

Multichannel Marketing

Focusing on a Healthcare Destination



Introduction

Pharmaceutical marketers are forever on a quest to deliver relevant and useful messages to the right audience in a timely, cost-effective manner. Today's consumers have choices about how and where they gather pertinent health information, and conversely, pharmaceutical companies have endless options on how, when and where to reach them. The plethora of options introduces a new quandary—where to begin?

One marketing strategy starting point is determining what combination of media channels will most effectively drive important messages to consumers. From there, brand ambassadors need to sort out how best to maximize the various channels. But there is one channel often left off the marketing channel checklist. One very important channel, one that can help marketers reach millions of patients quickly and at a fraction of the cost of other channels. What channel are we talking about? The pharmacy.

Consumers enter pharmacies with purses slung over shoulders and wallets stuffed in back pockets, prepared to purchase health-related items. It's a captive audience, hungry for valuable information and tools to answer lingering health questions or meet a particular medical need. Even the consumer who stops by to purchase milk during the evening commute knows the pharmacy is a healthcare destination and as such, is generally open to health messaging.

Information gathered during a pharmacy visit may be used to make a decision on the spot or spur follow-up action, such as visiting a brand website or posing a question to the primary care physician. Either way, it's a destination that the pharmaceutical marketer cannot afford to overlook.



Putting the Consumer Back in the Center of the Marketing Plan

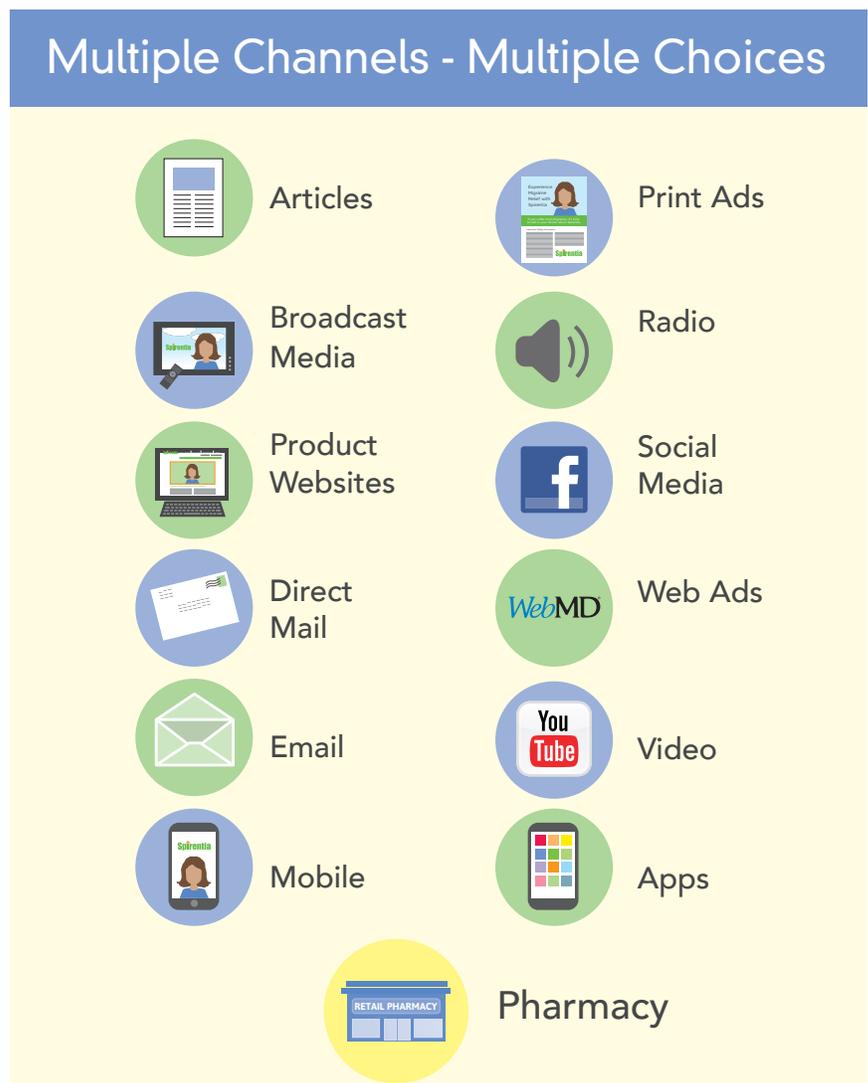
In response to an increasing need to use promotional budgets creatively, pharmaceutical companies are funneling communication efforts into a multichannel format. Essentially, multichannel marketing is a method of delivering messages across a combination of indirect and direct communication channels such as websites, retail stores, direct mail, email, and mobile, to engage and interact with consumers.

