

Medical Practitioners Prescribes Specific Product

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Abstract:

Customer orientation has become the winning business paradigm of our era for that customer should be viewed and treated as a strategic asset of the firm. Pharmaceutical companies are seeking ways to establish close and sustainable relation with customers. Medical practitioners are the key player in pharmaceutical industry. Medical representatives are developing relationship with doctor's i.e. Medical practitioners. This paper will talk about opinion of medical practitioners about reasons for prescribing product of specific company as well as Services and Facilities received by medical practitioners.

Keywords: Medical Practitioners, Pharmaceutical Industry, Relationship, Medical Representative, Buying behavior.

Introduction :

In marketing, customer relationship management highlights the final customer of the product and in pharmaceutical marketing patient may be the final customer. But sales representatives are developing the more relation with Doctors, stockiest and retailers. Since, Doctors prescribes the medicines of particular company, Stockiest and Retailers play important role in distribution channels at the same time retailers can increase sale by communicating with nearest doctors about

scheme or by substitute the prescription. For maintaining relations with customers companies are investing a crore of rupees by offering valuable gifts, articles as well as tours. So, there is need to study the actual reasons why medical practitioners are prescribing specific product. Several studies are undertaken for the analyzing behavior of prescribers some of this are mentioned in review of literature. In this paper researcher had taken opinion of medical practitioners about reasons for prescribing product of specific company as well as Services and Facilities Received by medical Practitioners.

Review of Literature:**Physician and Payer's Behavior**

As the pharmaceutical companies are more focuses on marketing strategy. There is need to analyze the behavior of physicians as well as the payers, some authors are commented on physician and payers behavior. Influence of payers and patients is increasing on prescribing decision whereas physician's influence is decreasing (Guenther, 2008). According to (Ravindra, 2009) in a detail-

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intensive industry, segmentation based on the knowledge of physicians' prescription behavior does improve the accuracy of sales forecasts. Physicians are satisfied with physician-targeted communication strategies and greatly value two-way interactive approaches, though they have significantly differing attitudes across cultures towards the likely impacts of DTC advertising, with Greek physicians the most opposed. Planned value creation for manufacturers and consumers through DTC advertising conflicts with the value delivery for the intermediary physician, which delays the expansion of this advertising policy (Reast et.al, 2011).

Perception about Relationship:

As the pharmaceutical business is depends upon the prescribers, distributors and actual payers i.e. patients. Everyone takes efforts to develop and maintain relationship. But it is essential to analyze the perception of stakeholder about relationship. Relationship marketing is one of the primary drivers of sales in the pharmaceutical industry and its important to determine how physicians perceive pharmaceutical sales representative. Corporate image is a function of the signals that an organization transmits to its various stakeholder groups (Lundstrom et.al., 2004). According to (Srivastava, 2011) perception will influence relationships. Relationships are built by a combination of individual value systems, personal characteristics, and a company's product and image. Researcher discussed that physically attractive people perceived differently from unattractive people. Attractive individuals have been shown to receive more positive attributions of liking and expertise than less attractive applicants. If a pharmaceutical sales representative has a good attitude, is friendly, nice and pleasant to be around, physicians will hold positive perceptions about that individual (Lundstrom et.al., 2004). (Srivastava, 2011) discussed relationship marketing activities if touching an emotional cord can aid in the marketing of pharmaceutical products. It also assists in changing

perception of the company, as positive perception leads to an incremental increase in prescriptions.

It means perception about relationship is depends on many factors. Physicians are not only considering the detailing of product, product quality but the physical attractiveness of representative also affect.

Research Methodology:

The study is descriptive inferential in nature, which describes the existing customer relationship management in the pharmaceutical industry. Inferential approach is used to derive the data from samples. Data about demographic profile of respondents, different basis used for developing and maintaining the relationship, preferences, expectations, segmentation criteria, conceptual data on CRM, Segmentation, relationship marketing etc. was a need of study. The data and information collected by using Primary Sources and Secondary Sources. The primary data regarding demographic profile, different basis used for developing and maintaining the relationship, preferences, expectations, segmentation criteria were collected through Structured Schedules. 103 medical practitioners are selected as sample for the study. The data was entered in Ms-Excel with data validation check. The data was further validated with the help of SPSS. The filtered and validated data was subjected to test of reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. Data was classified and presented in tables. Data Analysis was done using percentage, measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion.

