Pharmaceutical Direct-to-Consumer Advertising and Print Media

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The purpose of this study was to determine which type of pharmaceutical direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising would be the best marketing strategy for pharmaceutical companies to use. The main argument was that one-to-one marketing in the forms of print media and the Internet was the best strategy over mass media marketing in the forms of television and radio.

The study researched various literary sources on the different marketing strategies which facilitated in examining the positive and negative aspects of each. One hundred surveys were distributed to medical personnel and pharmaceutical prescription consumers in both the Bay Area and San Luis Obispo County. Participants were asked various questions in order to determine DTC advertising preferences and reasons for these preferences. In addition, a series of specialized and elite interviews were preformed with three retail pharmacists in the Bay Area in order to gain insight on medical professional view of DTC advertising.

Results showed that the best method for DTC advertisements is one-to-one marketing through magazines and websites. Through this method consumers can be targeted by pharmaceutical companies. In addition these advertisements offer clear information that a consumer and understand and retain. If consumers can retain information about a DTC advertisement they have a better chance of purchasing the medication.

Chapter I: Introduction

Direct-to-Consumer or DTC advertising is a form of advertising that pharmaceutical companies are using to promote brand name medications through newspaper, magazine, television, radio and Internet marketing. DTC informs consumers about the positive affects of a drug, negative side affects that could occur and doctor recommendations. Studies have shown that consumers who view or read DTC advertisements ask more informed questions about the drug and have a better grasp of their overall health condition.

Television or radio advertisements reach a wide range of consumers because they are forms of mass media marketing but are not always well absorbed. Print and web advertisements have less exposure but offer a greater amount of information and focus more on the consumer. These channels would fall under the category of one-to-one marketing. This study asks the question: What would be the best marketing strategy, for pharmaceutical companies, to use direct-to-consumer advertising, one-to-one marketing, or mass marketing?

The hypothesis of this study is that the channel of print media and other aspects of the graphic communication industry is the best marketing strategy for direct-to-consumer advertising. Printed direct-to-consumer advertisements are not as well exposed as television or radio ads but have the benefit of being informative. Television has greater consumer exposure than any other advertising outlet because it has national reach. Television advertisements have audio and visual aspects that can attract the consumer. However, many direct-to-consumer advertisements on television are fast-paced and only include superficial information. Also, during commercials many consumers do not pay close attention or “fast forward” through them. Radio advertisements can be more

informative but are not visual. Also, most people listen to the radio in the car or "on the go" which can lead to most of the information obtained being forgotten.

Printed advertisements have the advantage of being directly in front of the consumer who elects to read them. By reading an advertisement the consumers becomes better informed and are more likely to follow-up on the product. In addition, print media has the advantage of being tangible to consumers who can carry the medium with them or follow-up with it on the web.

Web sites are another way that direct-to-consumer advertising can reach consumers. They correlate with print media and the graphic communication industry because many pharmaceutical companies choose to create ad campaigns that direct consumers to an informational web site. Even if consumers hear about a drug in question, web sites can be found that provide additional information. Pharmaceutical companies should include a web address on print media that is circulated through the drug campaign so people can easily find information about the drug.

Different age groups also need to be considered when creating ad campaigns. Older generations would most likely prefer print media because of their habits. The older generation would be considered to be 50 years old or above. This age group grew-up in a time where there was no or very limited Internet access so they prefer tangible media. Newspapers and news magazines would be the best ways of reaching them. Medications such as Celebrex for arthritis or Plavix for heart problems primary age group is the elderly and should focus on printed media.

Younger generations are reached through many different channels. Younger generations would qualify as people born after 1980. Medications targeting a younger age

group should focus on print media in youth magazines that direct the consumer to an interactive and informative web site. Since the younger generation is more receptive to web sites and rely on the web, it would be in the best interest of pharmaceutical companies to create ad campaigns that direct the younger consumer to their web site.

Pharmaceutical companies benefit by using many options emerging in the graphic communication industry to attract both age groups. Variable data printing, a growing trend in the printing industry, is one way a pharmaceutical company can further personalize its' advertisements. Once a pharmaceutical company becomes aware of consumer's needs it could include elements such as adding the consumer's name or offering special offers for continuous purchases that would appeal to the consumer. Other aspects that would benefit direct-to-consumer advertising are finishing techniques such as a perforated edge to allow a page to be easily torn out or an interesting card insert would help to get consumer attention and generate interest and sales.

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that one-to-one advertising through print and non-print digital media are the best marketing strategies for direct-to-consumer advertising. The graphic communication industry specializes in many of the printing processes used to produce printed media for direct-to-consumer advertising. Web offset would be the primary choice for high quality magazine advertisements as well as those appearing in newspapers. Web sites will further allow pharmaceutical companies to inform consumers about the medication in question. Overall, print media and Internet are the best marketing strategy for direct-to-consumer advertising depending on the consumer group being targeted.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Direct-to-Consumer or DTC advertising is the promotion of medications through the outlets of newspapers, magazines, television, radio and Internet marketing. The channel of print media is the best marketing strategy for direct-to-consumer advertising. In his article, "Marketing Models: Why the Direct Response Model Isn't Broken," Mark Rabe observes the benefits for pharmaceutical companies to use direct-to-consumer advertising to gear their campaigning to a one-to-one marketing strategy. Rabe also discusses the value of direct response is a form of marketing designed to solicit a direct response which is specific and quantifiable. Rabe states:

> The main benefit of direct response advertising is the return on investment it offers advertisers. By targeting ads to the right audiences, there is a better chance of generating a response, and eventually completing a sale. When brands use a form of direct response ad, they are effectively having a one-to-one conversation with a consumer, who is seeking that information in the first place. An ad that uses the right tone of voice and is tailored to display the details a consumer wants to know, is more likely to spark interest than a more generic ad. Going direct to consumers like this, and targeting campaign messages helps to produce results. DTC campaigns can offer brands flexibility, if used in the right way. Advertisers have the ability to design campaigns around the medium and location where it will eventually be displayed (Rabe).