What is the goal of Multichannel Marketing? To prompt consumers to take some sort of action through their preferred touch point.

Really, multichannel marketing is nothing new. It's been around since the dawn of marketing. The difference today is the variety of channels available. A recent push to make multichannel assets more productive and personalized is reshaping marketing engagement into a consumer-centric model. Many marketers appear to be wrapped up with cornering the right touch point and using technology to its fullest. Lost in the message? The consumer.

As a result, the strategy has been given a new moniker meant to turn the spotlight back on the customer. Meet omnichannel marketing. The idea is to keep consumer needs at the center of the marketing campaign, supported by data-driven strategies and the appropriate technologies.

- 84.6% of marketers feel they don't have the appropriate tools or technologies required for an omnichannel strategy.
- 85.6% of marketers say the biggest barrier to omnichannel marketing is consumer data that is unavailable or spread across multiple sources.¹



Health marketing content, at its most basic level, aims to encourage consumers to make investments in their own health. Those in the pharmaceutical sector are recognizing the value of building closer relationships with consumers but are finding it difficult to execute a plan. Some questions to consider when planning a multichannel marketing campaign include:

- What are the customer's needs?
- What is the budget?
- What channels will deliver the message most effectively?
- Where is the best ROI?
- How can the channels be aligned to deliver a consistent message?

In most industries, marketing efforts have a retail component. A consumer might research the year's best new car features online and use the Kelley Blue Book app to learn about prices before test driving and buying a car. A skier will likely try on a new ski jacket at an outdoor enthusiast shop and read reviews on Facebook before searching for the best price online. What is the retail component in healthcare? The pharmacy.

And just like in other industries, the pharmacy has opportunities to connect the healthcare purchasing experience for the consumer. That's where omnichannel marketing comes in. Today's consumer wants to dance between the various channels with the grace of a ballerina. They want a seamless and user-friendly experience that ends with all questions answered and needs satisfied.

The takeaway, according to many factions, is regardless of whether a company prefers to call its strategy multichannel or omnichannel, the consumer should be top of mind from the very beginning of a marketing campaign all the way through to its launch.

The Pharmacy Showcases Its Opportunities for Pharma Marketers

The pharmacy has been revamped into a trusted healthcare destination, giving way to a rising number of opportunities to partner with drug manufacturers. Communicating with today's health-conscious consumer within the drugstore walls hinges on identifying our country's most important health and wellness needs.

The pharmacy's refreshed identity is well-timed as healthcare entities across the United States strive to embrace a wellness model. Pharmacy offerings have expanded, with universally offered vaccinations and retail health



clinics—staffed with nurse practitioners and physician assistants—in some locations. With weekend and evening hours and walk-ins welcome, pharmacies offer more opportunities to reach consumers than physician offices.

The pharmacy is the only national healthcare-related venue that consumers visit in droves: **it's a stop on the weekly round of errands for 275 million Americans.**² The pharmacy has done its part – the people have come – now all pharma needs to do is devise a way to get as many eyeballs on their product information as possible.

Pharma marketers see the value in targeting the average consumer who stops by the local pharmacy to grab a few necessities and have a prescription filled. More often than not, the customer is also thinking about her own health needs, her child's recent cold or a parent with diabetes. As she passes through the store aisles, her attention can be easily captured by well-placed communications that provide valuable disease information, explain how and when to take medications safely, or promote long-term medication adherence.



In the diabetes space, perhaps the right channel combination includes TV spots, direct mail, disease awareness campaigns in the pharmacy, and a digital component to help manage challenging lifestyle factors. **The pharmacy can be used to connect the marketing dots:** an image seen in a TV commercial for a diabetes brand is strategically placed on a sign near the diabetes foot care products.

Despite a major move toward digital channels including mobile, social media, wearable devices, and digital customer service models, there's still a place for traditional media in the pharmaceutical space. Print, direct mail, broadcast media, email, and pharmacy campaigns can be tailored to complement digital presentations.



Is the pharmacy a traditional channel? In a sense, yes. However, the interaction with the consumer is unmatched by other traditional channels. Unlike the one-dimensional experience of seeing a brand ad in a magazine, the consumer can digest the information served up by a pharmaceutical company before walking to the back of the store to engage face to face with a healthcare professional.

