

## Reprint

### eDetailing Strategies for a Higher Physician Response

By John Mack

In 1996, when the sales rep expansion was just starting, adding a drug rep to the sales force would yield 750 doctor calls per year. In 2000, this number dropped to just 17 calls per year per added rep (Credit Suisse/Scott-Levin, 2001).

“Clearly we are passing the point of diminishing returns,” says Croom Lawrence, Marketing Manager at Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, “and innovation is required to increase the productivity of reps.” He was speaking at the ePharma Summit conference held on May 10-12, 2004, in Philadelphia, PA.

In 2003, there were slightly over 90,000 reps in the industry, about a 1% increase over 2002.

generally accepted that over ninety percent of US physicians have online access. Moreover, according to Manhattan Research, 49% of physicians are “ePharma Physicians,” meaning that do substantial prescribing and have used the

Since 1999, the number of U.S. sales reps employed by the 40 largest pharmaceutical companies jumped more than 50 percent to nearly 90,000, according to Verispan - “Sales reps overwhelm doctors,” newsobserver.com, 7/29/2003

(<http://newsobserver.com/business/story/2732132p-2532931c.html>).

For every 100 sales reps who visit a doctor's office, just 20 actually get to meet with the physician. And only eight of those encounters are remembered by doctors later. - newsobserver.com, *opcit*

Internet for edetailing and CME purposes (see “What the Next Generation Physician Wants from Pharma,” [PMN Reprint-28-01](#)).

Physicians also view the Internet as a credible source of research and prescribing information. A Jupiter/MD Linx physician survey, for example, indicates that when it comes to staying up-to-date on research and Rx drugs, physicians value the Web much more than sales reps.

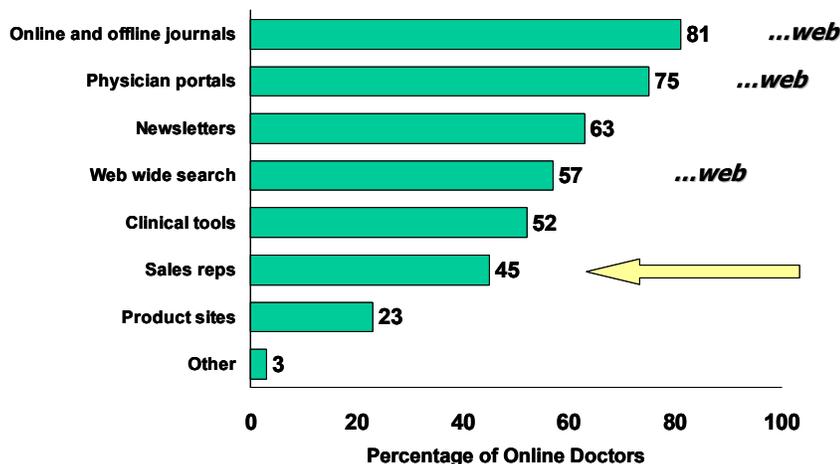
### Internet is Now Mature

Croom contends that the Internet is now a “mature channel” and offers a means of reaching physicians in an efficient manner. Indeed, it is

### Pharma ePromotion Losing Traction?

There is still considerable resistance to online promotions. In comparing the 4th quarter of 2002, to the 4th quarter of 2003, the number of corporations and products involved in ePromotion has increased, resulting in a 7% increase in the number of activities and a 5% increase in expenditures. However, expenditures have remain-ed flat in the latter half of 2003 (see TABLE on next page), perhaps indicating “a loss of traction,” says Croom.

When using the Internet for marketing purposes, more than convenient, accurate, and up-to-date information is required as a value proposition for physicians – 89% of physician internet users expect adequate compensation for their



Source: Jupiter Research/MD Linx, Inc. Physicians Survey (6/03), n = 195 (Physicians who use the Internet for work-related activities US only)

time, and place this above convenience (Jupiter Research 2003). This is why, according to Croom, that eDetailing, in its current form, is experiencing diminishing returns on investment. Croom's presentation focused on what needs to be done to improve eDetailing and reverse this trend.

