

SALESFORCE EFFECTIVENESS

Is the DECILE MODEL Becoming **OUTMODED?**

For years pharmaceutical sales teams have targeted physicians based solely on their prescribing volume. Technology advances, process enhancements, and new messaging formats are offering new and improved ways of accessing physicians.

CAN SALESFORCE OPTIMIZATION TECHNOLOGY BECOME THE MAGIC BULLET FOR LAGGING SALES?

Pharmaceutical companies of all sizes are employing salesforce optimization procedures to aid their field forces, but not everyone agrees that technology is the cure-all for diminishing returns. Data-rich, real-time technology can give a competitive advantage to sales reps, but some experts report that adding technology to a salesforce optimization plan will not automatically lead to increased sales. The industry and its sales reps face many barriers that may impede the adoption and use of these technologies. Our Forum experts discuss how to meet these challenges and what trends and best practices they are experiencing in the area of salesforce optimization.

Better Techniques

With the proliferation of cost-savings, cutbacks, drying pipelines, expiring patents, and physician backlash, now is the time for the industry to find a better way to reach, inform, and educate physicians.

KEEFER. PUBLICIS SELLING SOLUTIONS. There are three backdrops that sales leadership and strategic management need to consider when addressing sales optimization issues. First, the industry is facing challenges today that didn't exist even a year ago. For example, consider the increase in third-party decision makers who can limit access to pharmaceutical products. State governments are becoming more sophisticated, organized, and focused in terms of drug use, access, and even formulary creation for their Medicaid populations. Medi-Cal in California was the forerunner of this trend in formulary creation, and the concept has branched out to many other states. The industry has to worry not only about the commercial third-party formulary and payers, but also gov-

ernmental oversight as well. We also have a more restrictive regulatory environment across the board. The FDA is taking a much more strenuous view of new drug application reviews, and states are now becoming much more involved in monitoring the interaction between pharma companies and physicians. This is one of the factors that plays into the decision-making process that didn't figure in five years ago. Another important factor is the declining number of physicians who are accessible through traditional channels. There are a variety of reasons for this: changes in treatment guidelines, large group practices, fewer physicians, and the increase in patient load, making many physicians just too busy to see sales representatives. For this reason, technology has become a critical part of how we optimize our field force.

MERCANTE. TGAS. The challenge today is taking the enormous amount of market data that flows through the pharmaceutical operations pipeline, making sure it has the highest

degree of accuracy, and streamlining the process of incorporating it into the corporate decision-making environment. This is a growing challenge as companies start to look at combining multiple data sources. Some companies, for example, are developing their own ways to derive data from various sources, such as specialty drug usage and outcomes data. The challenge is to make sure there is a high level of data quality and a consistent data management process. This should include data stewards who are responsible for reviewing the various data being processed and developing an architecture that specifies how these data are collected, analyzed, and processed.

STEPHAN. PRINCETON BRAND ECONOMETRICS. Technology on its own is not that important. I think any company, before it goes to the expense of adding salesforce optimization technology and training reps, ought to do double-blind crossovers to test whether reps will be noticeably more effective with technology than they would be without it. It's important to adopt technology that will help reps do a better job.

BRANA. TNS HEALTHCARE. Technology can be quite important if, as our research shows, everyone is moving toward a relationship-based sales strategy. If the goal is to bring the right sales and service elements to bear, we need to be able to measure the quality of the relationship, not just that the doctor is prescribing a lot of the product or there is a lot of potential in the market. With technology, we have the opportunity to gain an understand-



KENT STEPHAN
Princeton Brand Econometrics

In some cases, sales reps were sold a bill of goods; new technologies were supposed to make them more effective in the field and it hasn't always worked out. **IN THESE CASES, EVERYBODY LOSES CREDIBILITY.**

take to get Dr. Jones to move away from Lipitor or any other preferred brand. If physicians have a strong commitment to a brand, they use it more than if their commitment was weak. But just as significantly, it will be tough for a competitor to get a foot in the door. The strength of relationships is not measured by the volume of prescribing but rather is assessed as if it were a dating relationship: what are the alternatives; what are the choices; and am I happy with them? Just like dating, when those three emotional elements come together there is a commitment, and trying to decommit somebody is tough because there is a strong bond.

WEXLER. BILTMORE TECHNOLOGIES. One of the key goals of salesforce optimization is the ability to create a personalized and actionable set of information pertaining

to the practitioners who a sales rep calls on. And this is not just about the sales rep, these data are needed by field sales management and corporate sales and marketing staff. This information provides personalized data about performance in the territory as well as what's happening with practitioners or accounts within the territory. Technology has evolved to such a point that an individual doesn't have to be technically or analytically astute to digest the information

provided. Technology can proactively alert users of outlier conditions that exist in the data.