Rabe continues by breaking down the journey that a consumer takes from view the advertisement to actually taking action in following-up on the medication or discussing the medication with their doctor. Rabe also discusses the importance of consumer recall. Recall is

the ability for a consumer to remember aspects of an advertisement after being exposed to it. Rabe states:

> The ultimate goal of DTC advertising is to educate consumers so that they can further investigate and try the product. In order to present medications in an informative way that motivates preventive health care, a number of events need to occur. First, consumers must see advertisements balanced in terms of benefit and risk information. Second, consumers must recall advertised information. Third, they must take some action, such as seeking additional information, and ultimately engage in dialogue with their physician. Fourth, they must engage in behavior that is medically sound (prescribed by their physician) and which they believe is in their best interest (Rabe).
>
> To facilitate advertising recall, the drug company and its advertising agency must construct a compelling message to present benefit and risk information in a believable, relevant, and memorable way, and ensure sufficient exposures to target customers. Without doing so, DTC advertisements will not be recalled, and subsequent effects such as information search, physician dialogue, and consumption behavior will not occur. Thus generating advertising recall is the first critical marketing communication objective for a balanced DTC drug advertisement (Rabe).

Based on Rabe's statement pharmaceutical companies need to design an advertising campaign that can both grab a consumer's attention and give vital information. In his study on

memory and comprehension of medication advertisements, Ty Abernathy, claims that magazine advertisements are the best strategy to achieve these goals. Abernathy argues:

> Television advertising of prescription drugs is the most common form of drug advertising, but it may not be the most appropriate form of drug advertising. Television ads are short, fast, and usually present only brief "sound bites" of information. Most ads spend more time informing consumers about the benefits of a drug than the risks, and advertisers have found it difficult to fully describe side effect information straightforwardly in just a few seconds. As such, television ads may be easy for consumers to remember, but difficult to evaluate (Abernathy).

With this point, Abernathy hits on one of the main disadvantages of television or mass media advertising. Television advertisements of prescription medications are often fast paced due to the high cost of the air time. Therefore, most advertisers choose to focus the allotted time to rattling off the benefits of a drug. This leads the consumer being mislead about the true affect of the medication. Abernathy argues that printed advertisements not only better informs the consumer but also allows the consumer to properly examine the information. Abernathy states:

> Magazine and other print ads are more likely than television ads to include extensive information about drug efficacy and side effects. Furthermore, magazine advertisements allow consumers time to examine complete product information at their own pace. Consumers can choose how much or how little time to spend on an advertisement that interests them. As a result, one would

> expect consumers to remember plenty of information from magazine drug advertisements that they closely attend to (Abernathy).
>
> Magazine advertising seems to be one of the most common formats for advertising drugs typically used by older adults. Older adults, and particularly affluent older adults, read magazines more frequently than young adults. They also have more positive attitudes toward magazine advertisements than they do toward television advertisements. A few characteristics of magazine advertisements make them more useful to older adults than television advertisements. First, magazine advertisements tend to contain more complete drug information than television advertisements. Second, because older adults can examine them as quickly or slowly as they want, magazine advertisements may be easier than television advertisements for them to comprehend. The extra time allows older adults the opportunity to pull from the advertisements the detailed information they need (Abernathy).

Abernathy's statements and research show that printed media is the most informative method of advertising for pharmaceutical companies. It allows consumers to read at their own pace instead of being bombarded with a flow of information as with television. With print advertisements the consumer would also have to make the a conscious decision to read it. Diane West has the same argument as stated in her article "Mixing it Up in the Media. West states, "A magazine is a tangible product that you have in your hand while TV just sort of flashes by. You don't spend time with a TV commercial. There's a bond that exists between consumers and magazines."

In conjunction with printed media, direct-to-consumer advertising would benefit from web site marketing. In her article, “Direct-to-Consumer Branded Drug Websites”, Kim Sheehan discusses the benefits of direct-to-consumer advertising on the Internet. Sheehan states:

> Direct-to-consumer (DTC) branded Web sites provide a range of information about drugs, including explanations of how drugs work, testimonials from users, assessment tools, and drugs' risks and benefits. Such Web sites can educate consumers about medical conditions and help consumers take a proactive role in their own health care. Many prescription drugs have a Web site directed to consumers (Sheehan).

Sheehan argues that in this time of economic decline, web marketing is the only sector in the print industry that is rising. She states:

> DTC advertising spending ranked among the highest ad spending categories for the past several years, with almost $3 billion spent in consumer media to support these products in 2003 and over $4 billion in 2004. Drug marketers are increasing their efforts in direct mail and the Internet; these interactive channels allow for the delivery of a range of information that can help patients manage their illness and increase the effects of their treatment. Estimates indicate that DTC interactive marketing budgets increased 13 percent in the United States in 2003, and that interactive budgets account for approximately 10 percent of total DTC advertising budgets (Sheehan).

The benefit of web advertising the Internet has an endless supply of information that a consumer can access at anytime. Besides looking up a specific medication, a consumer can look

up similar medications or medications with the same ingredients to compare and contrast. Overall consumers who have access to the internet use it in order to become more informed about a medication that has been advertised. Sheehan states:

> About 80 percent of on-line Americans search the Internet for health information at least once per year, and half of on-line Americans search for health information at least one time each month. More than half of on-line Americans gather prescription drug information before visiting a doctor and believe that the information found on-line greatly assisted in decision making for their health. More than one-fourth of on-line Americans bypass traditional portal sites and search engines and go directly to Web sites that they believe offer health-care information. Consumers prefer obtaining information about a drug from that drug's Web site to other methods. Perhaps most salient, the majority of on-line Americans view this information as reliable: A consumer's intent to request a branded drug increases from 29 percent to 39 percent when he or she visits a drug's Web site after seeing a commercial for that Web site (Sheehan).

> Interactive marketing is increasing in importance to pharmaceutical companies. DTC Web sites are like labels in that they provide consumers access to full prescribing information for a drug. They are like advertisements in that they use persuasive language to communicate the benefits of the drug to consumers. In addition, they move beyond the roles of labels and advertisements to provide a variety of health information, resources, and promotional items to consumers (Sheehan).

Based on Sheehan's statements it would appear that much of future advertisement will be on the web. The web has a wide reach much like television but is considerably less expensive to create advertisements for. For direct-to-consumer advertising in particular, web sites would be a good investment as it not only reaches a wide range of consumers, it also provides additional information that consumer might otherwise not have gotten.

