



Rx EDGE® Builds Psoriasis Awareness to Boost Prescription Sales

The Challenge

Psoriasis is an immune system disorder with no cure that causes dry, itchy and sometimes painful skin irritation. Patches or plaques of raised, reddish skin with white scales usually appear on the elbows, knees, lower back and scalp. Affected areas sometimes can crack or bleed. The disease flares up periodically and goes into remission, and controlling symptoms generally requires lifelong therapy. In severe cases, the itching and discomfort can make it difficult to sleep.

Many of the estimated 4.5 million afflicted with psoriasis in the United States experience anxiety, embarrassment and low self-esteem. Though treatments are available, it is common to think the disease is just a dry-skin problem and self treat with moisturizing lotions or OTC hydrocortisone products. Further, the stigma associated with psoriasis makes many hesitant to seek medical treatment.

To help raise disease awareness, the brand team for one psoriasis medication pursued a strategy to inform and educate the public about the condition and treatment options. They knew it would be a challenge to persuade consumers to use a medication that cost significantly more than a typical OTC treatment for a 30-day supply, and had to be injected. The strategy, therefore, was to motivate consumers to learn more about the disease and better understand the potential benefits of drug treatment for managing symptoms and bringing long-term relief. At launch, a major internet and television advertising campaign featuring a professional athlete had yielded disappointing results, so the team turned to Rx EDGE to develop an in-store promotional campaign. They had never considered in-store marketing, but were willing to give it a try to improve disease awareness and build interest in the product.

Program Strategy

Rx EDGE and the brand team decided that information about psoriasis should be located in the pharmacy aisles where OTC hydrocortisone-based products are sold. It was believed individuals with moderate to severe forms of psoriasis would be more receptive to learning more about the disease and possible treatments they could discuss with their doctors. Use of hydrocortisone instead of moisturizing lotion is an indicator that a consumer is experiencing persistent, bothersome itching and other symptoms. The key objective therefore, was to inform pharmacy customers with possible psoriasis that their condition isn't just a dry skin problem or rash and they could benefit from a prescription medication.

Pamphlets in the Rx EDGE pharmacy shelf display stressed that treatment has helped thousands with moderate to severe plaque

psoriasis get relief, and noted that in clinical studies nearly half of patients treated showed significant improvement within three months. Consumers also were encouraged to visit a website to receive a free information kit with product information and tips on how to communicate more effectively with a dermatologist.

After working with the brand team to formulate the key messages, Rx EDGE placed product information dispensers in 5,300 retail pharmacies. The stores agreed with the strategy of locating the information in aisles containing hydrocortisone products, such as Cortaid, to reach the target patient audience.

Execution

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Results

At the conclusion of the trial period, Rx EDGE conducted matched-panel studies to measure prescription lift attributable to the in-store program and gauge return on investment. Two panels (test and control) of 148 stores in the CVS chain were established. The panels were matched on total prescriptions filled, geographic locations and total prescriptions per week, per store. During the test period only, Rx EDGE dispensers were placed in test panel stores and not the control stores.

For the 13-week evaluation, prescription sales for the injectable psoriasis medication increased by 7.3 percent. Before the Rx EDGE program began, the brand had experienced significant sales slippage. The matched-panel analysis clearly demonstrated that, even for a low-volume product, reaching consumers in the pharmacy when they are most receptive to a brand message succeeds in building awareness and in motivating consumers to speak with their doctor about a specific medication.

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Overall, the Rx EDGE campaign exceeded the brand team's expectations, with an average of .5 new prescriptions per store per week. The 7.3 percent prescription lift generated a total return on investment of \$5.00 for every dollar invested in the program.

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