

A Study On Relationship Management Practices and Identify the Problems Faced By Pharmacist CUM Retailer

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ABSTRACT

Relationship Management Practices play significant role in prescribing products of pharmaceutical companies which influence the behavior of doctors and pharmacist. The study explores the problems faced by pharmacist cum retailers from the services rendered by Pharma companies. The present study was based on the information obtained through a Survey technique which was carried out in the National Capital Region of Haryana state and for the survey five district have been selected and further Subdivided into four zones depending upon the area covered by each Pharmaceutical companies (Headquarter wise) and the distributor channel (stockists etc.) feeding the different Headquarters. Focus Group Interview was conducted to fulfil the objective i.e. problems faced by customers (pharmacists cum retailers) from Pharmaceutical companies. Through this Interview the researcher could understand the problems and difficulties faced by the pharmacists cum retailers after identifying their issues.

Key Words: Pharmaceutical Companies, Pharmacist, Knowledge Management

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Pharmaceutical market is the third largest in terms of Rupee value and thirteenth largest in terms of value, as per a report by Equity Master. 70 to 80 percent of the market is captured by the Generics brands as reporting by equity master. India is the biggest provider which contributes one-fifth of Generic drugs marketed globally in terms of volume. Indian pharmaceutical market is highly fragmented and has become a significant feature of Indian Pharmaceutical industry.

The population of our country is mounting rapidly, so as economy of India is creating a large Middle class with the resources to afford drugs available globally. Further, India's epidemiological report is shifting, so requirement is expected to boost for drugs for Cardio-vascular problems, disorders of the Central nervous system and other unrelieved diseases. Collectively these factors signify that India represents talented prospective market worldwide Pharmaceutical manufacturers. Moreover, India has a rising Pharmaceutical industry at its hold. It is expected to grow drastically in some specific areas at International platform. and a prospective collaborator in others. India has extensive Manufacturing Proficiency. Indian companies are along with the world Cream of the Crop in the production of Generics and Vaccines, as both of these areas develop into more vital segments. Indian producers are expected to take a huge position on the Global Theatre – and potentially associate with worldwide Pharma companies to promote their commodities outside India.

Objectives of the Study

To identify the problems faced by Pharmacists cum Retailers from Pharmaceutical companies.

To suggest better ways and means for developing good Relationship management practices.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective was achieved after applying descriptive analysis of the problem faced by pharmacist cum retailers and further chi square test has been applied for the equality of more than two population proportions. For the purpose focus group method and depth interview is used to identify the problems. Focus groups are the most significant Qualitative research procedure. The main objective of focus groups is to collect information from the group of people in planned target market by discussing in Context of priorities to the researcher. This Technique is similar to qualitative research and detailed interviews are also another method of obtaining Qualitative data.

Explanation of Problems

On the basis of focus group interview and depth interview of group of people from the target market following problems are explored.

Prob 1 Replacement of expiry items

In most of the brands the expiry / batch no. and MRP of the product is given only on one side of the strip so while selling some of the information regarding expiry no. may get detached which makes it difficult for pharmacist cum retailers to replace the product.

Prob 2 Replacement due to leakage etc.

The pharmacist faces difficulty in replacing the soiled stock, stock which is spoiled due to leakage from the company's distributors.

Prob 3 Replacement due to breakage etc.

The pharmacist faces difficulty in replacing the stock which is spoiled due to breakage from the company's distributors.

Prob 4 Packing of product is not dose oriented

Since the packing of product is not dose oriented which compels the pharmacist to cut the strip etc leading to damage of stock.

Prob 5 Lack of information regarding bonus offer

A pharmacist cum retailers does not get adequate information regarding bonus offer which leads to financial loss.

Prob 6 Unhealthy trade practices

As observed that the field force is involved in unhealthy trade practices to complete their incentive-based targets. There is a disparity of transactions in different parties.

Prob 7 Lack of information at the time of launch of new molecules

Absence of adequate information regarding launch of a new molecule or even discontinuation of an old molecule with the pharmacists cum retailers forcing them to substitute the product leading to inconvenience to the patients, moreover it is a lifesaving drug it triggers the mortality rate.