BARD. MANHATTAN RESEARCH. As a strategic industry trend, we are increasingly looking at the integration of technology by the rep with the physician. While this may seem innovative for the pharma companies that are conducting pilot projects today, the reality is that many other industries outside of pharma have been successfully using Tablet PC and mobile PC devices to support a mobile salesforce for many years. The ultimate goal with mobile salesforce technology is rather simple: provide timely access to the latest product information tailored to the learning and channel preferences of the person on the other end of the sales call. And better yet, the goal should be to use the device for clean data capture to further refine messaging, targeting, and salesforce optimization on a larger scale over time.

A Changing Environment

The current climate is much different from 10 years, five years ago, or even one year ago, and there are new challenges and new processes and technologies to meet those challenges that require a shift in thinking and performance.

MERCANTE. TGAS. In the past five to seven

ing of the doctor's perceptions from the interaction between the doctor and rep. If closed-loop technology is used properly, it should enable these three elements: ability to deliver different avenues of discussion; ability to profile doctors based on interests and priorities; and ability to capture and measure the quality of the relationship. The emotional strength of relationships between the customer and the product can be measured by what it would

THOUGHT LEADERS

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years, especially in large pharma, companies have started to use sophisticated data warehousing and business intelligence tools to house both subnational and secondary sales,

research, and market data. Once the information is pooled, the company can analyze the data in a number of ways, depending on the situation. The driver behind this new trend is

the exponential increase in data warehouse capability. Over the past three to five years, we've also witnessed companies that have developed very advanced customer master data capabilities that allow them to link all critical customer entities — not just physicians — but also long-term care facilities, managed care organizations, and hospitals. These customer masters can generate messaging and targeting that allow sales reps to be much more laser-like in their approach. Looking ahead to other uses of technology, I can envision a time within the next five years when every sales person will conduct Internet meetings via an iPhone. Change is constant and companies that learn how to adapt to these tools and technologies and use them to advance their business goals will be more effective.

Improving Pharmaceutical Sales and Marketing Effectiveness

Alpharma Pharmaceuticals LLC needed a single data source for all of its critical sales and marketing reporting to support key business strategies, including the management of its continued growth of its branded pharmaceutical franchise in the chronic pain market with its morphine-based, extended-release Kadian product.

Alpharma's sales and marketing management, sales operations group, and field salesforce needed to have easy access to consistent and accurate data in a more complete and timely fashion that would improve the company's sales and marketing effectiveness. Management needed to be able to analyze data directly against the data warehouse for analysis and decision making and provide the field salesforce with actionable information.

Alpharma's challenge was to find a reporting system that would empower its management and field sales representatives with the right information at the right time. Working with Biltmore Technologies and its My Vital Signs Rx, a hosted sales and marketing data warehouse solution, Alpharma's salesforce was able to gain information to answer more robust business questions in new subject areas with a faster response time. The data warehouse and the business intelligence tools provide users with self-service access to data.

Working with Biltmore, Alpharma was able to fulfill its needs for robust and sophisticated analytical, ad-hoc query, and reporting capabilities along with dashboards and scorecards to monitor its business objectives. The company could track the sales performance of its flagship products and other sales initiatives in an efficient manner.

"My Vital Signs Rx enables us to seamlessly meet the needs of our users, and vastly improves Alpharma's sales and marketing effectiveness," says Alfredo Hannibal, director of sales operations at Alpharma Pharmaceuticals.

Another major challenge Alpharma Pharmaceuticals needed to solve was to give its sales group the ability to determine the appropriate audience for its sales and marketing initiatives. Alpharma wanted its data to be made available in a much quicker fashion to its user community. Biltmore's solution, anchored by the MicroStrategy platform, provided sales management with automated delivery of reports to the field to guide optimal sales and marketing activities.

Alpharma's sales managers can access executive dashboards that provide a pulse of the business; with one click they can follow new product introductions, as well as sales trends of existing products.

District managers can analyze the success of a marketing campaign and learn who is performing above or below goal.

In addition, the sales management team can determine what increases the field force needs to achieve to reach its prescribing goals.

In addition, the company's analysts can access information to better understand customer retention/defection issues, as well as recommend an immediate course of action for management to take.

With My Vital Signs Rx, Alpharma receives a monthly briefing book that includes a wide variety of valuable reports customized for each user base, including sales/marketing management, sales operations/market research, and field sales.

Source: Alpharma Inc., Bridgewater, N.J. For more information, visit alpharma.com.

