

STUDY TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROMOTIONAL METHODS USED BY MEDICAL REPRESENTATIVES IN DOCTOR'S CHAMBER

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***Abstract:** Pharmaceutical companies appoint trained medical representatives to promote their brands to doctors. This study evaluates the effectiveness of the various promotional methods used by the representatives in convincing the doctors to prescribe their brands. The survey was done by collecting the information from various specialty doctors. We have observed that product detailing was considered as the most effective method of brand promotion, followed by free sampling, gift and brand reminders. The less effective methods of brand promotion are monetary rewards and schemes offered by medical representatives. Regular representation and good product detailing is very important for an effective brand promotion, product samples and brand reminders may support the doctor in judging the efficacy of the product and to remember the brand name respectively.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Pharmaceutical industry is a knowledge based industry and the customers (doctors) are highly qualified decision makers, further the decision of product selection is not directly done by the consumer especially for prescribed products. The decision of product selection is done by doctors who prescribe the medicines to their patients. Thus pharmaceutical companies compete with each other in promoting their brands to occupy the prime position in the mind of doctors. Brand promotion to doctors are mainly done by medical representatives, thus pharmaceutical companies provide training to their representatives and provide them various promotional inputs. This promotional methods adopted by pharmaceutical companies includes product detailing, gifts, table top reminders, monetary rewards, free samples, schemes offered by medical representatives, patient education materials, product literatures and product references, This study evaluates the effectiveness of the various promotional methods used by the representatives in convincing the doctors to prescribe their brands.

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II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review on the topic has revealed some research papers and articles have been written and are available in print media and electronic media. We have shortlisted the studied which are relevant.

In an article published in African Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology Vol. 5(13), pp. 1623-1632, 8 October, 2011 entitled "Relevant influence of promotional tools by pharmaceutical industry on prescribing behaviors of doctors: A cross-sectional survey in Pakistan" by Arslan Siddiqi et. al. the authors describes the role of various promotional tools which includes both in-clinic and outside the doctors clinic activities such as sponsorship, CMEs, personal promotional tools and their effectiveness. In an article published in Indian Journal of Medical Ethics Vol 4, No 2 (2007) entitled Drug promotional practices in Mumbai: a qualitative study by Nobhojit Roy, Neha Madhiwalla, Sanjay A Pai the author talks about the impact of manufacturers, chemists, doctors and medical representatives in brand promotion.

Promotion of Prescription Drugs and Its Impact on Physicians' Choice Behavior by Volume 65, Issue 3 (July 2001) by Füsün F. et. al., the authors found that physicians are characterized by fairly limited price sensitivity, detailing and samples have a mostly informative effect on physicians, and physicians with a relatively large number of Medicare or health maintenance organization patients are less influenced by promotion than other physicians.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data for this research paper has been collected from doctors around Chennai and the secondary data sources, articles, research papers, study conducted by organization of pharmaceutical firms present in the Indian market. The data gathered on the key aspects have been studied and mathematically analyzed to identify the effective promotional methods which can be used by medical representatives in doctor's chamber.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from 50 doctors from various specialties like GPs, Physicians, Gynecologists, pediatricians, surgeons, ENT, and orthopedicians. 40 % of respondents were GP and the balance respondents were 10% from each specialty doctors. The study reveals interesting information regarding the effectiveness of promotional methods used by medical representatives inside the doctor's chamber as represented in the Table 1.

From the above table it is very clear that almost 80 percent of doctors say that product detailing is more effective and 44 percent of doctors say that product free sampling is more effective. Chart-1 reveals the more effective promotional methods

Table 1
Effectiveness of promotional methods

Promotional Methods	More effective	Average	Less effective	Not effective
Product detailing	39	8	3	0
Gift	12	20	10	8
Brand reminder	4	25	16	5
Monetary rewards	0	0	1	49
Free samples	22	14	10	4
Schemes offered by medical representatives	1	3	9	37
Patient education materials and product literatures.	5	12	19	14

used by medical representatives and Chart-2 reveals the less effective promotional methods.

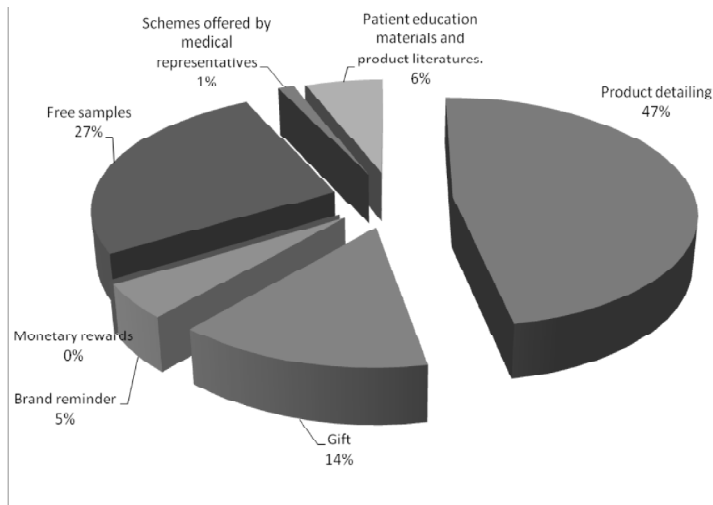


Chart-1: More Effective of promotional methods

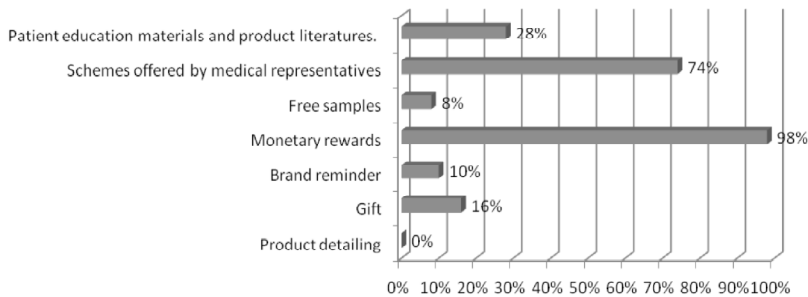


Chart-2: Less Effective of promotional methods

V. CONCLUSION

Out of the various promotional methods used by pharmaceutical for effective brand promotion, product detailing was considered as the most effective, followed by free sampling, gift and brand reminders. The less effective methods of brand promotion are monetary rewards and schemes offered by medical representatives. Regular representation and good product detailing is very important for an effective brand promotion, product samples and brand reminders may support the doctor in judging the efficacy of the product and to remember the brand name respectively.

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