



Building an impactful brand

Market aligned communication is key to ensuring that customers receive the right message about your product's values and attributes in as impactful a way as possible. And the best way to maximise the impact of your brand is to select the best possible communication agencies. As Sergio Zyman, former vice president of marketing at Coca-Cola, puts it: 'Strategy is your job. The job of your advertising agencies is to communicate it effectively!'¹

Planning the deployment of your core offering in a market aligned fashion falls under the banner of impact marketing. Take Pfizer's Lipitor which, despite being fifth to market, went on to become market leader and the world's number one drug, with annual sales in the region of \$9.5 billion.

Of course, part of the interactive philosophy of impact marketing is that – to be market aligned – we must have carried out a segmentation exercise to define the target market and customer segments. In other words, we need to target customers to maximise our impact and we need to think about how our offering could affect opportunity in the given segment, by creating significant differentiation through branding.

So how do we define our target market and customer segments? As marketing expert Philip Kotler has observed: 'Some companies have moved to customer segments of one, namely individuals. More companies are guilty of under segmentation than over segmentation. They imagine more high potential prospects than really exist and the antidote is to divide the market into serious levels of potential.'²

Most marketeers would agree that, having constructed the segments, each should be rated in terms of relative attractiveness or potential value, as well as by qualitative judgement! We then need to turn the product features into rational and emotional offerings that will lead to an impactful brand!

Obviously, we should start this thinking as early as possible in the drug development process, probably even outlining the key brand shaping ideas as soon as the New Chemical Entity is discovered. Any marketing or pre-

marketing segmentation conclusions should be incorporated into the clinical development plan to ensure that the evidence is produced to enable the required claims database to be constructed.

As the diagram shows, an impactful brand consists of the functional values of the offering, what it does and the rational benefit of the molecule. It's the added or expressive values from outside the basic molecule's mode of action and basic physiological impact that create the brand.

One example is GlaxoSmithKline's long acting beta-agonist, Serevent, for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Much of the communication, having established the rational clinical benefit, has been around how the brand made the patient 'feel' they had a new lease of life. Crucially, it enabled the target doctor to see this new quality of life through the patient's eyes. So, Serevent for COPD has been successful in emotional terms and has generated brand loyalty with both doctor and patient, which in turn drove a much-improved sales performance. And if that isn't impact marketing, what is?

Performance management

But, if we are to have impact marketing, how are we going to measure performance against objectives? Certainly it follows that the most successful impact marketeers have systems that track progress and enable strategy and tactics to be adjusted as appropriate. Peaks and troughs caused by sell-ins, competitor activity or promotional spend should be picked out. Trends should be isolated and cyclical patterns or seasonality should be identified.

Clearing the impact monitoring process should enable an understanding about what has caused each pattern. In its simplest sense, these could be internal factors within the company, such as spend on advertising, public relations, extra salesforces or even availability of stock. External factors, such as competitor activities, new drug class launches, the impact of generics, parallel importing, key opinion leaders' views within the clinical and NHS environments, and NICE guidance, may also be enhancing or limiting our impact. ▶

In his last article, Roy Carlisle of PharmaSolutions explored the field of impact marketing. This time, he looks at the role of communications in building impact for your brand.

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Crucially, through our performance management process, we are able to track the likelihood of our best, most likely and worst case scenarios, and we can explain the difference between reality and any variation in our sales forecasts. Indeed, Kotler asserts: 'Marketing is becoming more based on information than on brute sales power.'²

The critical success factor is all about gaining customer insight. We need to stay awake and anticipate what is likely to happen. And have contingency plans in place!

In fact, as I mentioned in a previous article,³ research into customer relationship management in the life sciences sector, involving sixty executives from twenty-eight top global companies, concluded that they are achieving some early tactical improvements in sales and marketing effectiveness, but still have some way to go to realise the full strategic benefits. The next phase will see a transition to a data management and analytically driven system that will enable 'micro segmentation of customers' and in turn will drive 'reciprocal value from customer relationships.'

So, does this mean that to maximise impact we need to move beyond market research towards being more predictive of customer trends and competitor activity through closer customer understanding and relationships? Almost certainly!

Of course, enhanced strategic insight probably doesn't mean that old information-gathering techniques will go away. Rather, they will perhaps be more focused and will validate our more insightful customer feedback.

So, we have this great offering, we've created a brand, we've market aligned it, we've worked out the optimum customer segments, we've put market intelligence and performance systems in place, and we've set up proactive business management teams, but is anybody going to let us do anything with it?

Do we have an organisational culture that enables proactive decision-making delegated to talented people at the coalface? Will we ever get to the stage where – apart from adjusting promotional spend – individual marketeers will be empowered to make more of the strategic decisions, even in non-traditional areas such as clinical development?

'Hear, hear,' you say!

But what are you doing to make the difference? In a more empowered environment, decision-making will be more transparent, people will run their own business within the organisation as a whole and be given full responsibility for achieving the results via impact marketing.

Mostly in the biotech sector, but increasingly in some larger pharmaceutical companies, entrepreneurial spirit and flexibility have been paramount. True, there have been heroic and not so heroic failures in biotech, but there have also been a raft of successes. For example, Amgen produced Epogen and Immunex developed Enbrel. Both are billion-dollar drugs.

The question here is can we have entrepreneurial creativity? Surely the pharmaceutical entrepreneur's maxim should be 'seize the day,' while looking for the opportunity and working to fulfil it! Tom Peters suggests it's about passion and imagination and persistence⁴. If this drive can be harnessed with creativity, it will make a major impact with our core offering.

This means using creativity via the most appropriate medium to build rational and emotional value through visualising and communicating the brand offering to target customers. Creativity doesn't have to be complicated to have an impact. In fact, usually less is more! And there is little doubt that the most creative people can be, well, a little odd! So maybe it is time to, as Tom Peters says: 'Fire the planners, and hire the freaks!'

And, if you don't think we could do with a few more creatives and entrepreneurs in the pharmaceutical industry, I make no apology for citing Tom again: 'It is a weird time in the world of pharmaceuticals... and weird times calls for weird people!'

Even if partly true, this means that we need more 'off the wall' marketeers to deliver the creative impact that will make a difference in the increasingly complex pharmaceutical market.

Happy impact marketing, all you weirdos out there! ▲

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1. Zyman Sergio (2002) The End of Advertising as we know it. Wiley & Sons.
2. Kotler P (2003) Marketing Insights from A-Z/Marketing Management, 11th International Edition, Prentice Hall.
3. Carlisle R (January 2004), Is Bigger Better? Pharma Times Magazine.
4. Peters T (2003) ReImagined Doring Kindersley.