KEEFER. PUBLICIS SELLING SOLUTIONS. Ten years ago — even five years ago — we knew that if we put more reps into the marketplace, we would increase our share of voice and our market share. While this strategy is still relatively sound, there are so many other factors influencing prescribing habits, and salesforce optimization must take all of those factors into consideration. As resources get stretched thin and as touch points proliferate, the question becomes: how does a company optimize the salesforce so that it becomes part of the company's overall strategy? Analysis is much more advanced today than it was in the past; today's tools allow a company to discern its most profitable geographies not based just on prescription activity but on a multitude of other factors, including access, formulary restrictions, third-party influencers, and state government factors. For example, in today's environment, we can perform a much more sophisticated analysis that tells us that, although a physician may be a high writer of prescriptions, if he or she works in a highly managed, formulary restrictive area, a pharma company may be better off applying its salesforce resources in another geographic location where the business climate is more conducive to generating prescriptions and physicians can more easily effect change.

KING. JUICE PHARMA. The quality of the creative messaging content is even more important now than it was five to seven years ago. Technology alone was a differentiator to some extent five years ago; today technology is universal. Content must be central, and content that is valuable to physicians is not necessarily self-serving. It's not all about the product but about how the product can fit into the doctor's needs and help his or her practice as well as patients. Content needs to have real meat to it. Instead of customizing the story around the product, marketers can customize brand stories around what is going on in the physician's office. For example, during flu season when doctors are inundated with symp-

tom-laden patients, reps can speak to physicians about what they are facing at that moment so it's a relevant, timely presentation around a brand and where the brand fits in at that time.

STEPHAN. PRINCETON BRAND ECONOMETRICS. Salesforce optimization over the past 15 years has resulted in reps being loaded with as much information as is available about doctors in their territories. This information is supposed

to help them make two types of fundamental decisions each day: whom do they call on among all those doctors who will see them, and if they have choices of more than one brand to detail, which one do they talk about first, sec-

Sound Bites from the Field

MANY OPERATIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL FACTORS, SUCH AS DEPLOYMENT, SUPPORT, AND SALES REP MOTIVATION, MUST LINE UP FOR SALESFORCE OPTIMIZATION TO BE EFFECTIVE. PHARMAVOICE ASKED EXPERTS WHAT THE MOST COMMON WEAKEST LINK IS AND HOW COMPANIES CAN OVERCOME THIS CHALLENGE.



SUBBARAO JAYANTHI is VP, Sales Practice, of Campbell Alliance, Raleigh, N.C., a management consulting firm specializing in the pharmaceutical and biotech industries. For more information, visit campbellalliance.com.

“The data in most specialty markets are sketchy, which makes it difficult for companies to accurately assess the market potential for their products and to manage their salesforces. Without robust customer-level sales information, it will be difficult for companies to align promotional activities to maximize the portfolio promotional investments. To address this situation, companies need to take a systematic approach to developing internal sales information systems to effectively undertake positioning, segmentation, targeting, and promotional strategies.

Companies tend to take a variety of approaches to measuring salesforce performance. While most companies rely on hard metrics such as sales goal attainments and activity levels, they often de-emphasize some important metrics to address customer perceptions, access constraints, managed care challenges, selling skills, and others. To take a comprehensive approach to managing salesforce performance, companies have to strike a delicate balance between hard and soft metrics and put appropriate processes in place to effectively measure salesforce performance.

Most companies tend to force reps to take a tactical approach (mostly because of short-term financial pressures) to sales that doesn't allow reps to build solid, long-term relationships with customers. This might lead to reps losing motivation when their efforts fail to produce sustainable results. To address this situation, companies need to provide strategic guidance, tools, and resources required for

salesforces to build long-term relationships that would produce superior results.”



TODD MACLAUGHLAN is Founder and CEO of Eclipse Pharmaceuticals, Far Hills, N.J., a pharma company that is focused on developing, sourcing, and commercializing products for

both the OTC and prescription pharmaceutical markets. For more information, visit eclipsepharma.com.

“The common weakest link is the proper alignment of salesforce incentives to behaviors. All too often the focus is on number of calls versus the right calls, and, therefore, proper targeting of accounts is essential to maximize the salesforce efforts. This also must be done with an understanding of the various competitive situations that can be different on a territory-by-territory basis. Implementing a strategy and salesforce compensation that aligns regionally is also important versus a one-size-fits-all approach.

The second item that routinely gets overlooked is the need for strong communication around what is working and what is not working. This communication takes the form of focusing only on the top results versus the reasons for the results (good or bad) and how the success may be applied to other territories.”