Reasons for Prescribing Product

Medical representative using various tools to motivate physician to prescribe and sale the product. Researcher has taken the opinions of medical practitioner about reasons behind prescribing particular product of company. Researcher has articulated 48 parameters which are considered as tool for marketing of product. The data on 5 point likert scale has collected and analyzed by using mean, standard deviation and ranks.

Table: 1**Opinion of Medical Practitioner on Prescribing Product of Any Company**

(n=103)

Sr	Parameter	Mean	S.D.	Rank
1	Product by Reputed branded company	4.15	1.08	4
2	Unique combination of molecule	3.88	0.96	7
3	Combination as per case	3.94	0.97	6
4	Medical trials taken on different patient groups	3.82	0.99	11
5	Breadth of the product line offered	3.55	0.94	23
6	Product quality offered	4.23	0.94	3
7	Ease of product use for patient	4.06	0.96	5
8	Available in different form (Tablet, Syrup, Injection)	4.48	0.79	1
9	Available in different Size/Quantity (100ml, 200ml)	4.26	0.84	2
10	Price less than other available brands	3.73	0.88	14
11	Price as per quality of Product	3.78	0.90	12
12	More margin on MRP	3.14	1.12	38
13	Scheme given by Company, Stockiest	3.45	1.06	27
14	Ease of placing orders	3.68	0.93	16
15	On-time delivery of products	3.83	0.90	10
16	Accuracy of invoicing	3.46	0.89	26
17	Free samples/Drug Sample	3.61	0.95	20
18	Offer Pens and Pads	3.31	1.21	34
19	Offer Medical Books	3.62	1.01	19
20	Offer Other Book (Novel, Biography etc.)	3.40	1.17	30
21	Offer Other Stationery Materials	3.22	1.06	36
22	Financial assistance for conducting social activity	3.39	1.09	31
23	Financial assistance for purchasing any medical equipment	3.23	1.09	35
24	Financial assistance to Conduct Research	3.19	1.03	37
25	Railway/Airline tickets or Financial assistance for Travel	3.02	1.10	40
26	Sponsorship to an academic event	3.10	1.03	39
27	Conference/Travel Expenses,	3.09	1.05	39
28	Passes/tickets to nonacademic events like movies and exhibitions	2.78	0.96	46
29	Sports tournament fees/ tickets	2.98	1.06	41
30	Perceived value of the gift to patients as well as its monetary value.	2.90	0.90	43
31	Offers Electronic Appliances (T.V.,Laptop,A.C. etc.)	2.76	0.98	47
32	Offers Home Utensils	2.81	0.98	45
33	Dinner out	2.86	1.02	44
34	Spouse meal at Dinner out	2.93	1.05	42
35	Greetings on Birthday/ Anniversary /Festivals	3.38	1.06	32
36	The overall value receives from Medical rep./Company	3.44	1.00	29

Sr	Parameter	Mean	S.D.	Rank
37	Overall service efficiency receives from Medical rep./Company	3.63	0.86	18
38	Relationship maintain by Medical rep./Company	3.77	0.89	13
39	Ease of using catalogue	3.38	0.90	32
40	Product training provided	3.45	0.90	27
41	Attitude of specialists	3.58	1.01	22
42	Technical ability of specialists	3.85	1.05	9
43	Rapid solutions of customers problems	3.64	1.04	17
44	Availability of sales consultants/ specialists	3.59	0.91	21
45	Frequency of contact of sales consultants/specialists	3.50	0.93	24
46	Product knowledge of sales consultants/specialists	3.88	0.86	7
47	Ease of contacting customer service staff	3.69	0.95	15
48	Convincing power	3.48	1.05	25

