional practices and the newer initiatives pertaining to the technology and advancement is the most practised and followed in the pharmaceutical system. ? Pharmaceutical companies have their distinct customers: ”DOCTORS”, hence every pharmaceutical firm engages the physicians with a host of promotional tools.

? The basic intent behind these tools is to build a long term relationship with the doctors in order to ensure continuous business and support from the doctors towards their firm. ? While the companies make efforts and positively influence doctors, such initiatives highly encourage doctors to prescribe their drugs marketed by their sales representatives. Interpretation:

45 ? From the above picture it can be inferred that, Educational/Academic initiatives are the most preferred  
46 initiative accounting to 88% (Ranked 1) and Patient Engagement initiatives are perceived as most important by  
47 12% of the doctors. The Consultancy services stand at 10% followed by Brand promotional tools are ranked  
48 most important by 4% of the doctors and finally Special services are marked as important by 3% of the doctors.  
49 Which initiative influences your prescription behavior the most (Kindly tick the most relevant option)?

### 3 Interpretation:

51 While in terms of usefulness of the initiative, again Educational initiatives and Patient Engagement appear  
52 to be most influential initiatives. 79% of the physicians consider the educational/ academic initiatives the most  
53 useful and thereby play a role in influencing the prescription and 43% of physicians consider patient engagement  
54 initiatives most useful. The Consultancy services are considered as most useful initiative by 12% of the doctors.  
55 The Special Interpretation:

56 ? Product literature was perceived as Clinical updates: regarding the drugs and studies on it about various  
57 types of reactions, efficacy etc. The Clinical updates (51%) are considered most useful to recall brand name,  
58 followed by 25% of Visual aid/e-detailing. 19% of Product samples, 5% of Clinical brand reminders.

59 Feedback on Consultancy to Pharma Companies 5. In Consultancy to Pharma Companies given a choice,  
60 which initiative would you prefer the most? (Rank in an order of 1 to 3 for each).

### 4 Interpretation:

62 For Consultancy services, PMS (41%) most preferred followed by Advisory Board meetings (40%).

63 Feedback on Special Services: 6. Doctor, amongst the various Special Services which initiative is the most  
64 preferred by you? (Rank in an order of 1 to 5 for each). Interpretation: 68% Doctors prefer gifts of clinical  
65 utility, followed by 14% of them preferring planned tours and vacations. 8% of them prefer Gifts for general  
66 utility. 6% each for Gifts for special occasions and festive occasions.

### 5 40%

68 Feedback on Sales Representatives 7. Amongst the various factors to assess the sales reps, which factors do you  
69 consider most important (rank in an order of 1 to 6 for each)?

### 6 Interpretation:

71 The doctors perceive Communication skills (43%) followed by Product knowledge (26%) as most important  
72 factors to assess sales representatives. 20% of the physicians perceive regularity of visits the most important.

73 9% of them expressed that scientific knowledge as a important parameter. 2% building customer relations  
74 and 2% problem solving ability. consultancy agreements should be done in order to engage and attract the  
75 interested physicians. 6. E-detailing being the preferred medium, improve the proficiency of the sales reps for  
76 e-detailing. 7. Mobile apps for doctors can be launched with regular drug updates, apps with access to complete  
77 drug information and access to latest journals.

## 7 Section VIII: Feedback on

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Figure 1:

Marketing/Promotional Initiatives by Pharmaceutical Companies - "Doctor's Perspective"  
 CME'S attended per month by the physicians:

		0	9%						
	Textbooks, Subscription of journals, research articles	1		57%	44%	15%	7%	7%	4%
	CMEs/Doctor Group Meetings		19%		49%		24%		4%
									1%
									1%
									1%
	International Conferences	9%	18%	10%	12%	22%	7%	7%	13%
		2		29%					
Year	6% 1% 3% More than National/Regional Conferences 2	9%	18%	16%	32%	13%	12%	22%	
2020		10%	13%		13%	19%			
				18%					

44 79% 58% Very helpful 24% ? Among the Patient Engagement initiatives, Patient Awareness programs

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10% (41%) are considered most important to build connect/influence the patients. The Disease detect  
 Digital/social media campaigns have bagged 6% each.

> 6%  
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Marketing/Promotional Initiatives by Pharmaceutical Companies - "Doctor's Perspective" Marketing/Promotional

12. What are your expectations from a knowledge sharing app in your clinical practice?

Gifts of clinical utility

68%

Expectations from Knowledge sharing

8% No time for mobile applications/Not prone to use apps 44% 14% General Utility Gifts 18% 4% 36% 33%

6% Apps with regular updates on Drug 21% 12% Gifts for Special Occasions ?

14% 16% Apps with Drug Details: MOA, side effects, contraindications 6% 36% 6% Planning for Domestic ?

26% 20% 15% 42% 12% 3% 9% 2% 2% 3% 3% 26% 8% 24% Rank1 Rank2 Rank3 21% 6% 6% 22% Rank1 Rank2 Rank3



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