Chapter III: Research Methods

Direct-to-consumer or DTC advertising is a form of advertising that pharmaceutical companies are using to promote brand name medications through newspaper, magazine, television, radio and Internet marketing. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that one-to-one advertising through print and non-print digital media are the best marketing strategies for direct-to-consumer advertising. The methods used to research this topic are descriptive research and content analysis.

Descriptive research helps to determine a situation that exists at the time the study is being conducted. Dr. Levenson notes, "the aim is to describe 'what exists' with respect to variables or conditions in a situation." The method used in this for the descriptive research was a survey. In order to study the current state of consumer preference for media with direct-to-consumer advertising surveys would be the most helpful. In addition a series of elite and specialized interviews were conducted with three pharmacists in order to get a medical perspective on patient perceptions on DTC advertisements.

Dr. Levenson notes that content analysis "is a method for quantifying qualitative information gathered from historical research and descriptive research" (Levenson). It helped to further develop results and helps to draw conclusions.

I conducted the following survey using as diverse a sampling group as possible. Different age groups were consulted to see if consumer preference differs by age. It was also important to see how many people who were exposed to these advertisements followed-up on or asked their doctor to try the medication. The survey was primarily distributed through the Internet via e-mail or by hand in order to reach the "younger" demographics. In addition, I took the survey into

many pharmacies and hospitals around the San Luis Obispo area and used my pharmaceutical networks to reach health care professionals in other areas. Since many of the pharmacies in the areas are "chain" stores the survey can be sent via e-mail to other stores in other areas.

It was difficult to determine what age to start as statistics show that many children take prescription drugs. I decided to limit the "young" category to those falling within the 15-18 year age groups. This group is not really independent in buying medication so much of their purchases are influenced by their parents. However, it was still important to see why certain advertisements appealed to this group. I wanted to see whether it was primarily the older generation that preferred printed media and if the younger generation would prefer television and Internet.

I wanted to survey people in the medical community. People that work in pharmacies will be surveyed, including, clerks, pharmacy technicians and pharmacists. I took this approach because I have observed, working in a pharmacy myself, that many people will first inquire about certain medical advertisements at their local pharmacy before asking their doctor about it. The preference of people that work in pharmacies was important because people in the medical community place importance on giving the best medical advice to their customers. It was important that customers get accurate and useful information about their medications.

Through descriptive research I was able to learn what age groups preferred which media for DTC advertising. I did not ask which medications the people I surveyed were taking or were influenced to try after being exposed to DTC advertising. I know that certain medications are particularly prevalent to certain age groups, for example attention deficit medications for young children, birth control for teen girls and women from 20 to late 40. However, it is against the law

to inquire about any part of a person's health information. Therefore, I restricted my questioning to the person's advertising preference and just asked if they would follow-up on the advertisement that they were exposed to.

Survey

1. Indicate which type of medication advertisement you either seen or heard.
    a) Magazine
    b) Newspaper
    c) Television
    d) Radio
    e) Internet
    f) Other

2. Which of these advertisements did you prefer?
    a) Magazine
    b) Newspaper
    c) Television
    d) Radio
    e) Internet
3. For what reasons did you prefer this type of advertisement?
    a. Advertisement grabbed and held your attention
    b. Advertisement informed you about the medication
    c. Advertisement was easy to understand
    d. Other (please specify)

4. What did you not like about the other forms of advertisement?
    a. Advertisement did not grab and hold your attention
    b. Advertisement did not inform you or you did not get enough information out of the advertisement
    c. Advertisement was confusing
    d. Other (please specify)
5. What was it that made one form of advertising more successful than the others?
6. Which type of advertisement do you feel gives the most information about a medication?
    a. Magazine
    b. Newspaper
    c. Television
    d. Radio
    e. Internet
    f. Other
7. After being exposed to this advertisement will you follow-up on this medication via the internet?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. undecided
8. What age group do you fit into?
    - 15-20
    - 21-25
    - 26-35
    - 36-45

- 46-55
- 55+

9. Which demographic do you fit into?
    a. Doctor
    b. Pharmacist
    c. Workers in a medical profession
    d. Consumer

In addition to this survey, I preformed a series elite and specialized interviews with three pharmacists. This is largely due to the fact that pharmacists are more knowledgeable than doctors about medications. Doctors are more focused on health conditions while pharmacists focus on drug interactions and how certain medications will affect a patient. This enabled me to get a medical professionals opinion on direct-to-consumer advertising. It was helpful to know the type of direct-to-consumer advertising is preferred as most medical professionals value accurate and informative forms of advertising over visually appealing ads which encourage consumer sales. I wanted to have a structured section of the interview in which the following questions below were asked.

Interview Questions

1. What types of direct-to-consumer advertising have you been exposed to?
    a. Which forms have you seen it in? (magazines, newspapers, internet, television, radio)
2. Have you been asked by a patient about a certain medication that they have been exposed to through direct-to-consumer advertising?
    a. In what form was the patient exposed to the advertisement? (magazines, newspapers, Internet, television, radio)

3. Do you feel that the patients who are following-up on a direct-to-consumer advertisement are more informed than patients that have not?
4. How well do you feel direct-to-consumer advertisements inform patients about a medication?
5. Which age group do you find primarily follows-up on DTC ads?
    a. Elderly (50+ yrs)
    b. Younger generation (15-30 yrs)
6. What sort of changes would you like to see in direct-to-consumer advertising?
    a. Different forms (which form of DTC do you prefer)
    b. More information (what sort of information would you like to see put into DTC ads?)

Content Analysis

Content analysis was used in analyzing the survey. This helped me to further research consumer preference for DTC advertising but it gave me more detail and firsthand accounts. The survey allowed me to see which type of media the people I surveyed preferred. It helped me to distinguish preferences within each age group and to see discrepancies between age groups. I was also be able to see reasons why each group preferred each method of advertising and if the advertisement encouraged a consumer purchase or follow-up. I then took the quantitative data such as preferences and scales of each advertisement and place them into graphs. I separated age groups and created bar graphs to show the preferences of each type of advertisement for that age group. I got group percentages for each other questions and place them in charts.