Source: Field Data

Above table reveals that product available in different form (Tablet, Syrup, Injection) and available in different Size/Quantity (100ml, 200ml) were more affected on prescription behavior as having mean value 4.28 and 4.26 secures 1st & 2nd rank respectively. Followed to this practitioner prefer product quality, product by reputed brand, ease of product use for patient having ranks 3rd, 4th and 5th respectively. 36 variables receive mean value in between 3 to 4 it shows that practitioners are agree on these 36 variables are responsible for prescribing product. Remaining 6 variable received mean value less than 3 it means that this variables are not that much responsible for prescribing product the variables are sports tournament fees/ tickets, spouse meal at dinner out, perceived value of the gift to patients as well as its monetary value, dinner out, offers home utensils, passes/tickets to nonacademic events like movies and exhibitions, offers electronic appliances (T.V., Laptop, A.C. etc.).

The detail analysis of aforesaid 48 parameters has undertaken in an independent section in this thesis using multivariate technique of analysis i.e. factor analysis.

After analysis it can conclude that as per the medical practitioners opinion product available in different form (Tablet, Syrup, Injection) and different size/quantity (100ml, 200ml) as well as quality more affect on prescribing product of any

company. Medical practitioners are also given preference to product by reputed branded company and ease of product use for patient. As per the Medical practitioners opinion offering electronic appliances, passes/tickets to nonacademic events like movies and exhibitions, home utensils, dinner out for individual as well as with spouse are not affecting on sale of particular product. Hence, it is found that Medical practitioners are more focus on product quality and its specification than promotional items.

Services and Facilities Received by medical Practitioners

Medical representatives have been using various tools to motivate physician to prescribe and sale the product. Researcher assess the opinions of medical practitioner regarding services and facilities received and the extent of satisfaction after receiving the services and facilities. Researcher has facilitated 17 parameters which are considered as tool for marketing of product. The scale for received level ranges 1 for very poor and 5 for very good, for satisfaction level 1 for strongly dissatisfied and 5 for strongly satisfied. Mean, standard deviation and rank has been used for data analysis, the spearman's rank correlation also has calculated at 0.01 significance level to check the relationship between Services and Facilities Received by medical Practitioners.

Table: 2
Opinions of Medical Practitioner about Services and Facilities Received and Satisfaction after Receiving by them.

(n=103)

Sr.	Parameter	Received			Satisfaction		
		Mean	S.D.	Rank	Mean	S.D.	Rank
1	Schemes by Company/ Medical Representative	3.73	1.04	3	3.64	0.99	7
2	On time Delivery	3.77	0.84	1	3.81	0.94	1
3	Free Samples/ Drug Samples	3.55	1.04	7	3.55	0.94	10
4	Offering Pen	3.44	0.97	11	3.66	1.08	5
5	Offering Prescription Pad	3.64	0.91	5	3.61	1.07	8
6	Offering Stationary Material	3.51	0.97	9	3.38	1.04	16
7	Offering Books	3.41	1.03	12	3.52	1.01	11
8	Financial assistance for Research	3.09	0.91	15	3.40	1.13	13
9	Sponsorships to conduct academic events	3.01	0.93	16	3.31	1.05	17
10	Sponsorships to conduct campaigning for patients	2.99	1.01	17	3.43	1.08	12
11	Sponsorships to attain important conference for enhancement of knowledge	3.10	0.98	14	3.40	1.00	13
12	Instruments required for Daily practices & for to give good quality of service to patient	3.36	1.01	13	3.56	1.02	9
13	Regular calls/Meetings by Medical Rep.	3.50	0.98	10	3.68	1.00	4
14	Regular follow up and communication . of requirement by Medical Rep	3.69	0.92	4	3.70	0.96	2
15	Greetings on festivals/Birthday/Functions	3.53	0.96	8	3.39	0.94	15
16	Customized Product/service as per Requirements	3.62	0.94	6	3.65	1.05	6
17	Regular reminders of brands	3.74	0.99	2	3.70	0.96	2
Spearman's Correlation Coefficient		.691					
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.002					
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

Source: Field Data

Entire parameters of services and facilities found received by physician since mean values ranges from 2.99 to 3.77 which is less than 4 but near to 3 it means that practitioners agree on that they are receiving promotional material. Samples were further asked about satisfaction on service and facilities reveals mean score ranging from 3.81 to

3.31 which shows that all samples are satisfied with variables standard deviation is ranging from 0.94 to 1.13 which shows little inconsistency in the opinions about satisfaction.