The Patient Is In: Conveniences Drawing Customers into Today's Pharmacy

- Weekend and evening hours
- Access to health services in a growing number of locations
- Immunization services
- On-site access to a healthcare professional (pharmacist, nurse practitioner or physician assistant)
- No appointments necessary
- Convenient locations
- Ability to purchase other household necessities

Multichannel Challenges for Marketers

Deciding to incorporate a multichannel – or omnichannel, whichever you prefer – marketing approach is not a simple undertaking. Challenges range from indecision among those with the marketing reins to simply having no clue how to begin. In fact, a recent survey from QuintilesIMS found that just 36% of life-sciences companies have a multichannel strategy and have begun to roll it out, while 34% are reportedly still working on it.

Counted among the biggest hurdles for pharma marketers to overcome? Having the right talent in place and accurately identifying the needs of the targeted consumer. Other important factors hindering multichannel uptake include budgeting issues and technological roadblocks.

Essential Elements for Multichannel Marketing Success:

- Awareness of the consumer's needs
- Strong pool of skilled experts
- Approved guidelines specific to the organization
- Knowledge of regulatory standards
- Budget-friendly channel selection
- Optimized technological platforms
- Properly integrated channels



By design, a multichannel strategy needs to be regularly tweaked, fine-tuned, and at times, completely overhauled in order to continue to deliver results. Unfortunately, each individual channel requires quite a bit of a marketer's time to ensure messages aren't missing their mark. Once more channels are added, routine checkups ensure the combination of touchpoints are in unison.

Selecting the Right Mix of Channels

Consumers want quick and reliable access to the information they need on their own terms. For the most effective consumption, marketing messages need to be adapted to suit each channel type. The knowledge a consumer draws from a TV ad may differ from that gathered in the pharmacy, however, synchronization between the two channels is crucial.

95% of marketers agree a multichannel strategy that allows them to target customers is important for their organization.³

Narrowing down a large playing field of channels – and staying abreast of channels that may join the team down the line – is a large undertaking, to say the least. In order to encourage consumers to take action and to form a long-lasting relationship, the message within the chosen channel must be strong.

Making Sure Messages are Heard Loud and Clear

Consumers are more informed than ever, presenting challenges to pharmaceutical marketers. However, brand managers have an edge: the ability to deliver high-quality, relevant messages that help consumers sort through today's health noise. As it turns out, consumers are always on the hunt for relevant and useful health information from a trusted source.

76% of patients think pharmaceutical companies have a responsibility to provide information and services that complement the products they sell.⁴

Knowing and understanding the needs of the audience and engaging them with appropriate messaging is the holy grail for the brand marketer. With some research into the types of information consumers are sharing on social media and other outlets, marketers can begin to understand the patient journey and identify the most effective channels to meet their needs.

Striking the right balance can be challenging because today's consumer has a growing number of needs and expectations. Consumers need more information because diseases and their treatments are complex. And, the number of prescriptions taken by Americans is on the rise.⁵

- 46% of American adults take prescription drugs
- Average number of prescriptions per person: 4.1
- 25% of people ages 18 to 39 years take 2 prescription drugs regularly

According to an Accenture survey, 50% of patients are open to receiving assistance after they have begun a course of treatment or are considering switching. That's just one entry point for pharma, and pharmacy can be the delivery channel.

The pharmacy channel can help pharma companies arm consumers with accurate and useful healthcare and prescription information. At a time when the consumer is shouldering more of the healthcare burden than ever, the industry can use the available channels to ensure access to the tools needed to improve health and wellness.

After being prescribed medication, 60% continue to do more research to understand them better and to ultimately decide whether or not they'll fill them.⁶

Corralling the Components of a Multichannel Strategy

With dwindling budgets, competing time constraints, and a continually transforming prescription drug market, delivering a consistent message across all communication touch points has never been more important.

A strong marketing campaign narrows down the channel options based on intended outcomes, funds allotted and anticipated ROIs. The key is to consider every channel, and not be alarmed when the best fit is a channel that's been around for a long time. Each channel serves as a touchpoint along the sales continuum, requiring a smooth handoff from one message to the next.

Finding the Geographic Bullseye. Marketers are learning that multichannel marketing does not work in the same manner across all geographic and therapeutic areas. Take drugstores, for example. A major pharmacy with more than 8,000 locations across the United States looks and feels virtually the same in each location, however, each also caters to the local population. Individual stores might stock a specific type of regional food or offer more varieties of an over-the-counter product. A store located in a popular area for retirees may boost its shingles vaccine inventory. For pharma marketers, pharmacy-specific targeting strategies are available.