Prob 8 Poor quality of printing

Quality of printing is so poor in few companies that batch no. and other details regarding drugs erase and the drugs cannot be sent back to the companies

Descriptive analysis of the problem faced by Pharmacist cum Retailers

	Dis 1		Dis 2		Dis 3		Dis 4		Dis 5		Total
	(F)	%	(F)	%	(F)	%	(F)	%	(F)	%	
Prob 1	30	14.63	11	5.36	60	29.75	70	34.14	33	16.09	205
Prob 2	11	15.71	6	8.57	17	24.28	20	28.57	16	22.86	70
Prob 3	26	14.28	13	7.14	55	30.22	60	32.97	28	15.38	182
Prob 4	29	16.11	9	5	48	26.67	60	33.33	34	18.89	180
Prob 5	29	18.35	11	6.96	42	26.58	45	28.48	31	19.62	158
Prob 6	35	20.83	16	11.31	40	23.81	40	23.81	34	20.24	168
Prob 7	25	21.19	7	5.93	23	19.49	36	30.51	27	22.88	118
Prob 8	15	21.74	4	5.79	14	20.29	19	27.54	17	24.63	69

The table depicts that 205 Respondents confirm the problem 1 (replacement of expiry item) and this is the major problem faced by them. The study shows that In District 1 (Rohtak) 30(14.63) percent, District 2 (Bhiwani) 11(5.36) percent, District 3 (Gurugram) 60(29.75) percent, District 4 (Faridabad) 70 (34.14) percent and District 5 (Bahadurgarh) 33(16.09) percent Pharmacists cum Retailers are facing problem 1. Further 70 Respondents confirm the

problem 2 (replacement due to leakage) and this is the minor problem faced by them. The study shows that In District 1 (Rohtak) 11(15.71) percent, District 2 (Bhiwani) 6(8.57) percent, District 3 (Gurugram) 17(24.28) percent, District 4 (Faridabad) 20 (28.57) percent and District 5 (Bahadurgarh) 16(22.86) percent Pharmacists cum Retailers are facing problem 2. The study also reveals that 182 Respondents confirm the problem 3 (replacement due to Breakage) again this is the major problem face by them. In District 1 (Rohtak) 26(14.28) percent, District 2 (Bhiwani) 13(7.14) percent, District 3 (Gurugram) 55(30.22) percent, District 4 (Faridabad) 60 (32.97) percent and District 5 (Bahadurgarh) 28(15.38) percent Pharmacists cum Retailers are facing problem 3. Further 180 Respondents confirm the problem 4 (packing of product is not dose oriented). In District 1 (Rohtak) 29(16.11) percent, District 2 (Bhiwani) 9(5) percent, District 3 (Gurugram) 48(26.67) percent, District 4 (Faridabad) 60(33.33) percent and District 5 (Bahadurgarh) 34(18.89) percent Pharmacists cum Retailers are facing problem 4. 158 Respondents confirm the problem 5 (lack of information regarding bonus offer) the study shows that In District 1 (Rohtak) 29(18.35) percent, District 2 (Bhiwani) 11(6.96) percent, District 3 (Gurugram) 42(26.58) percent, District 4 (Faridabad) 45 (28.48) percent and District 5 (Bahadurgarh) 31(19.62) percent Pharmacists cum Retailers are facing problem 5. 168 Respondents confirm the problem 6 (unhealthy trade practices). The study shows that In District 1 (Rohtak) 35(20.83) percent, District 2 (Bhiwani) 16(11.31) percent, District 3 (Gurugram) 40(23.81) percent, District 4 (Faridabad) 40 (23.81) percent and District 5 (Bahadurgarh) 34(20.24) percent Pharmacists cum Retailers are facing problem 6. 118 Respondents confirm the problem 7 (lack of information at the time of launch of new molecules) the study shows that In District 1 (Rohtak) 25(21.19) percent, District 2 (Bhiwani) 7(5.93) percent, District 3 (Gurugram) 23(19.49) percent, District 4 (Faridabad) 36 (30.51) percent and District 5 (Bahadurgarh) 27(22.88) percent Pharmacists cum Retailers are facing problem 7. 69 Respondents confirm the problem 8 (poor quality of printing) and this is the minor problem faced by them. The study shows that In District 1 (Rohtak) 15(21.74) percent, District 2 (Bhiwani) 4(5.79) percent, District 3 (Gurugram) 14(20.29) percent, District 4 (Faridabad) 19 (27.54) percent and District 5 (Bahadurgarh) 17(24.63) percent Pharmacists cum Retailers are facing problem 8.