The elite and specialized interviews allowed me to see what medical professionals think about direct-to-consumer advertising in general and it's different forms. I was particularly interested in what types of advertising a medical profession preferred as most would prefer a

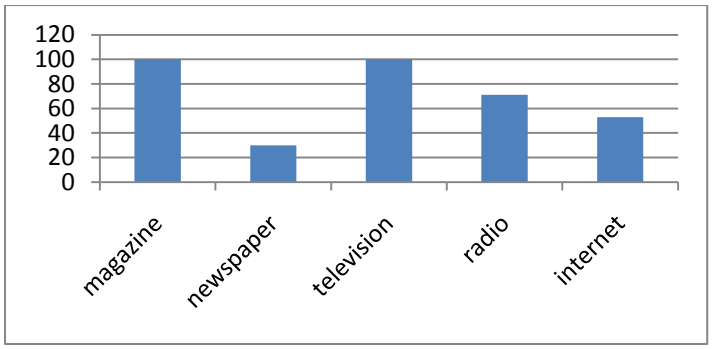
patient to be more thoroughly informed a drug before seeking medical advice. The information gathered from the interviews was prioritized based on the how each pharmacist answered each question. The key points of each answer from each pharmacist were grouped into areas of focus depending on how often it was referred to during the interviews. Group 1 (Unanimous Consensus) consisted of key points that all three pharmacists referred to, Group 2 (Majority Consensus) consisted of key points that two out of the three pharmacists referred to and Group 3 (Individual Thoughts) consisted of key points that only one of the three pharmacists referred to.

Chapter IV: Results

The survey described in Chapter III was distributed to100 people who were either medical personnel or prescription drug consumers. The purpose of the survey was to gain insight into the preferences of advertisements by consumers who purchase prescription drugs in relation to their willingness to buy the product. In addition, the survey showed what medical professionals preferred in reference to patients being informed of medications. One hundred people were surveyed, forty-five were pharmacy consumers and fifty-five were doctors, pharmacists, pharmacy technicians or pharmacy clerks. The results are as follows shown in both in percentages and graphically.

Survey

1. Indicate which type of medication advertisement you either seen or heard.
    a) Magazine (100%)
    b) Newspaper (30%)
    c) Television (100%)
    d) Radio (71%)
    e) Internet (53%)
    f) Other (no other forms of medication advertisements were added)



2. Which of these advertisements did you prefer?

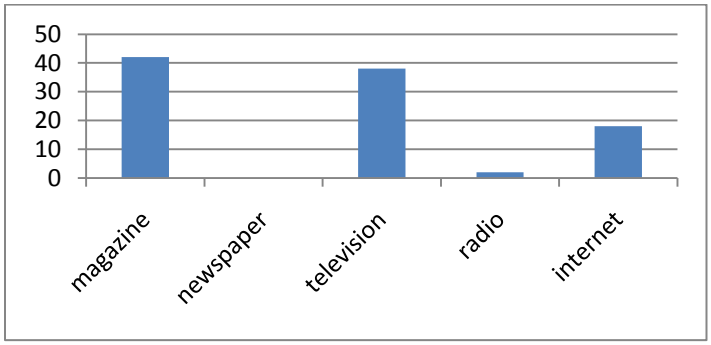
    a) Magazine (42%)

    b) Newspaper (0%)

    c) Television (38%)

    d) Radio (2%)

    e) Internet (18%)



3) For what reasons did you prefer this type of advertisement?

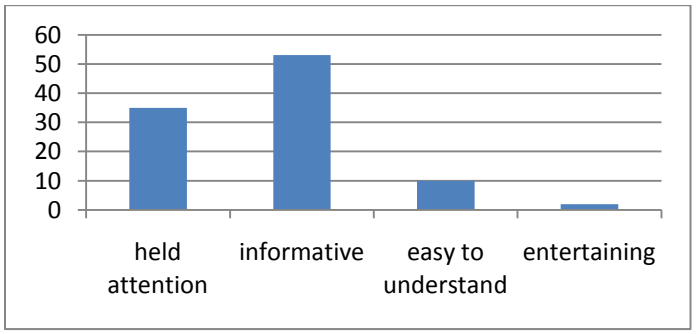
    a. Advertisement grabbed and held your attention (35%)

    b. Advertisement informed you about the medication (53%)

    c. Advertisement was easy to understand (10%)

    d. Other (please specify)

        i. Entertainment (2%)



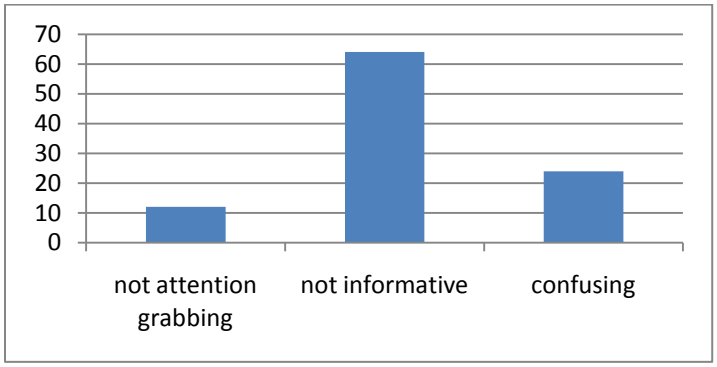
4) What did you not like about the other forms of advertisement?

   a. Advertisement did not grab and hold your attention (12%)

   b. Advertisement did not inform you or you did not get enough information out of the advertisement (64%)

   c. Advertisement was confusing (24%)

   d. Other (please specify)



5) What was it that made one form of advertising more successful than the others?

   Major reasons are listed below. There was repetition in some of the answers.