DAVE MAURO is Director of Domestic Sales of Cegedim Dendrite, Bedminster, N.J., a provider of diversified sales, marketing, and compliance solutions to the

global life-sciences and pharmaceutical industries. For more information, visit cegedimdendrite.com.

“We believe the most common pitfall for pharmaceutical companies when deploying a

salesforce automation system is losing sight of the end-user experience. The best practices we see from our customers include a strong focus on ensuring that the solution meets the needs of the sales team in all aspects, ranging from sales rep interfaces to back-office reports. This requires a truly collaborative effort, both internally at the pharmaceutical company and externally with the solution provider. Increasingly, we are witnessing greater involvement from representatives of the sales side of the pharmaceutical company during all stages of the SFE evaluation process.

When we develop and deploy a solution for a customer, we are mindful that we are not just selling a piece of software. This solution must withstand the ultimate test: will the sales representatives use it, and will it enhance their ability to manage the territory and promote products? For that reason, we developed our software after spending hundreds of hours riding with pharmaceutical sales representatives to better understand their workflow.

The final piece to ensuring salesforce adoption and satisfaction is to remain closely involved with the customer through all stages of the process. To ensure salesforce optimization through technology, the end-user experience must be among the highest priorities from implementation right through to training and ongoing support.”



PAUL MIGNON is President and Chief Operating Officer of inVentiv Pharma Teams, Somerset, N.J., a provider of commercialization and complementary services to the

global pharmaceutical and life-sciences industries. For more information, visit inventivhealth.com.

“Companies are often successful in developing a sound execution strategy, but they overlook the importance of an accurate target list

ond, and third? Reps are supposed to sift through all this information to determine the answers to these critical forecasting questions. I believe it is far simpler for the reps and far better for their productivity to provide them with

and call plan. A payer mix analysis is crucial in today's marketplace, as is the validation of the physician call list data. These two steps alone can help to optimize the field time of a company's most valuable asset."



KARI SEYMOUR is VP, Training and Development, at VoxMedica Inc., Philadelphia, an independent healthcare agency. For more information, visit voxmedica.com.

"Providing support beyond the sales representative level is important. District managers have hectic schedules. It's amazing how often these critical players are not given the necessary tools or pull-through training to maximize sales representative training. Solutions can be as simple as a coaching guide that DMs use during ride-alongs or as extensive as a series of live training workshops for DMs at leadership meetings. The goal is to remember these coaches/managers in the training plan and provide tools and information to help them make their reps successful.

Another missed opportunity is selling skills "tune ups" for specialty salesforces. This group often knows the science and data inside and out and — because of the years of experience selling — is assumed to know how to open, probe, close effectively, and navigate the ever-evolving physician environment. This is not always the case. With the changing environment, where accessibility is challenging and physician time is limited, revisiting selling skills can assist these experienced reps with making efficient and effective calls.

Our strict compliance environment is one that can create a couple of different camps: the renegade rep, who pays no attention and puts the company at risk, and the ultra-conservative, who interprets the rules beyond the rules intent and minimizes the impact in the field. The goal is to provide balanced training where the field reps are clear on what they can't do, but also on what they can do."



Mike Wexler
Biltmore Technologies

the expected dollar value of each and every sales call they could make in their territories. This represents a different approach to allocating or helping reps allocate their detailing time and samples. Increasingly, pharma companies are also using this methodology to plan how they will distribute marketing resources and how to target against the physician universe. Once a model has been built, companies can input different detailing scenarios and get a forecast for each one. This is true optimization.

WEXLER. BILTMORE TECHNOLOGIES. Technology is always advancing. Laptops and Tablet PCs capture data easily. They can accommodate highly technical presentations that are very high-end, with a lot of glitz. But more importantly, reps can use the tools for signature captures. As such, the laptop has become the command center, the one device he or she needs to communicate, to receive, and to send all information back to headquarters.

Leveraging Technology

There are numerous ways for the industry to leverage technology to improve sales effectiveness. But the rep will need to take into account what the physician wants before riding in on a high-tech horse.

MERCANTE. TGAS. Electronic sales aids have the potential to enhance the interaction between sales reps and physicians. A few select companies have moved to closed-loop promotions, embedding electronic detail aids in software that allows more sophisticated navigation, depending on the unique needs of the physician. The software has built-in analytics that can track navigation and, therefore, determine what resonates with different segments of the customer audience. Databases can be used in conjunction with market research to refine and define the right message to the right physician at the right time to get a maximum effect. Many companies are combining market-research techniques with other analysis to try to identify which messages are resonating with physicians by type of physician, geography, and so on. The only limit to the segmentation is one's imagination. Pharma is

ONE OF THE KEY GOALS OF SALESFORCE OPTIMIZATION IS THE ABILITY TO CREATE A PERSONALIZED AND ACTIONABLE SET OF INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THE PRACTITIONERS WHO A SALES REP CALLS ON. And this is not just important for the sales rep; these data are needed by the field sales management and corporate sales and marketing staff in the form of scorecards and dashboards.

developing advanced approaches and methodologies to target physicians, deciding which physician to call on based on the competitive mix, the life of the product, and the portfolio beyond the single measure of physician decile or conventional potential.

