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Predictive Physician Marketing

By **John Mack**

According to some experts, the pharmaceutical industry has only itself to blame for limited physician access and two-minute sales calls (see "Marketing's Role in Limiting Physician Access and What to Do About It" in PMN Supplement: Increase Physician Access and Detailing Effectiveness). Because marketing develops the campaign executed by sales, pharmaceutical marketers have an opportunity to improve the situation by creating better physician marketing materials, including the detail pieces used by reps.

Creating product detail pieces and training representatives on the use of new materials represents a considerable marketing investment. Also, as will be shown below, increasing the effectiveness of detail pieces can add tens of millions of dollars in sales over a very short period of time. It would be extremely valuable, therefore, to be able to predict how well a detail will do before it is launched.

Quantitative data such as new prescription (NRx) numbers exist to evaluate the effectiveness of physician marketing campaigns but only after implementation; too late to recapture lost opportunities. Qualitative measures, such as in-depth interviews, offer anecdotal data that are limited in scope and therefore do not provide the level of accuracy needed to make the right decisions.

The ProSigma™ Detail Model
Now there is a method proven to predict the success of a campaign prior to launch. The ProSigma™ Detail Model created by TargetRx, a marketing information services company located in Horsham, PA, helps pharmaceutical marketers develop a detail piece that will drive prescribing behavior most effectively.

Mike Luby, CEO of TargetRx, founded the company after working for 10 years at Merck & Co. where he was frustrated by the lack of actionable data available. "I had 'so-what' information," he says, "but what I really needed was 'now-what' information. Without a benchmark, it was guesswork to determine which of two or three campaign approaches would be the best."

TargetRx has developed a series of finely-tuned predictive models by leveraging an expansive database of over 150 million physician insights from over 65,000 U.S.-based physicians and more than 375,000 physician/rep interactions in over 30 therapeutic markets. Applying the models to specific marketing campaigns before they are implemented gives pharmaceutical marketers visibility into how their detail will perform in the field.

Once the decision is made to implement the detail in the field, TargetRx can pinpoint the stronger and weaker elements and make clear, physician-driven recommendations to improve performance of the detail.

Case Study
A case study involving two brands (call them Product X and Product Y) clearly illustrates the ability to validate the effectiveness of the detail before it is handed to the sales force. Although the two brands were not direct competitors, they were in comparably competitive markets with comparable promotion dynamics.

In the fourth quarter of 2003, TargetRx worked with the two brands prior to the rollout of a new detail to their sales forces in the first quarter of 2004. Baseline performance trends and market dynamics were judged to be very comparable between the two products. They targeted the same specialty mix of physicians as well. Average annual revenue for each of Product X and Product Y was approximately \$1 billion in the U.S. Prior to implementation of the new details, both products had relatively similar rates of new prescriptions and similar detail quality scores based on tracking of their current sales force performance in the field.

In separate tests for each of Product X and Product Y, physicians were exposed to simulated details of the product using the new sales aid. The results of these tests were then analyzed using ProSigma Detail, which uses normative data to analyze and benchmark all of the underlying aspects of the details, such as messages and concepts, to produce a comprehensive measure of detail quality called the Detail Performance Score (DPS). DPS is a number from 1 to 100 and is a relative measure

of how well a campaign is likely to driver new prescribing. Since it is a relative index, it can compare a campaign that gets tested to many others, providing powerful perspective.

The final analysis of the new details predicted that Product X's new detail would be more effective than its existing detail and that it would likely drive an increase in new prescription market share. Conversely, analysis of Product Y's detail predicted that the new detail would be less effective than its existing piece and that share would be flat to slightly declining, all other things being equal (see TABLES 1 and 2).

If the pharmaceutical industry is to effectively execute on their strategies and realize the opportunities identified in The Kerdan 10, the boundaries created by siloed organizations must be overcome.

TABLE 1: Product X DPS Results from December 2003 Promotions Test

Product X in-Field Score Oct-Dec 2003	39
Predicted Field DPS Low Decile Physicians	52
Predicted Field DPS High Decile Physicians	48

Prediction: The new detail would be an improvement over the current Product X detail and share would increase, all else equal.