   - The ad was clear, concise and informative while being creative and entertaining.
   - The ad had relevant and useful information about the medication.
   - The ad had a catchy slogan.
   - The ad had an amusing mascot.
   - The ad was easy to read

6) Which type of advertisement do you feel gives the most information about a medication?

   a. Magazine (45%)

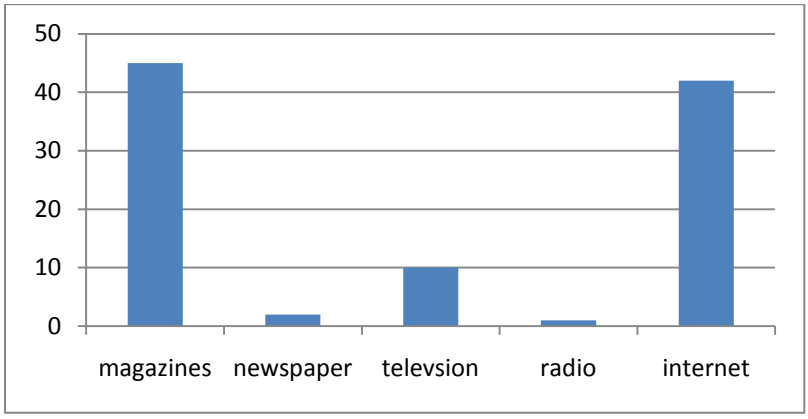
   b. Newspaper (2%)

   c. Television (10%)

   d. Radio (1%)

e. Internet (42%)

f. Other (0%)

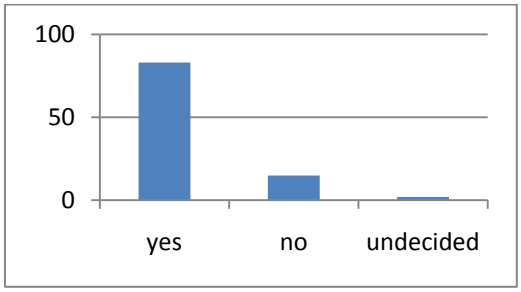


7) After being exposed to this advertisement will you follow-up on this medication via the internet?

a. Yes (83%)

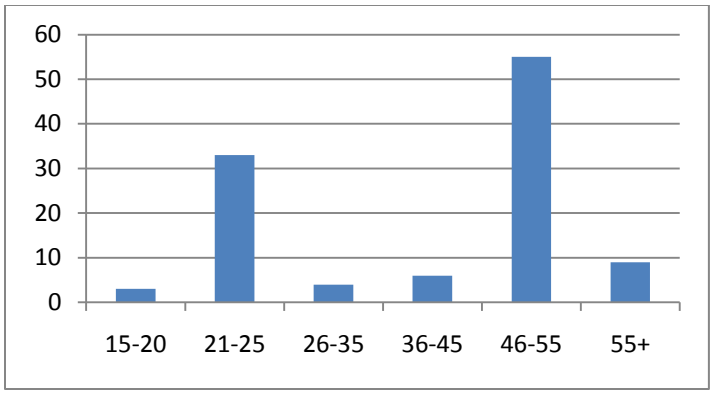
b. No (15%)

c. Undecided (2%)

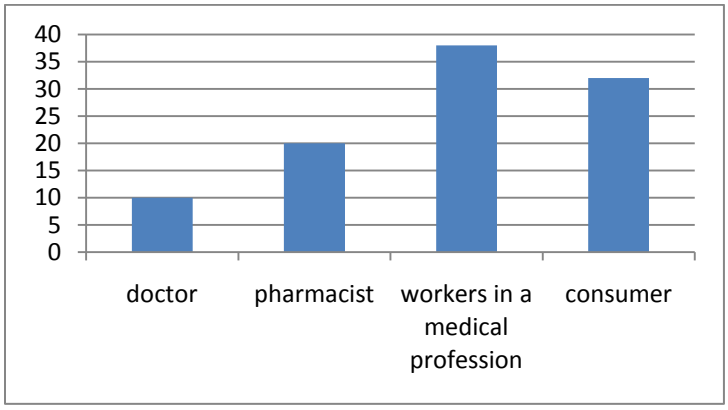


8) What age group do you fit into?

- 15-20 (3%)
- 21-25 (33%)
- 26-35 (4%)
- 36-45 (6%)
- 46-55 (55%)
- 55+ (9%)



9) Which demographic do you fit into?
   a. Doctor (10%)
   b. Pharmacist (20%)
   c. Workers in a medical profession (38%)
   d. Consumer (32%)



Elite and Specialized Interview

Ernest Khim Jr. received his pharmacy degree from the Thomas J. Longs School of Pharmacy at University of the Pacific in 1981. He has been working at a retail pharmacy for over 35 years and as a pharmacist for 25 years. Patricia Alushin received her doctor of pharmacy degree from the University of Pittsburgh Pharmacy School in 1988. She has worked at a variety of retail pharmacies for the past 20 years. Jim Crumpler received his pharmacy degree from the

Thomas J. Longs School of Pharmacy at University of the Pacific in 1975. He has worked as a retail pharmacist for over 34 years.

The elite and specialized interviews were performed in order to gain insight into how direct-to-consumer advertisements are received by the medical community. They also gave insight into what a medical professional values in these advertisements and how these advertisements change in offering a patient health care.

Interview Questions

1) What types of direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising have you been exposed to?

Ernest Khim:

For the most part I have been exposed to DTC advertising on television, magazines and the internet. I have seen medication advertisements the most frequently on television away from work. I occasionally see medication advertisements in certain magazines. When I am at work I mostly see DTC advertisements in magazine form from drug representatives wanting me to recommend the drug to patients. On the internet, the advertisements are mostly pop-up ads, headers or sidebars to the webpage I am looking at. If I click on one of these a separate webpage pops up for the medication.

Patricia Alusion:

I have seen DTC advertisements in various forms. I have mainly seen them on television or in the magazines that I read. Occasionally I see an internet DTC advertisement when I am online but this is mainly when I am searching for

information about a medication or medical condition. I frequently use Epocrities, an online site to look up medication information and drug interactions.

Jim Crumpler

I see DTC advertisements on television most of the time. I am not a big magazine reader but occasionally if I come across one there is always one of more DTC ads present. Drug representatives used to frequently bring in printed DTC advertisements for me to view and distribute. This has decreased recently due to new FDA restrictions for drug advertising "freebies" (pens, pads etc.).

2) Have you been asked by a patient about a certain medication that they have been exposed to through direct-to-consumer advertising?

EK: Yes, customers have come into my pharmacy to ask me questions about medications they have been exposed to through DTC advertising. This has become more frequent within the last eight years.

PA: Yes, pharmacy patients frequently come in to inquire about medications that they have been exposed to through DTC advertising.

