

How the pharmaceutical industry can win audience mindshare

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While a shift in pharmaceutical companies' goals to enhance the 'customer experience' is becoming part of the common lexicon when prioritising strategic goals, pharmaceutical companies are not quite prepared to bring this objective to life, with very few, if any, in the pharmaceutical space are getting it right.

Expecting new results

Most are still working with the same inputs they've been using for years. Their goals might have shifted, but they're doing the same thing over and over and expecting new results.

Typical industry approaches to audience strategy involve segmenting and understanding audiences based on behavioural, attitudinal, and demographic data.

There is a pronounced emphasis on using medical or clinical data, focusing on disease type or trying to predict who may have a certain diagnosis.

While it is important to consider these factors for sizing and reaching, they're less effective in adding personal relevancy into marketing communications or tapping into the emotional needs that motivate behavioural change.

Consumers end up being inundated with similar messaging from pharmaceutical brands that lack true empathy, and this desensitises consumers to pharmaceutical advertising.

Many pharmaceutical brands aren't fully able to move beyond the status quo and motivate audiences towards healthier outcomes.

Shifting attention

Marketers in the pharmaceutical space need to shift their attention from looking purely at who is winnable, and instead broadening their outlook to understand how to win more of their audience's mindshare.

While there is value in establishing who the 'low-hanging fruit' is that makes up, say, 10% of their audience, the bigger challenge is figuring out how to win the 80% in the middle, who may be leaning towards a particular brand, are likely considering alternatives too.

To get this group to 'move', pharmaceutical brands need to be more relevant, modernise their tactics, and broaden their definition of winnable audiences by looking beyond the consumers that are already motivated and understanding how to motivate those who might otherwise be waiting in the wings.

Human values and motivations

Human value systems, the deeply emotional outcomes we desire above all, shape what consumers see as favourable and therefore influence behaviour and the choices they make.

We've seen values like health and personal security trump others like social status or belonging within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Wellness-focused values, like quality of life, have become greater priorities in the consumers' eyes, prompting purchases they believe will contribute to their wellbeing and their families.

Some of what consumers long for, what truly speaks to them, remains stable, but many of their needs evolve.

The pandemic, among other impactful events over the past two years, has shone a light on just how adaptable consumers are and how much their values may shift.

There are great opportunities for pharmaceutical companies to consider how to motivate with a more tailored proposition based on emotional needs.

Individuals who are met with 'cookie cutter' messaging are likely to remain unmoved.

Elicit a meaningful response

Targeting the same consumers with more emotionally personalised and highly relevant messaging is far more likely to grab their attention and elicit a meaningful response.

To do that pharmaceutical companies need to push themselves (and their partners) to seek an understanding of the

underlying values that shape a defined population's decisions—not just micro decisions about a brand choice but a spectrum of decisions that uncover the implicit path to consumers' hearts and minds.

By looking at the real-life picture, pharmaceutical companies will be able to implement a more inclusive strategy that involves an understanding of meaningful differences between people as opposed to a view of a homogenised group within a population.

In a 'Health Inertia Study' we conducted this year, we noted that the right content can actually motivate action and change attitudes.

That may sound straightforward, but we found that marketing tailored to people's personal health values can increase consumer action by double to triple digits, compared to standard industry advertising.

This goes to show that delivering personalised and emotional content to a deeply understood audience is the way forward for pharmaceutical companies that want to achieve true differentiation as brands that engage with their audiences in a human way and succeed at motivating those who think differently, enabling the expansion of their winnable audiences.

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