

THE POSSIBILITIES AND ADVANTAGES OF USING OF MULTICHANNEL MARKETING IN PHARMACY

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The pharmaceutical industry is undergoing significant changes due to development and increasing role of digital technologies. Multichannel marketing provides simultaneous interaction of pharmaceutical companies with target audiences through a set of off-line channels of marketing communications (advertising, specialized publications, visits of medical representatives, conferences, merchandising, etc.) and on-line channels (search engines, social networks, professional communities, e-mail, blogs, forums, webinars, mobile applications, etc.).

Drugs and other medical products, unlike ordinary consumer products, require a high level of awareness during their selection and application. This, combined with an interest of target audiences, identifies prospects of application of multichannel marketing for pharmaceutical brands. The feasibility of multi-channel marketing for pharmaceutical companies is justified by the fact that clients (consumers, patients, medical and pharmaceutical professionals) use different channels of information on medicines (published sources, television, Internet, mobile devices and social networks) at different stages of making decision on use of drugs. Multichannel marketing involves the use of multiple synchronized channels of marketing communications to deliver required information to target audiences according to the stage of their decision-making. In this case between the pharmaceutical company and clients there is interaction and a long two-way communication creating favourable conditions for application of drugs.

The main advantages of pharmaceutical multichannel marketing is the ability to attract the consumers' attention in a few additional platforms; to increase the effectiveness of messages received simultaneously through multiple channels; to categorize prospective clients based on their information needs and meet these needs; to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing activities and make quick adjustments to them; to compensate the high cost of content creation by simultaneous use of many channels; to attract consumers to the creation and distribution of content (exchange of experiences on the use of drugs) via social media.

Problems in pharmaceutical multichannel marketing may be caused by the rapid spread of negative customer experience on the use of drugs, as well as the need for continuous monitoring and neutralization of some negative messages. Perspective directions of multichannel marketing for pharmaceutical companies are related to the formation and development of social networks for healthcare professionals and patients.