Laser Targeting the Consumer. The same can be true for consumer demographics. Consumers can be grouped into segments based on shared characteristics, even if they're located in different regions of the country. A TV ad for erectile dysfunction is appropriately timed to air nationwide during Sunday football games, just as a magazine ad for post-menopause osteoporosis is commonly found in the pages of women's magazines. In the pharmacy, messages for these same Rx products are spotted in the men's grooming and women's health aisles respectively.

Getting in Step with Treatment Progression. Today's patients need assistance—ranging from disease education to medication adherence tools—at various stages of disease progression. A retail pharmacy partnership can disseminate tailored patient education before a branded product hits the market, provide outreach and support during product launch, and serve as a companion to other channels of engagement throughout the product's lifecycle.

Trusted Platforms for Health-Related Messages. Patients are turning to the expertise of pharmacists more than ever, and for good reason. The healthcare provider is trained to explain the benefits and risks of medications, and is able to provide context to the messages presented in drug advertising. Brand ambassadors are looking for ways to entice patients to engage pharmacists and gather more information about their medical needs.

User-Friendliness. A marketing plan should begin with the endgame in mind. Envision a patient standing before an information dispenser on allergies in a drugstore aisle. Why the patient is there is quite obvious but what are his specific needs? Does he have questions? And most importantly, how can the pharmaceutical marketer make sure the right tools are there to help?

Was the Message Delivered? Depending on the intended message, certain channels may be a better fit for consumers than others.

Patients are accustomed to receiving disease awareness messaging in the drugstore, for example, and data indicate the messages are well received. A patient with heartburn will likely find himself standing in the OTC antacid aisle before too long. While there, he may spot an informational sign on the pharmacy shelf using the same image for a prescription heartburn medicine he saw advertised during his favorite cooking show the night before, and in the pages of *Men's Health* the week prior. As he stands there considering his self-medication plan, he makes a mental note of his options. To piece it all together, the consumer may choose to speak with the pharmacist or conduct additional research on his mobile phone during his train ride to work.



Measuring Tactics. Data. Data. Data. The data revolution is here to stay and the collection of patient information, preferences, and needs is driving many of today's marketing initiatives. Data is also crucial in determining how one channel's ROI stacks up to another. While a channel largely used for brand awareness may not result in direct dollar sales, it still plays an important role on the campaign continuum. However, the ability to quantitatively measure the impact of a pharmacy campaign sets it apart from other channels vying for marketing dollars. Through the use of matched-panel research, actual impact on Rx sales can be determined.

Channel Integration. Partnerships with pharmacies on a variety of consumer-minded efforts including vaccine programs can complement the pharma marketer's overall agenda. Similarly, unbranded disease awareness campaigns can educate consumers about screenings and diagnostics, and entice them to take action. In order to be most effective, each of these consumer touchpoints need to work in concert with one another and share the same common goals and messages.

Today's marketers are tasked with delivering clear and consistent messaging across a growing number of communication channels. Though it may sound like a simple undertaking, it's anything but. Successful campaigns are aligned to support a pharma company's overall goals and have the flexibility to adapt to an ever-changing channel stream. With a more intimate view of prospective patients and their needs, today's pharma marketer can expertly reach out with the right messages at the right time and positively impact outcomes.

Rx EDGE Pharmacy Networks: A Powerful Element of Multichannel Strategies

Since 2000, Rx EDGE Pharmacy Networks has helped multiple pharmaceutical brands achieve success by promoting their products in a nationwide network of retail pharmacies. The Solutions at the Shelf™ marketing program delivers actionable information at the Mindset Moment™, helping current and potential patients better understand their symptoms and move more knowledgeably through the awareness-to-treatment experience.

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SOURCES 1. The CMO Club 2. Giberson, Scott F. Public Health Reports. "Million Hearts: Pharmacist-Delivered Care to Improve Cardiovascular Health." January-February 2013, volume 128 3. 2015 report by Episerver and Digital Doughnut 4. Accenture "Great Expectations: Why Pharma Companies Can't Ignore Patient Services" survey of 2,000 patients in the United States 5. 2012 poll by Consumer Reports National Research Center 6. CDW Healthcare 2014 "Today's Digital Patient"





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