BARD. MANHATTAN RESEARCH. With regard to the state of technology use by pharma reps, there is clearly a lot of room for improvement in the user experience. Successful reps will not put up with a tool that crashes in the middle of a sales call and requires a reboot that eats up their precious window of time. They need technology that helps them do what they do best: engage the physician. Also, there may be some resistance given that the technology naturally forces the physicians to focus their attention on the device and not make eye contact and engage with the rep. One of the challenges today is that many brand teams have not planned for content that shines in the electronic realm. They are simply trying to repurpose offline material to the electronic format, and most reps see it for what it is: an electronic version of their leave behind. Many ask the question: where is the added value in that approach for me? Where is the added value for the physician? There will be strategic changes when brands plan for digital content well in advance. By digital content I mean resources that can be delivered by Tablet PC, product sites, physician portal, or any other channel physicians may use to access product information content, including channels as diverse as a kiosk at a medical conference.

KEEFER. PUBLICIS SELLING SOLUTIONS. Technology is the virtual representative and is available whenever a physician wants to interact with someone. This may be Saturday morning at 10 a.m. or Sunday evening at 11:00 p.m. Some companies are now staffing virtual reps to leverage technology to provide touch points for doctors whenever they want to view details.

KING. JUICE PHARMA. To me, better sales tools don't necessarily mean Tablet PCs or technology. Print still has a significant place and impact.



Forrest King
Juice Pharma

But I think the touch-screen technology of the Tablet PC is like a lightning bolt, and it will change how sales reps interact with physicians. Sales reps can have everything at their fingertips, and we see companies moving to embrace this technology, some because they want to differentiate themselves and some because they believe they need to keep up with everyone else.

WEXLER. BILTMORE TECHNOLOGIES. Technology is improving but these tools are just enablers and ways to present information. What is much more important is integrating all of the information and creating a business intelligence data warehouse environment. It is also important to create personalized information briefs that can be sent to reps or that can be accessed from a Web portal. The real power is having the ability to provide tactical and strategic information to reps and alert them to changes happening in their territories.

STEPHAN. PRINCETON BRAND ECONOMETRICS. In my opinion, the industry may be buying technology but not making more money from having it. We know how much potential there is to improve salesforce productivity; in most cases a company could double productivity of the salesforce by reallocating the detailing time to higher potential situations. We have found that 40% of sales calls are made against opportunities that have little chance of yielding a return, and reps are walking right past other opportunities that would yield far more incremental business. For example, some companies are taking the IMS physician data and directing reps to target high-subscribers of their brand or category. They incorrectly assume that a detail will result in the same percent change in prescribing regardless of which doctor is detailed, so they go after the heaviest prescribers. In the real world, individual doctors will respond differently to details, and this differential response can be calculated. The expected value of each potential sales call can be determined so reps are not limited to calling on doctors because of their past sub-

MARKETING TEAMS WITHIN PHARMA NEED TO INVEST IN PUTTING A QUALITY CREATIVE PRESENTATION TOGETHER that uses video, animation, and audio. This investment sends a very strong signal to the salesforce about the brand's strategic messaging and values.

scribing, but can instead focus on how much incremental prescribing they have the potential to do in the future.

BRANA. TNS HEALTHCARE. Closed-loop marketing is the most intriguing technology to me. It is just beginning to take off in the U.S. market. Imagine the market research and brand teams being able to lay out what a physician wants, everything from patient quality of life, to mechanism of action, to therapeutic choice and all the support services in between, in a nice, easy-to-navigate environment that the reps can access on a PC. With this information, the sales-

force can start to build long-term relationships with physicians. Sales reps can say, "I'm here to make sure we get your priorities met and if you choose to use this, I am giving you access to all types of support to make product use in your practice with your patients easy and productive." Using closed-loop platforms, reps can initiate an engagement by setting an agenda of priorities with a physician. The rep can say, "I have all this information right here in my electronic bag, where do you want to start? Let's talk about what your priorities are so I can make our time productive for you."