JC: Yes, customers have come into ask me questions about a medication that they have been exposed to through DTC advertising.

a. In what form was the patient exposed to the advertisement? (magazines, newspapers, Internet, television, radio)

EK: The type of advertisement tends to vary. I have noticed that my older patients have been exposed to these advertisements mainly through magazines. These patients are primarily older than 60 years old. Occasionally, they come in and refer to an ad that they saw on television. More recently most of the older

patients have ripped out the advertisement from a magazine they were reading or a piece of paper with the name of the medication that they saw on television written on it. These patients usually have read the benefits and risk of the medication that were printed as part of the advertisement.

Younger patients, usually between the ages of 16-38 years old, are exposed to medication advertisements primarily from television. With this type of exposer, I find that patients come into the pharmacy with a limited amount of information about the medication. This usually entails the medications name and basic effects. Occasionally, some of the patients have followed up their initial exposer by looking up the medication on the internet. If they have done this I find that they are better informed about the risks and benefits of the medication.

PA: For the most part I find that patients that come in have either been exposed to DTC advertisements through television or magazines. Older patients will come in primarily with magazine DTC advertisements to show me and I am happy to go over it with them. Other times older patients will come in and ask about a television advertisement that they saw on television and I try to inform them about the medication. Younger patients are much the same as the older patients in reference to what type of DTC advertisements they ask me about. I have noticed that more recently they will inquire about an advertisement that they saw on the internet.

JC: I believe that most of the patients who come in to inquire about DTC advertisements have been exposed to television or magazines. I would say that older patients primarily inquire about magazine advertisements because they are easier for them to comprehend and adsorb the information. Younger patients come in having been exposed to both television and magazines.

3) Do you feel that the patients who are following-up on a direct-to-consumer advertisement are more informed than patients that have not?

EK: The patients that have followed-up on the DTC advertisement by coming into the pharmacy, asking their doctors or looking online are better informed. It is helpful when patients come into the pharmacy after doing additional research so that they can ask me more useful and discerning questions regarding their health care. If patients come in with only basic information, it is harder to ensure they are getting all of the information that they want from me about the medication. This can lead to misunderstandings between the patient and their doctor and me with their doctor.

It is important to understand that pharmacists do not write prescriptions for patients. Pharmacist have a patient's medication and health history but patients need to see their doctors in order to determine if a medication is safe for them to take given their current health. As a pharmacist, it is my job to be sure that the doctor has prescribed the patient the right strength and that the medication does not conflict with any current medications the patient is taking. When patients come in to ask me about a medication before seeing their doctor all I can do is inform them as best I can and recommend to the patient's doctor whether or not the medication is good for the patient.

PA: I do feel that patients who does further research either on their own or with me are better informed about the medication in question. It is extremely important for patients to be informed about the medications that they are taking or could possibly start taking. As a pharmacist I am concerned about how a medication will affect a patient's health and how the medication will interact with the medications the patient is already taking. Therefore, I feel that the more research a patient does regarding a medication the better informed they will be in their decision making.

JC: Patients who follow-up on a DTC advertisement before coming into see me are better informed. This is very helpful as they do not need me to go over the basics of the medication and we can dive straight into how the medication will affect their current health care regime. When patients come in with only a limited understanding of medication it causes a lot of confusion. Much of the time patients come in and want a medication because they saw a DTC advertisement that made it look perfect of them. Then they are disappointed because the medication conflicts somehow with a medical condition that they have or with another medication that they are already taking.

4) How well do you feel direct-to-consumer advertisements inform patients about a medication?

EK: There are certain elements that the Food and Drug Administration require drug companies to include in their advertisements. I do feel that the advertisements that are in print better inform the patient. Older patients can read and refer back to the printed advertisement and are therefore more likely to remember the information about the

medication. Television advertisements for the most part have disclaimers at the end of the advertisement spoken very quickly and are very hard to retain. I'm sure that most of the time people just see and listen to the beginning part of the advertisement which goes over the benefits of the medication and tune out the quick voice over that goes over the risks. This is counterproductive as many patients who ask about a medication cannot take a medication due to a risk that they did not hear in the advertisement. In addition many older patients have hearing and or vision problems. Television advertisements have started to place small print disclaimers at the bottom of their ads. Older patients are most likely not able to see the disclaimer while sitting in front of their television and miss hearing the quick voice over. Regardless of age I am fairly certain, having done this myself that many people do not pay close attention to commercials and therefore miss key information. Internet DTC advertisements are fairly new and are primarily found if a patient were to go online and look up a medication after they were initially exposed to it. These internet sites are good about offering additional information.

PA: I think that DTC advertisements have varying degrees of information that they present to the patient. Television and radio advertisements offer the shallowest form of information to a potential patient. The information is given to the patient at a very fast pace that makes it hard to comprehend. Advertisers have to realize that a television advertisement appears to the patient as a commercial which they may be paying little or no attention to. When commercials play most people will either turned down the volume, walk away from the television or avert their attention. The only way a patient will absorb the information in the commercial is if something grabs their attention. If a certain catch

phrase catches a patient's attention it is most likely because it is something that pertains to them. For example, if someone with high blood pressure were to hear "significantly lowers blood pressure" they are likely to pay attention to the advertisement. This is worrisome because they are only focusing in on only one element of the advertisement and could have missed useful information.

Magazines DTC advertisements are very informative as all the information a patient needs about a medication is right there for them if they choose to read it. This is good for patients of all ages. Older patients can take their time and read the advertisement at their own pace. Fast paced younger patients can re-read facts that they may have overlooked. I personally prefer it when patients come in with a printed (magazine DTC advertisements) because I can go over it with them and point out certain things that pertain to their specific health care.

DTC advertisements that are on the Internet have information in an alternative form of print. The patient can read the information as if it were printed. These are useful as they can be referred to after a patient sees a medication in another form of advertisement. I primarily find that younger patients will look a medication that interests them on the Internet to get more information.

JC: Television DTC advertisements I feel go for the "wow" factor. They want to reach a wide variety of people and convince them that they have to have this drug. However, the information offered by a television DTC advertisement is limited both in what it says and

what a patient takes away from it. Television advertisements are fast paced because of time allotments and the limited amount of information that they do include are thrown at the patient who rarely retains it all. It is incontinent when a patient comes in with inaccurate information because a television advertisement did not have enough information or has misleading information. One thing that I think DTC advertisements need to make clear is if the medication requires a prescription. Sometimes patients come into the pharmacy and want a drug because they saw it on television but don't understand that they need to get a prescription from their doctor. This gets them frustrated with me because I cannot give them the product that they want.