### Best Practice Guide for eDetailing

Most pharmaceutical firms have piloted eDetailing programs and scaled them successfully. However,

could be Powerpoint slide decks with audio or even video (according to Forrester Research, 45% of physicians have broadband access; see "Why Pharma Can't Ignore eDetailers," [PMN REPRINT 29-01](#)). Nearly four in five respondents to the sixth annual Modern Physician/PwC survey of physician executive opinions on key information systems issues say their group doctors have high-speed Internet access.

	4Q02	1Q03	2Q03	3Q03	4Q03
<b>Therapeutic Classes</b>	162	190	193	181	188
<b>Corporations</b>	93	98	99	107	108
<b>Products</b>	406	442	448	392	463
<b>Activities</b>	494,315	590,047	624,477	497,721	529,851
<b>Expenditures</b>	\$46 million	\$55 million	\$61 million	\$48 million	\$48 million

Source: Verispan ePromotion Audit



although "Traditional eDetailing" has been around for at least 5 years, marketers must expand the definition of eDetailing. To this end Croom offers the following Best Practice Guide for eDetailing to help pharma marketers optimize the reach and impact of eDetailing.

#### 1. Go Beyond the Brochure

Most eDetails are little more than detail aids "re-purposed" into Flash pages that deliver the key selling messages in a linear format. Not that there is anything wrong with that- it be effective for new brands or for brands with something new to say based on clinical evidence. Brochureware eDetails are less effective, however, for mature brands.

eDetail brochures represent a relatively cheap and quick way to convert offline sales materials to online details but they don't take advantage of all the benefits the Internet has to offer.

Croom suggests that the best eDetailing programs go "beyond the brochure" and provide access to resources that are not easily delivered offline such as archives of presentations by thought leaders or other relevant content. These could be presentations from satellite symposia sponsored by the brand at recent scientific meetings. It also

Croom suggests that eDetails could include the following to help build customer relationships and leverage an engaged physician:

- Offer physicians the ability to opt-in to receive additional information when available
- Embed market research to learn more about your customers
- Provide physicians with an opportunity to obtain samples on-line (see "Intelligent Online Sampling Strategies," [PMN REPRINT 34-01](#))

eDetails can also be more interactive and fun. For example, Physicians Interactive, which specializes in Internet-based product solutions for physicians and healthcare professionals, offers Interplay, which is an interactive game format that extends the value eDetailing through a more effective educational tool that strengthens the dialogue and relationship with physicians.

#### 2. Expand the Focus Beyond a Brand Sales Pitch

The best eDetails—including those that are delivered using "beyond the brochure" techniques mentioned above—include more than a sales pitch. Your eDetail program should leverage what

is clinically relevant to the audience and can focus on educating the physician about other brand-related programs.

This could be education about the brand's current DTC campaign (see, for example, "Cialis® (tadalafil) Direct-to-Patient Advertising—Review the Moment" on Medscape). This helps keep the physician in the loop and prepared to address patient questions and concerns related to the DTC campaign.

Other brand-related programs that eDetailing can educate physicians about are patient support programs, rebates, etc. This helps the physician provide better service to his or her patients.

### **3. Build the Relationship between the Brand and the Physician**

Sales reps are good at building relationships with their physician clients. They learn a lot about physicians' preferences in order to take advantage of any opportunity to supply them with information they need, when they need it. eDetailing should do the same good job of customer relationship management (CRM) as the reps do.

The topic of the application of CRM in pharmaceutical marketing was covered extensively in Vol. 2, #10 of Pharma Marketing News (see, for example, "Putting the Customer Back in Customer Relationship Management," [PMN REPRINT 210-02](#))

Building a relationship also involves permission-based marketing techniques (see "Out-of-the-Box Marketing: Will It Work for Pharma?," [PMN REPRINT 27-02](#). Order this reprint now.). Croom suggests that eDetailing programs employ a permission-based "re-contact strategy" to extend the reach of eDetailing. That is, use opt-in databases maintained by your CRM application to re-connect with interested physicians with relevant messages based upon past contact information.

The Key Success Factor is to keep in regular contact with your audience with high value, relevant information. Once the databases are developed, the cost of delivering these permission-based messages is extremely low.