In district 1 (Rohtak) problem 6 (unhealthy trade practices) is faced by maximum number of pharmacists cum retailers. The table depicts that out of 40 respondents 35 (87.5) percent tick the problem 6. In district 2 (Bhiwani) all the 16 respondents have tick the problem 6. Further table depicts that in district 3 (Gurugram) problem 1 (replacement of expiry items) is faced by maximum number of pharmacists cum retailers. The table showed that out of 60 respondents all have tick the problem 1. In district 4 (Faridabad) also problem 1 is faced by 100 percent respondents. In district 5 (Bahadurgarh) 33(75) percent pharmacist cum retailers are facing the problem 1.

Findings of the objective i.e. Problems faced by Pharmacist cum Retailers achieved through descriptive analysis.

The study explored that Problem 1(replacement of expiry items) is very serious problem because it is confirmed by 205 respondents. In district 4 (Faridabad) Out of 205respondents, 70 (34.14) percent respondents were facing Problem 1. Further analysis shows that problem 3 (replacement due to breakage) and problem 4(packing of product is not dose oriented) are again very serious problems among Pharmacists cum Retailers. In total problem 3 is confirmed by 182 respondents and problem 4 is confirmed by 180 pharmacists cum retailers. The study explored that problem 6 is also confirmed by 168 respondents in all the five districts.

In district 1 (Rohtak) problem 6 (unhealthy trade practices) is faced by maximum number of Pharmacist cum retailers. The table depicts that out of 40 respondents 35 (87.5) percent confirmed the problem 6. In district 2 (Bhiwani) all the 16 respondents have confirmed the problem 6. Further table depicts that in district 3 (Gurugram) problem 1 (replacement of expiry items) is faced by maximum number of pharmacists cum retailers. The table showed that out of 60 respondents all have confirmed the problem 1. In district 4 (Faridabad) also problem 1 is faced by 100 percent respondents. In district 5 (Bahadurgarh) 33(75) percent pharmacist cum retailers were facing the problem 1.

SUGGESTIONS & CONCLUSION

1. Knowledge Management is the most importance tool for the Doctors as they stand responsible to treat and cure their patients for which they supposed to use the latest and approved drugs which are not only cost effective but also ensures patient compliance. Pharmaceutical companies should not only provide the latest information regarding the development of new molecules but also train and upgrade their field force so that the information should pass down to doctors in a scientifically framed pattern, so that it makes it convenient and confident for the doctors to use the drugs efficiently.

2. Since the study was conducted to address and understand the concern of Doctors regarding branding actions of Pharmaceutical companies. These can take many forms, including overt advertising, provisions of gifts and perquisites to individual Doctors etc. It becomes very significant to recognize and understand that they are the indirect targets for advertising and promotional activities as they are not the actual consumers. Doctors act as a medium to reach the final consumer which is their patients so their relationship with the latter, are both guided by ethical considerations. As a standard rule, there should be open and clear commitments between Doctors A and Pharmaceuticals companies, the possibility of a conflict of interest could be raised either in clinical practice or in research that should be declared openly to patients. It should be mandatory for the Doctors to judge for themselves what is and is not acceptable, but

should err on the side of rejection of gifts. Service oriented items may be acceptable occasionally. The significance of impropriety should be taken under consideration before accepting lavish dinners and entertainment, even if accompanied by Scientific Presentation.