KING. JUICE PHARMA. My favorite thing about the available breadth of technology channels is that we have choices on how to best tell a story. For example, in the old days a published article was distributed by the salesforce as a reprint to make sure as many physicians as possible got to see it. This is still valid and appropriate. But if we're talk-

PDMA Compliance and the Salesforce

Pharmaceutical companies must make sure they are compliant with the requirements for distribution, storage, and handling of the drug samples in their possession. The Prescription Drug Marketing Act (PDMA) was enacted to "1) ensure that drugs purchased by consumers are safe and effective, and 2) avoid the unacceptable risk to American consumers from counterfeit, adulterated, misbranded, subpotent, or expired drugs."

Among other requirements, it states that all drug samples shall be stored by manufacturers or distributors under conditions that will maintain their stability, integrity, and effectiveness and will assure that the drug samples are free of contamination, deterioration, and adulteration.

PDMA guidelines require pharmaceutical companies to monitor samples as they come into the warehouse, for example tracking how many samples of what products come into the facility, their lot numbers, how and where they go, that is, which product samples go to each sales representative, how many, and exactly what product, lot number, and total number of samples are left with physicians.

"Most PDMA compliance problems arise because companies have difficulty coordinating databases from multiple internal systems or vendors and, thus, are not able to put the relevant PDMA information together in one place," says William Pollock, president and CEO of Pharmagistics. "Also, the data many times are not readily available, so a company can't make meaningful business decisions based upon a real-time physician-centric type of model."

Another area of compliance concern occurs when companies use multiple vendors to ship samples directly to physicians. This can create many issues, such as practitioner validation cost overruns and duplication of efforts across multiple brands.

For this reason, many companies are now turning to single-source suppliers who have all of these capabilities — storage, distribution, tracking, and monitoring — under one roof. This single-source system allows greater control of samples, greater adherence to PDMA guidelines, and increased efficiencies and cost-savings.

Source: Pharmagistics, Somerset, N.J. For more information, visit pharmagistics.com.



William Pollock,
Pharmagistics

ing about a six- or seven-page manuscript, technology provides different publishing options, such as online, in a Tablet PC format, or a CD that reps can hand out. And if the data are a little heady, there are now other channels that help explain the information through video, audio, graphics, and animation. The data can be shown in a two- or three-minute presentation as opposed to having the physician devote an hour to pouring over a manuscript. It's possible to take a study and distill it down into a three-minute presentation that the physician can have an "aha" moment about.

Logging On

The Internet is a timely, precise, and dynamic channel that can help the industry keep pace and stay connected to physicians, regulations, and the home office.

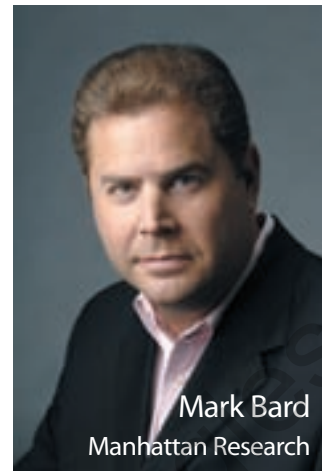
MERCANTE. TGaS. The Internet also enhances and simplifies sales reps' basic administrative tasks. They need to access what's going on in the company with regard to key product and selling information, which may have been delivered in a big stack of paper years ago. Companies now use the Internet and intelligent routing via portals. There are portals for each rep category. For example, there are primary care rep portals that are different from those for specialty and oncology reps. Each portal feeds information to the sales rep about

THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY BY SALES REPS WHEN THEY INTERACT WITH PHYSICIANS MUST BE ANALYZED in the broader context of how physicians are using multiple channels to access information about products today.



THE INTERNET HAS BECOME A KEY TOOL TO IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE CAREER PATHS OF SALES REPS, as well as their ability to access and deliver information at the point of sale.