Magazine DTC advertisements are currently the most informative form of advertising out there. It allows a patient to read about what the medication can do, types of side effects and health and medication conflicts that may occur. There is also the added benefit of being a tangible source of information. A patient can refer back to it, highlight certain portions of it or write notes alongside portions. It is helpful for me when they bring in the magazine advertisement so that I can refer them to certain portions. Instead of just orally informing them I can show them the words in print.

I find that Internet DTC advertisements are not as commonly followed-up on by my patients. I do feel that they offer accurate and useful information if patients were to refer to them. However, the majorities of my patients are elderly and are wary of information on the Internet. Most of the time they would rather follow-up with a pharmacist or a doctor and have that face-to-face interaction to make sure they are getting the correct

information. I feel that over time this skepticism will decrease as more people; older patients in particular, get comfortable using the Internet.

5) Which age group do you find primarily follows-up on DTC ads?

EK: There is a mixture of age groups that come in to question me about DTC ads. The younger age group largely consists of teenage girls and young adult women inquiring about birth control medication advertisements that they either saw on television or in a magazine. The older group tends to be an even mix of males and females. They tend to inquire on various medications that can help a range of maladies. I do notice that the people that would be considered in the elderly group tend to come in with more informed questions and usually have done a preliminary amount of research. There are positives and negatives about this. The trend with elderly people is that the older they get, the more medications they tend to be on. I find that people taking medications are usually the most well informed since they have to be aware of what each medication is doing their body. When new medications enter the market these people are the most interested because these medications could benefit their current health care options. However, people taking various medications have the most problems with drug interactions.

PA: I find that older patients tend to follow-up on DTC advertisements more than younger patients. Older patients are more concerned about long-term health or maintenance medications than younger patients. Sometimes patients are taking so many medications that when a new medication enters the market that promises to decrease either the dosage or number of pills taken per day patients will want to see if it can

benefit them. Younger patients are more resilient and usually are taking fewer medications that are acute in nature. These consist of antibiotics, antihistamines, short-term steroids, or birth control. If patients do not take these it is not a matter of life and death as in the case of many older patients.

JC: Older patients definitely follow-up on medication advertising more than younger patients do. This is probably due to the fact that older patients take more medications and have more questions about them. It is often the most difficult to inform a patient that is taking multiple medications about a new medication because there are so many different possible medication conflicts. Most of the time a younger patient can go into the doctor, ask about a medication and the doctor will be willing to let them try it as long there is not a conflicting medical condition. Younger patients take fewer medications and have more leeway to try the new medications as they enter the market. Because of this they are less likely to come into the pharmacy and ask follow-up questions.

6) What sort of changes would you like to see in direct-to-consumer advertising?
    a. Different forms (which form of DTC do you prefer)?

    EK: I can see the appeal for drug companies wanting to utilize all forms of DTC advertising. Television is a great way to reach the greatest number of consumers. However, as a health care professional, I personally would like the outreach of these advertisements to be less widespread. It is always good for patients to have options

for their health care but usually these advertisements try to capitalize on the benefits of a medication. We then have patients anxious to try these new medications that may not be right for them given their health and medication history.

If I had to choose a type of DTC advertising I would prefer one-to-one advertising in magazines or newspapers. This is due to the fact that these types of advertisements contain more information about benefits and risks of the medication. They also are fairly good about stating what types of patients should not take the medication due to health problems or drug interactions with other medications. I think informational medication web sites are a good way of allowing a patient to get more information about a given medication. However, it is important for consumers to remember that all advertisements have the goal of selling a product to a consumer. I find that customers who come in after seeing a magazine DTC advertisement are better informed about the risks involved with a medication.

PA: I prefer any type of advertisement that is in print. I think that printed advertisements are easier for a patient to receive and retain information. In addition I like it when a patient brings in the DTC advertisement so that I can see the same information that they see and can go over it with them so there is less chance of confusion.

JC: From a professional standpoint I prefer magazine or newspaper advertisements. These can be visually appealing but the primary goal of a printed advertisement is to

inform a patient about the medication. I do not like that television only tries to portray the positive elements of a drug and aims to draw in a consumer with flashy colors and catchy songs. It may not be the intent of the advertisers but television DTC advertisements are often misunderstood or misrepresented.

b. More information (what sort of information would you like to see put into DTC ads)?

EK: Magazine DTC advertisements already have more information than television advertisements. Television advertisements grab a consumer's attention with both audio and visual effects. Television advertisements have started to put fine print written warnings on the bottom of the running advertisement but that can be easily overlooked. The quick voice over warnings are hard to understand and retain. I find that many patients come in excited about a new medication they saw during a television show but remember very little about the benefits and risks of the medication. As I have said previously, printed advertisements in any form have the information right there on the page in front of the patient. I find that with my older patients these print advertisements are more informational for them. Many times patients will bring in the advertisement for me to see and I am able to go over the information the ad contains with them and offer my own professional facts on the medication.

PA: Printed advertisements have all of the information out there for a patient to see and refer back to if needed. I would like to see television advertisements focus more

on all the aspects of a medication. It would be great if television advertisements could slow down but I know that is not possible because advertisers want to pack as much as they can into a short time period.

JC: I would prefer all DTC advertisements to focus less on show and more on the application and uses of a medication. I started practicing when there was a limited amount of medications on the market for a certain ailment. Now there are brand name drugs with their offspring generic drugs and all sorts of different drugs that can treat multiple aliments. The problem with television DTC advertisement is that they tend to focus on the primary, positive aspect of the drug. Patients that see these advertisements are unaware that they may not be able to take the medication because it has some other affect that was not mentioned in the advertisment.