3. There is a significant need to focus on the upgradation and proper communication of the field force since it is the most important channel through which the information is to be imparted by the company to the Doctors. So, the sales person should have a responsive behavior which will help in delivering precise but complete scientific information.

4. Doctors and Pharmaceutical companies do share a number of familiar interests such as encouraging the effective and responsible use of existing drugs as well as innovative research in developing new ones. (Komersaroff, Kerridge, 2002) Physicians being the most vital contributor in pharmaceutical sales since doctors write the prescription after determining which drug should be used by the patient, they should never ignore that the prescription should be Customer's Centric and Cost Effective.

Disease detection camps should be a regular activity as it helps the doctor not only to make proper diagnosis but also helps him to try latest drugs and analyze the response in all category and age group of patients.

Pleasure and educational tours should be organized keeping Up Gradation of knowledge of a Doctor as a priority in addition to enjoying the geographical locations.

5. There is a need to focus on Relationship management practices through Interactive Technologies because marketing is there to spend to get more Revenue but service is here to Attract and to retain the Customers. An important aspect to be considered is the measurement of the customer's satisfaction for allowing data gathering that supports the companies in the supply of products and services that fits into customer's expectations (Newel, 2000).

6. Companies need to adopt strategies not only for Product development but also the strategy should be customer oriented (Lerilt, 1960, 1993). According to Day (2001), Cardozo (1965) and Oliver (1997) it is the customer's satisfaction that will strengthen the relationship with the company. So Pharmaceutical Company should built customers Knowledge Competence through regularly maintained Customer's Database.

7. Companies should focus on the training and development programme of employees for the improvement of their performance in building strong customer relationship base.

8. Companies should focus on some incentives to motivate the sales force. This can be possible by coming up with specific reward system and financial gain based on their behavior and customer focus performances.

9. The most important but difficult to handle promotional tool with any organization is Human resource. Since he is the first and the most important tool who has to generate Currency for the organization by convincing and helping the Doctor to prescribe the drug to the patients. The person needs to be medically equipped with the desired knowledge, and sound communication helping the Doctors to use the medical data, Usage of Sufficient trial packs of the specific molecules and promotional tools in the form of gifts to the doctors so that is makes convenient for the doctor to use their products through these inputs. For example, to start with Physician, Cardiologist, Chest Physician etc. should be presented ECG machines, Spirometers, B/P apparatus etc. which are of regular utility to the doctor for patients on daily basis. There is a need for adequate Distribution Network for rendering a better-quality service to its customers. It is necessary that they perform in the Perspective of knowledge over their Needs and Expectations, because according to Cardozo (1965) the knowledge over the customer's need and expectations is very important in monitoring their satisfaction with the Goods and Services that have been rendered to them.

10. It is also mandatory for the Physicians to follow clinical practice guidelines (CPGs), which includes the ethical guidelines and code of conduct.

11. The expiry/batch no. and MRP of the product should be mentioned somewhere in between the strip so that the record of the drug whether it has expired or it can be further used can clearly be made out.

12. Packing, Storage and Transportation play a very important role for controlling the leakage, breakage, soilage etc. so the packing norms for each section i.e tablets, capsules, ointments, liquids, injectables etc should be clearly defined and strongly implemented to avoid losses. As on today different companies are supplying goods as per their own packing conveniences and common printing norms are not being followed.

13. The packaging of the product should be dose oriented so that after dispensing the drug to the patient by cutting the strips unsold stock in the form of incomplete strips can be sent back to the company for replacement otherwise retailers have to incur huge loss.

14. In the today's Era of technological advancement the companies should be connected through important channels like E-mails, whatsapp, SMS, Monthly bulletins etc. so that timely information regarding launch of new molecules and brands, bonus offer, incentive details etc. should reach the retailers helping him to Stock and dispense the drugs and avail financial gains

15. The coding of the batch no. etc. should be done keeping in mind the geographical locations of the Distribution network so that the stocks may not be pilfered from one zone to another which will help to control Cost War thereby controlling unhealthy trade practices.

16. The marketing field force should be guided and motivated through regular refresher programs, and strictly monitored to ensure healthy competence.

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