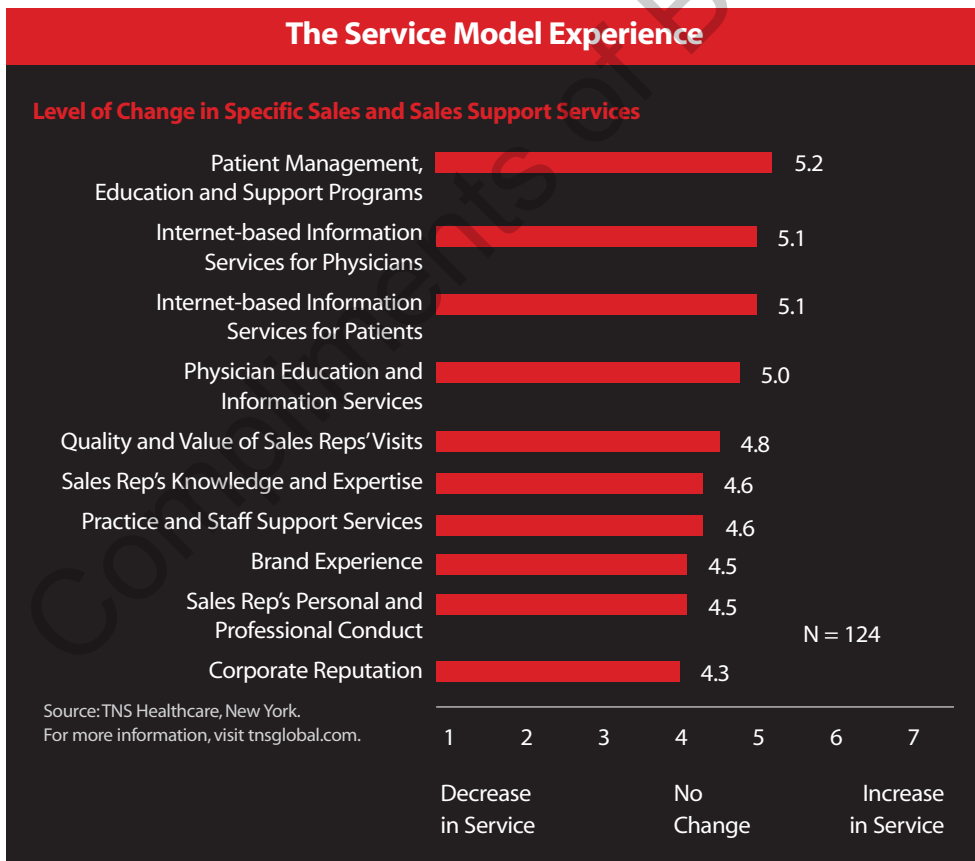
research, learning management, product information, ways to better promote products, selling skills, test taking online, and so on. Sys-

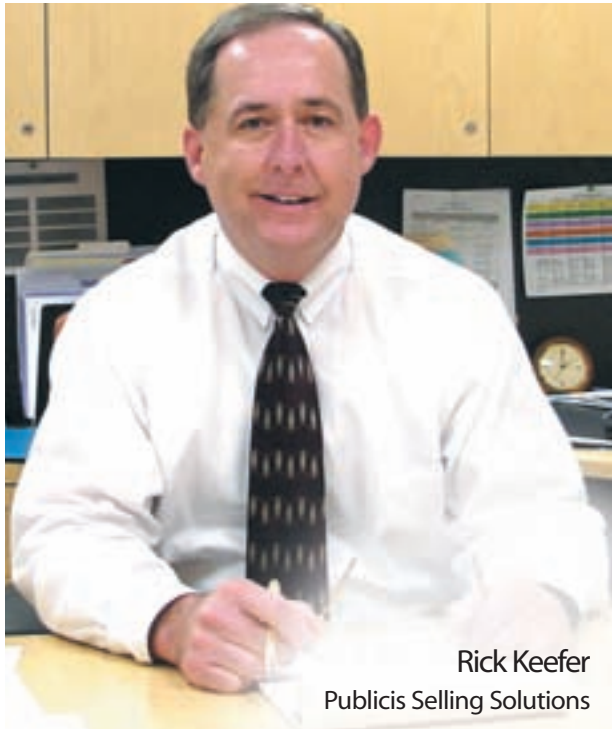


tems are also able to track performance. Another Internet-enabled capability is the ability to capture information on who is looking at the company's Website. Depending on who opts in, the information can be captured, stored in data warehouses, and used by market research and marketing sciences for sophisticated analytical techniques. The analysis can determine how the channel is being used to reach certain parts of the population, and that information can be leveraged to improve the effectiveness of the sales reps at the point of transaction with the physician.

BARD. MANHATTAN RESEARCH. A number of pharma companies are investing in portals and sites that aim to serve as an online rep of sorts. In other words, physicians could do 20%, 40%, or 60% of what they can do with a rep: download journal reprints, find product updates, make sample requests, and research new information and patient education. These sites will play an increasingly important role over the next five years as a number of companies find ways to merge technology use by the rep with these platforms to enable self-service by physicians. For example, a physician may want to perform several activities via the physician portal and use the time with the rep for specific questions and feedback. With regard to what physicians think of all this technology, our latest research found that about 25% of U.S. physicians overall really like paper. There are another 25% who only want technology and really hate paper. About half of the physicians want their reps to use technology when and where it is most appropriate. This might be common sense but it illustrates a key point that companies must start by determining channel preferences among target physicians before forcing technology upon them.

