

**ROLE OF SHORT TERM CAMPAIGNS IN BOOSTING UP SALES, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON INDIAN PHARMACEUTICAL MARKET**Aravinda Pai<sup>1\*</sup>, G.K.Sudhakar<sup>2</sup>, Venkatesh Kamath<sup>3</sup>, Vasudev Pai<sup>4</sup><sup>1,2</sup>Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Manipal College of Pharmaceutical sciences, Manipal University, Manipal, India<sup>3</sup> Department of Pharmaceutical Biotechnology, Manipal College of Pharmaceutical sciences, Manipal University, Manipal, India<sup>4</sup> Department of Pharmacognosy, Manipal College of Pharmaceutical sciences, Manipal University, Manipal, India**\*Corresponding author e-mail:** [pai.aravind@gmail.com](mailto:pai.aravind@gmail.com)**ABSTRACT**

In recent years, strategic marketing has played an important role in the process of pharmaceutical marketing. Due to increase in the number of pharmaceutical companies as well as rapidly growing product portfolio, it is essential to look for innovative strategies periodically to ensure competitiveness in the market place. Strategies may look different for different segments of markets because some segments may depend only on concept selling. Nowadays, particularly in the Indian pharmaceutical market, we see more than 100 brands competing for a single drug and price also playing an important role. Since patient is an indirect customer for a pharmaceutical company, it is the discretion of a physician to select particular brand for a drug (1). In this scenario, short term campaigns can be effective in brand conversions and to boost up sales. In the present article a brief overview will be given on short term campaigns conducted by different pharmaceutical companies and the output in the form of incremental sales.

**Key words:** Pharmaceutical market, Strategy, Sales, Brand, Competition**INTRODUCTION**

The Indian Pharmaceutical Industry (IPI) is globally the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest in terms of volume and 13<sup>th</sup> largest in terms of value. The total market size of Rs. 1,233 billion includes domestic consumption market of Rs.600 billion (contributing ~48.6%) and the exports market being Rs. 633 billion (contributing ~51.4%).The Indian Pharmaceutical industry is highly fragmented with about 24,000 players (around 330 in the organised sector) (2). The top rated first ten companies make up for more than a third of the market. The Indian pharma industry (IPM) grew by 27 % year after year in 2012 to 630 billion. It accounts for about 1.4% turnover of the world's pharma industry in value terms and 10% in volume terms. (3). Since a large amount of players are competing for a single product, the organization with

outstanding sales force as well as strategic marketing team can definitely win over the race. Traditional pharma marketers believe that the major marketing strategy is to recruit Medical sales representatives and focus on monitoring their daily visit to the listed doctors, call related parameters, and POB (personal order booking). By this process, each medical representative is supposed to make 10 doctor visits, 5 chemist visits and weekly stockist meeting. This was believed to be enough to get the desired business over a long period of time. At present, the global scenario is changing and right strategy at perfect time is required to sustain in the competitive market.

**Strategies followed by different Pharmaceutical companies:** In this review our focus will be more on the short term campaigns and their immediate effect on secondary sales in a sales officer territory.

### 1. Out Patient department campaigns (OPD campaigns)

This strategy is usually applied in hospitals where a fairly large number of patients regularly visit the OPD. The campaign can be planned on the day in which maximum patient flow is recorded, this requires little background work and information on number of patients on each day which can be obtained from reception counter or admission counters.

#### Inputs required

- a) Pet bottles of soft drinks (100ml-500ml) (select standard brands like **coke, Pepsi, sprite**, etc.)
- b) Brand reminder cards
- c) Individual brand stickers with attractive design

#### Strategic planning of the campaign:

It is the responsibility of the sales officer to select a particular day for this campaign, so that maximum output can be anticipated. Before the campaign day, the area manager should accompany the sales officer (area manager can plan his monthly work on these days). Before the OPD starts, the sales officer has to keep the bottles representing the brand stickers on the table along with brand reminder card, containing request for 5 prescriptions for that particular product after making it available in pharmacy. During the OPD time, the sales officer should make visit to the OPD along with manager after taking survey from the pharmacy. They have to thank doctors if any prescriptions were received, if not should request for prescriptions for that particular brand.

#### Expected outcomes:

Early morning brand reminder will have impact on the doctor's mind throughout the day. If doctor thinks of writing some product, the chances of writing the brand which is displayed in front of him is more.

### 2. Early morning NEWS PAPER campaign

Even with the greater advances in the field of media and broadcasting, newspapers still play a crucial role. It has become a habit to read newspapers along with morning tea. The psychology says that whatever we see or listen in the early morning will remain in our memory till evening. Based on this concept early morning newspaper campaign has been designed.

#### Strategic planning of the campaign

This campaign can be planned for a month or for a week depending upon the practicability of campaign respective to the area. The papers can be supplied either to the home or to the clinic, delivering to the home will have more advantages. Before the

campaign execution, the sales officer should collect the detailed home address of the doctors whom he wants to include in the campaign. The next step is to search for a newspaper vendor who supplies the newspapers to these areas. Sometimes multiple vendors are required in the case doctors are living in the different areas of a same city.