### **4. Employ a Viral Approach**

Viral marketing (aka, "word-of-mouth" and "creating a buzz") encourages individuals to pass on a message to others as in "e-mail this article to a friend." The technique is used in other industries such as major publications, e.g., the New York Times or Wall Street Journal.

If done effectively (e.g., requiring very little effort on the sender's part), viral marketing can create

exponential growth in the message's exposure and influence. So be sure to employ this technique within your eDetail program to encourage physicians to send information to their colleagues. If it is planned and implemented during development, the cost is virtually zero (scales very well from small audience to large) and it is an easy way to increase your reach and build your re-contact database.

### **5. Ensure Support from Your Sales Reps**

Although 65% "eDetailed Physicians" say they participate in eDetails because "they [eDetails] are less disruptive than reps" (Forrester, "Why Pharma Can't Ignore eDetailers," op cit) and reps may view eDetailing as competition, the best eDetailing programs will work hand-in-hand with the sales force. That is, eDetailing should complement the sales force and become integrated into the sales and marketing process (see "The Impact of eDetailing: Will it Complement, Replace, or Become Integrated with the Sales Force?" [PMN REPRINT 29-02](#)).

Recruiting physicians for eDetailing is a challenge and the sales force can be of great help here. For pharma companies where the sales reps benefit from eDetailing—through increased access and sales—Croom suggests that the sales force be leveraged to recruit physicians. The goal is to increase your database build over time, lower future program recruitment costs and optimize program efficiency

### **6. Measure, Measure, Measure**

ROI, ROI, ROI. How many times have we heard that acronym?! It refers, of course, to "Return on Investment." Although many marketers try to avoid this and shift the focus to less measurable outcomes like ROE ("Return on Education"), in today's world there is no escaping ROI. You know, it's matter of increasing profits! D'uh.

Traditionally, eMarketers have struggled for some time with the question of which metrics are most appropriate to measure success. This is no less true for eDetailing (see "Optimizing eDetailing ROI," [PMN REPRINT 29-03](#)).

Croom suggests that pharma companies and their eDetailing partners should focus on value creation for two main constituents: the physician and the company.

#### Value to the Physician

- Brand Experience
- Practice Efficiencies
- Education
- Patient Clinical Outcomes

*Continues on next page...*

### Value to the Company

- Quantitative Market Research
- Qualitative Research
- eCRM - Opt-in Permission Database

These value propositions will help you determine what to measure in order to evaluate the success of your eDetailing program.

### **Going Forward**

To move ePromotion—including eDetailing—ahead, pharma companies need to find answers to the following questions, according to Croom:

- How do you determine the right marketing mix?
- How do you integrate eMarketing with field promotion?

- How can you improve targeting and segmentation?
- How can you overcome organizational barriers to adoption?

Croom pointed to several non-pharma companies like WebMD, Amazon.com, and Capital One Financial Corp. that have achieved capitalization growth in a poor economy and suggested that what they had in common was a customer-driven value proposition that combined database marketing, personalization, and on-demand content. This, suggests Croom, is a credible model for pharma to follow with its customers as well.

**Pharma Marketing News**

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## **Experts Consulted and/or Cited In Articles**

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The following experts were mentioned or consulted in the preparation of articles for this issue.

- **Croom Lawrence**, Marketing Manager, Wyeth Pharmaceuticals , 484-865-3782, [lawrenc@wyeth.com](mailto:lawrenc@wyeth.com).

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## **Resource List**

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The following resources were consulted in the preparation of this issue or cited within this issue.

- “Doctors to Pharma: Don’t Ditch the eDetailers,” <http://www.forrester.com/ER/Research/Brief/Excerpt/0,1317,15454,FF.html>
- “More physicians have high-speed Internet access,” iHealthbeat, September 30, 2003. <http://ihealthbeat.org/index.cfm?action=dspItem&itemID=100018>. (accessed 4 June 2004).

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## Pharma Marketing News

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*Pharma Marketing News*—the First Forum for Pharmaceutical Marketing Experts—is published monthly by **VirSci Corporation** except for August. It is distributed electronically by email and the Web to members of the Pharma Marketing Network ([www.pharmamarketing.com](http://www.pharmamarketing.com)).

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