KEEFER. PUBLICIS SELLING SOLUTIONS. The industry is so data rich now that one of the challenges for senior management is what data to use at the rep level and how to present the information to the reps. Managers have to be careful to provide enough data to inform but





Rick Keefer
Publicis Selling Solutions

not confuse the sales people and to provide enough and the right kind of tools to help them sell the product effectively. There are so many more touch points for physicians and customers today that optimization takes on a much larger role that encompasses not only the sales side but the entire marketing mix. Historically, marketing teams would create one-size-fits-all promotions and programs that were not overlaid with the optimization model. But now the more sophisticated companies are looking at overall promotional spends across the board, not only making such programs much more effective but also harboring some cost synergies as well. Teleconferences are a good example. A few years ago, companies would allocate teleconferences across the organization equally. The problem was that in some areas teleconferences worked well, while in other areas not at all. Now, a company can evaluate where teleconferences are most effective. Where they're not, they can substitute direct mail, for example. This is one small example of how the overall promotional share of voice is being optimized. Technology is beginning to help companies be much more strategic in their approach, and this requires different skill sets from those needed in the past. It's an evolution. Another advance is building a database to model the dynamics of a client's entire portfolio of promoted products. And finally, the Internet allows us to provide representatives with easy access to tools and data that were not feasible in past years.

BRANA. TNS HEALTHCARE. One-third of the 286 physicians who responded to our recent survey responded that Web-based services had value in their relationships with sales reps. In terms of the mix of experiences they are looking for from pharma companies, they

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES HAVE ADVANCED TO THE POINT WHERE SALESFORCE OPTIMIZATION IS A MUCH MORE EXACT SCIENCE THAN IT WAS 15 YEARS AGO.

Now the industry can access more data to be used for analysis not only by physician, but also by product, geography, managed markets, access, and prescribing factors.

Andrew Brana, TNS Healthcare



CLOSED-LOOP MARKETING IS THE MOST INTRIGUING TECHNOLOGY TO ME.

Imagine the market research and brand teams being able to lay out what a physician is likely to want, everything from patient quality of life, to mechanism of action, to therapeutic choices, and all the support services in between, in a nice, easy-to-navigate environment that the reps can access on a PC.

put the Web in third place, with reps' knowledge and skills getting top ratings, followed by physician, practice, and patient support services. I'm wondering if the Internet is still gaining ground with physicians or if it is taken as a given. The Internet has a role to play but maybe it's almost cosmetic at the moment because physicians expect it to be there but they still usually go someplace else for their information. Maybe many think of the Web as a channel rather than as a service with unique value. I think there is an evolution going on, and personally, I expect that the one-third will increase over time. Interestingly, many physicians in a recent survey identified the Internet as showing the greatest increase as a service provided by the pharma industry.

Relationship Management

With the technology available today, reps are able to improve their encounters with physicians and build relationships as opposed to continuing to pepper the physician with unwanted visits.

KING. JUICE PHARMA. Usually the customer relationship management theory is touted when technology is discussed, but for me technology provides an intangible quality; it's really about producing a better quality sales rep because the story is more consistent. If the message is packaged as an auto-play, three-minute story and every sales rep on the force has the ability to play that story for five or 35 physicians, they hear it themselves and they memorize and understand it. Previously, reps were only exposed to this type of message through print documents or sales training. Now, the mechanism functions as a sales-training tool, and the quality of sales reps has catapulted because of it.

STEPHAN. PRINCETON BRAND ECONOMETRICS.

Frequency is important but so is knowing when to stop. We have witnessed cases when a sales rep can call on a doctor once a year, and that ends up being a great investment. A second call to some doctors yields a decent return. Frequency, per se, is not the issue; it's being able to determine what the right frequency is. Particularly in highly competitive situations, the balance tends to tilt toward the rep who was in the physician's office last. Certainly, top of mind awareness can be shifted by frequency but is it always worth it? If the last scrip costs a company \$3 million, it's not worth it.

BRANA. TNS HEALTHCARE. There has been a growing trend in the industry to focus on a more long-term relationship-building sales strategy. We all know that reps were detailing doctors any chance they could get, repeating the same message again and again. This approach drove share over time, but it also swamped doctors and turned them off. Physicians are looking for more added value from pharma companies around the brand. For example, they are seeking information on how to use the brand, how to support and treat patients, how to decide on a therapeutic treatment, how to support the staff, and how to keep up to date with the brand, as well as the science around the therapy and helping patients understand their condition and treatment. In addition, consumers are now a more empowered part of the treatment decision process. Physicians want more than reps who show up to just talk about the brand; they want help to better treat their patients. ♦

PharmaVOICE welcomes comments about this article. E-mail us at feedback@pharmavoices.com.