#### Inputs required

Newspapers from standard publishers (Ex- The Hindu, The Times of India etc.), or local language papers can be chosen, Brand stickers (enough size to cover title of the newspaper), vendor charges are the basic requirements. On the starting day of the campaign, the sales officer should hand over brand stickers to the vendor. The officer should give instructions like how to stick and how to supply. It is the sole responsibility of the sales officer to monitor proper supply of newspapers to the expected destination. On the other hand, sales officer should make daily surveys for the entire period of the campaign and should report the incremental sales data daily to the respected sales manager.

#### Expected outcomes:

If the newspapers were delivered on regular basis for the speculated period, there will be improvement of secondary sales of the product targeted. The regular supply of newspaper with brand stickers will create an impact on doctor's mind so that doctor will readily take up the product. The day new prescription is generated, the officer should meet the doctor and handover thank you card with the brand reminder. This campaign can be used not only for brand conversion but also for conversion from one molecule to other.

### 3. Conducting regular CME (Continuing Medical Education programmes)

Continuing medical education is a programme, which is regularly conducted by local IMA chapters (Indian Medical Association). The programme includes presentation, seminars by expert Physicians in their specialized areas. This programme will be particularly useful for general practitioners.

### 4. Conducting free medical check-up camps

This is a strategy followed by a large number of pharmaceutical companies. This activity can be planned either in rural area or in small city towns. The activity should be planned in partnership with either a government hospital set up or a private set up. It is the responsibility of the company to make necessary arrangement for the health check-up and to provide free samples. This campaign will help to

build up reputation with doctors and free samples will be like brand reminders for the doctors.

### Role of product management team in design and monitoring the strategic execution

The Product Management team is one of the frontline teams of the Marketing wing in a Pharmaceutical Company. Product Management, which is responsible for the overall marketing strategy for a specific brand, is responsible for the return on investment (4). Brand building is a main reason for carrying out the above campaigns or strategies, brand building will help the company to sustain its sales in the competitive market (5). Brand is a name that will remain in the consumers mind as a fixed set of tangible, that is rational and intangible, that is not rational, benefits(6). Marketing departments are investing their resources to get the product name in

such a way that it is easy to recall the brand name (7). Brand building is the responsibility of both product management segment as well as hard core sales force, they go hand by hand.

### CONCLUSION

A pharmaceutical company should always bring innovative marketing strategy in order to survive in the competitive market like India. In the present article a few of the useful campaigns are discussed. The strategy remains different for different market segments and product portfolio. It is the responsibility of product management team to decide what campaign has to be done in which area and also timing of the campaign. Finally good strategies always results in incremental sales, provided it is implemented properly.

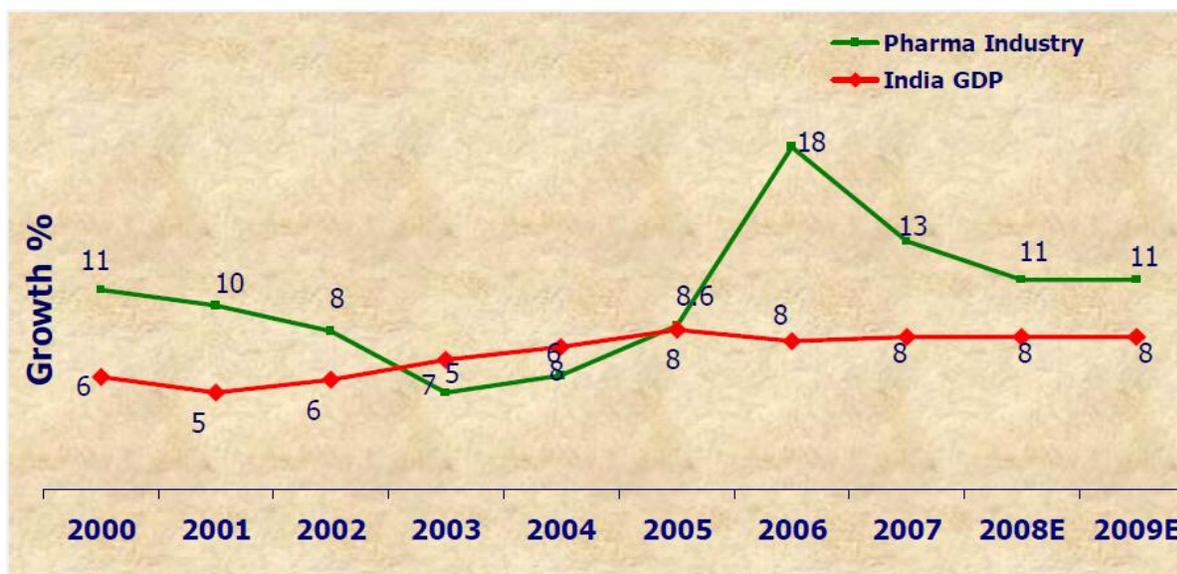


Fig 1. Prescription growth in the Indian pharmaceutical market over the years (2000-2009)

Source: ORG-IMS retail audit (2010)

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