Above table revels that there are different services and promotional items offered by medical

representatives to medical practitioners. As per the medical practitioners opinion on time delivery is very prompt by representative having mean value 3.77 with 0.84 Standard deviation and secures 1st rank. Followed to this practitioners received regular reminders of brands having mean value 3.74 with 0.99 standard deviation and secure 2nd rank. As mean value of Sponsorships to conduct campaigning for patients is 2.99 having 17th rank which shows that practitioners are not receiving this service by medical representatives.

The table also depicts the satisfaction of medical practitioners on services offered by medical representatives. Samples are satisfied with on time delivery having mean value 3.81 and secures 1st rank. Followed to this practitioners satisfied with regular follow up and communication of requirement by medical representative and regular reminders of brands having same mean value 3.70 and secure 2nd rank. Samples are not satisfied as compare to other variables with sponsorships to conduct academic events having mean value 3.31 and secure 17th rank.

The spearman's rank correlation coefficient is 0.691 at 0.01 significant level which shows the positive correlation between received and satisfaction level.

Findings:

As per the medical practitioners opinion offering electronic appliances, passes/tickets to nonacademic events like movies and exhibitions, home utensils, dinner out for individual as well as with spouse are not affecting on sale of particular product. Hence, it is found that medical practitioners have more focus on product quality and its specification than promotional items. Similar kind of finding drawn by Vishal et.al. (2010) that most doctors do accept gifts from pharmaceutical companies. The gifts reported to be accepted most frequently were of relatively lower cost like pens and\ pads. Certain gifts like direct cash and passes or tickets to non academic events were accepted by very few of them and were

considered unethical by most young graduates. As well as author also mention pharmaceutical companies and physicians have an interdependent relation. When physicians accept gifts from a drug company, there may be a conflict of interest between their duty to prescribe effective and affordable treatment to the patient and any obligation that they may feel to prescribe that company's drugs. The pharmaceutical industry has often been blamed for bribing doctors, the blame cannot be entirely apportioned to them as doctors do not necessarily view acceptance of gifts as unethical.

Medical practitioner are the part of prescriber so more agree on receiving on time delivery, regular reminders of brands, schemes by company/ medical representative regular follow up and communication of requirement by medical representatives. Similarly Melissa Clark (2011) mention that single most effective way that pharmaceutical companies can influence physician decisions is through the use of detailing by Pharmaceutical Sales Representative (PSRs). But medical practitioner do not agree on receiving sponsorships to conduct campaigning for patients, sponsorships to conduct academic events and financial assistance for research. medical practitioner are satisfied on delivery on time, regular follow up and communication of requirement by medical representatives, regular reminders of brands but less satisfied with sponsorships to conduct academic events. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient value between Services and facilities received is 0.691 at 0.01 level of significance. Signifies strong positive relationship between Services and facilities received.

Conclusion:

After the study it can be concluded that, as medical practitioner are the part of prescriber so more agree on receives on time delivery, regular reminders of brands, schemes by company/ medical representative regular follow up and communication of requirement by medical representatives. But medical practitioner are not agree on receiving sponsorships to conduct campaigning for patients, sponsorships to conduct

academic events and financial assistance for research. medical practitioner are satisfied on delivery on time, regular follow up and communication of requirement by medical representatives, regular reminders of brands but less satisfied with sponsorships to conduct academic events. The spearman's rank correlation coefficient shows the positive correlation between received and satisfaction level. Medical practitioners are satisfied on the services and motivation given by companies.

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