Content Analysis

Content Analysis Groups

<u>Group 1- Unanimous Consensus (3 out of 3 pharmacists)</u>

- Exposed to a form of DTC advertising
- Main forms of DTC advertising exposer: television and magazines
- Mainly exposed to DTC advertising through television
- Pharmacy patients inquire about DTC advertising
- Patients that do follow-up research on a DTC advertisement are better informed
- A pharmacists primary concerns are the medications a patient is taking, drug interactions of those medications and a patient's health care regime
- Television DTC advertisements offer the least amount of information to a patient
- Information given on a television DTC advertisement is hard to receive and retain because of the fast pace
- The fast pace of television DTC advertisements leads to patient confusion
- Magazine DTC advertisements have all of the information right there for a patient to read and refer back to

- Older patients inquire more about DTC advertisements than younger patients
- Older patients have more questions because they are taking more medications
- Television DTC advertisements need to be more focused on all the affects of a medication
- Print DTC advertisement are preferred because they give the most information to a patient
- It is helpful when a patient brings in a printed DTC advertisement so that the pharmacist can go over it with them

Group 2- Majority Consensus (2 out of 3 pharmacists)

- Magazine exposer came from drug representatives coming into the pharmacy
- Older patients who see television advertisements will inquire about a DTC advertisement (usually will write the name down on a piece of paper or just know the medication name)
- Older patients tend to inquire about medications seen in magazine DTC advertisements
- Younger patients tend to inquire about medications seen in television, magazine or internet DTC advertisements
- It is important for a patient to be well informed about how a medication affects their current health
- Patients who do not do follow-up information only have know the basic about a medication- this can lead to confusion because the medication either conflicts with a medical condition of another medication
- Patients do not devote full attention to television DTC advertisements
- Internet DTC advertisements give useful information but many patients are not used to using it
- As patients get used to using the Internet as an information source Internet DTC advertising will be more productive
- Younger patients are more resilient and have more leeway to try new medications on the market (doctors are more willing to prescribe them new medications)

Group 3- Individual Thoughts (1 out of 3 pharmacists)

- Inquiries have become more frequent in the last 8 years
- Drug representatives advertisements have decreased due to FDA restrictions
- Older patients will write down the name of a medication that they saw on television and bring it into the pharmacy and inquire about it
- The FDA has increased requirements on information DTC advertisements must have
- Patients prefer a face-to-face interaction when following-up on a DTC advertisement

Chapter V: Conclusions

This study evaluated if the best marketing strategy for pharmaceutical companies for direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising was one-to-one marketing or mass marketing. The purpose of this study was to demonstrate that one-to-one advertising through print and non-print digital media are the best marketing strategies for direct-to-consumer advertising. Various scholarly articles were viewed and cited for background information regarding the subject at hand. Additional research was carried out through the descriptive research method of surveying the target consumer base and health care community as well as a series of elite and specialized interviews with three licensed pharmacists.

The survey was performed in order to determine which type of DTC advertisement is preferred by the consumer population and why. In addition the survey distinguished different age groups and demographics that could influence a consumer's opinion about a DTC advertisement. The elite and specialized interviews showed the views of medical professionals regarding DTC advertisements.

The survey was distributed to 100 individuals fifty-five of whom where medical personnel and forty-five of whom where prescription drug consumers. Medical personnel, particularly those in a pharmacy were surveyed, as many consumers who are exposed to a DTC advertisement first inquire at their local pharmacy before making an appointment with their doctor. The medical personnel polled primarily fell within the 21-25 age group or the 45-55 age group. The younger of those groups consisted of pharmacy clerks, ancillaries, and technicians. The older of those consisted of pharmacy technicians, pharmacists and doctors. For the consumer group, there were at least 3 people from each

of the age group listed in chapter 3 surveyed in an attempt to distinguish DTC advertisement preferences based on age.

The survey showed that every person surveyed had been exposed to a DTC advertisement. The majority of them had either been exposed to a DTC advertisement by television or magazine and a little over half by the internet. The majority preferred advertisements seen in a magazine or television citing that the ads were either informative or held their attention. Most people also polled that they found magazine advertisements to be the most informative form of DTC advertising. After having been exposed to a DTC advertisement over 80 percent did follow-up research which indicates that the advertisement was effective in interesting a given demographic to pursue more information.

Based on the survey results in can be determined that the best way for drug companies to reach a consumer is either through television or magazines. Television is a mass marketing media and reaches a broad number of people. The majority of the people surveyed cited that they liked an advertisement based on the fact that it could hold their attention. Television is better able to capture and hold a consumer's attention because it has both visual and audio effects. It is important to note that most of the people who responded that the reason for liking an advertisement was because it held their attention were consumers.

Magazines are one-to-one marketing which can better target a specific demographic. The people polled who preferred magazine DTC advertisements sited that their preference was based the fact that the advertisement was informative. It is important

to note that people who chose magazine DTC advertisements for their informative factor were both consumers and medical personnel. This shows that although it is important for the consumer to be entertained by a DTC advertisement, they all want to be well informed. Medications are not a typical consumer product as they cannot be purchased by anyone who sees an advertisement. Consumers need to be well informed about the product in this case because it has a direct correlation to their personal health.

The pharmacists in the interviews clearly favored a one-to-one marketing approach for DTC advertisements. The overall consensus was that most medical professionals prefer that DTC advertisements not be broadly spread as it increases the number of patients, many of whom will be unable to purchase the medication in question. It was also mentioned that magazines are able to better target a specific demographic which can limit the amount of consumers that are ineligible to purchase the medication. The pharmacists also agreed that this marketing approach is favored because it contains either more information or information in a form which consumers can better retain. In addition the pharmacists felt that if a consumer can better retain information from a DTC advertisement they are more likely to do follow-up research and are therefore, better informed about their health care and have a better chance of purchasing the product.

Currently website DTC advertisements are not as widely recognized as television or magazines. Websites which correlate to a television or magazine DTC advertisements have had a larger response among the younger demographic. The results of the survey showed very few people from the older demographic (55+ years old) doing follow-up research using the internet. However, as the consumers in the younger demographics age, they will already be comfortable using the internet as a resource for information. The

pharmacists stated that as people age the trend is that the amount of medications they take will increase. Therefore, medication companies should utilize this trend and create informational websites that correlate with their current advertisement campaigns.

Based on the results of both the survey and the specialized and elite interviews it can be determined that the best method for DTC advertisements is one-to-one marketing through magazines and websites. This approach better targets a specific consumer for medication companies and offers useful information that the consumer can retain. If consumers can retain information about a DTC advertisement, they are more likely to do follow-up research and have the better chance of purchasing the medication.