TABLE 2: Product Y DPS Results from December 2003 Promotions Test

Product Y in-Field Score Oct-Dec 2003	45
Predicted Field Score	42

Prediction: The new detail would NOT be an improvement over the product's current detail and share will be flat or down, all else equal.
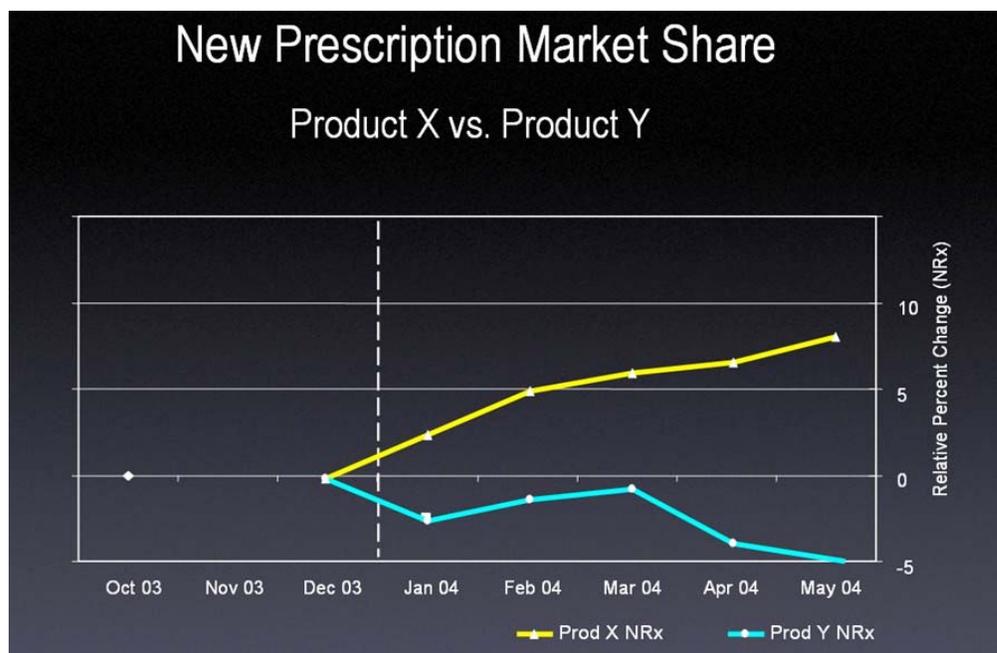

Figure 1: Market share performance for Product X and Product Y in the months following introduction of new campaign: As predicted, share increased steadily for Product X and declined for Product Y. Source: TargetRx.

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Results

Both brands released the tested details and detail pieces to their sales forces in January 2004. As seen in Figure 1, the performance of Product X improved consistently in the months following the introduction of the new piece, while Product Y saw market share go flat and decline during the same time period. Given the size of these brands, it is estimated that the impact in sales as a result of these changes was +/- $10 to $30 million over this 5 month period.

The predictive modeling, based on a very large normative database of physician representative interactions, was not only an accurate indicator of the future performance of the detail, but correlated consistently with new prescriptions for each product.

Certainly, new prescriptions are driven by many factors, but correlation of pre-launch test results in the "lab" with actual results achieved in the "field" by sales representatives is indicative of the power to predict performance using this approach.

Conclusion

"In senior management, no one generally thinks of the detail piece as being that important, and it doesn't get a lot of attention," says Luby. "It is usually delegated to a brand manager working with the agency and promotion management in a context where their preferences, rather than physician preferences, determine the fate of the campaign/ What they're missing," suggests Luby, "is that the detail piece is the lynchpin that ties together sales and marketing. Greater care should be taken to ensure that it will be effective as the stakes today are quite high."

The development of a detail that is more effective and that the sales force can have greater confidence in could have dramatic ramifications on how the sales team executes on strategies provided by marketing.

If the development of the detail piece is validated against actual prescribing, then sales should be more likely to embrace it. Marketing teams can further this likelihood by committing to tracking the effectiveness of a piece and changing it when it is needed, rather than on a pre-determined cycle. With predictive models now available, this should contribute substantially to improve sales force effectiveness.

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Expert Consulted

The following expert was consulted in the preparation of this article.

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