

The MediZine, Rx EDGE impact

NEW YORK — There is no better place to reach health care consumers than at the “point of care,” and for tens of millions of Americans every day that point is the pharmacy.

That’s why such marketing/health care communications companies as Rx EDGE and MediZine have thrived, say their top executives.

Both companies place and manage communications in drug stores. MediZine does so with consumer health educational programs, including its *Healthy Living*, *Diabetes Focus* and *Diabetes Focus Espanol* magazines and customized publications distributed at the pharmacy counter, as well as

physicians office programs and in-home direct and online permission marketing, while Rx EDGE provides booklets, pamphlets and inserts about pharmaceuticals for display on over-the-counter drug shelves or at the pharmacy counter.

“The best place to catch consumers is when they’re thinking about their own ailments, and there’s no better place for that than the drug store,” says Rx EDGE executive vice president and general manager Gary Norman.

Picking up Rx EDGE literature in stores is an expedient way for patients to get solid information not only about brands, but also disease states, says Nor-

man. And in the process they can sometimes get incentives to make a purchase with rebate offers. The upshot is an average lift in prescription volume for the product being promoted of 9.8% (based on well over 200 research panel programs), Norman points out. And the average return on investment for every manufacturer dollar spent on an Rx EDGE program is \$7, he says. “It’s a pretty fantastic result.”

And just as drug makers are bolstered by increased pharmacy volume, so too are retailers. As well, drug stores benefit from the increased compliance that Rx EDGE promotes because that keeps patients returning to stores, notes Norman.

“We look at retailers as partners, and we think we help them build loyalty,” he says. “And the more we get people tied to that particular pharmacy the more they’ll spend in the store, not just for prescriptions but at the front end.”

Rx EDGE’s value as a compliance tool is especially beneficial for people with such diseases as osteoporosis, Norman says. People with the condition may not feel bad, but without adherence to their drug regimens they are vulnerable to deterioration and bone fractures. Rx EDGE material maintains osteoporosis as a top-of-mind concern, lifting compliance.

All told, Rx EDGE has successfully provided material on 85 drugs in most large categories, including diabetes, high cholesterol, gastrointestinal acid reflux disease and incontinence, as well as osteoporosis. It has worked with most, if not all major manufacturers, including Merck & Co., Pfizer Inc., Johnson & Johnson and sanofi-aventis.



Rx EDGE P-O-S material offers patients pharmaceutical insights.



Healthy Living, Diabetes Focus are among MediZine’s titles.

“At a time in which growing numbers of consumers are taking a proactive role in understanding their options for health solutions, they have an increased need for credible and relevant educational health information,” MediZine president and chief executive officer Traver Hutchins says. “Retail pharmacies are ideally positioned to provide that information — they have a recognized trusted heritage as the destination for consumers seeking health solutions.”

“The need for this material is so great it can overwhelm the educational marketing budgets of many chains. But third-party companies like MediZine can tap into the funds that D-T-C [direct-to-consumer] brands spend on national advertising programs — funds that are often not accessible to individual chains.”

According to MediZine, about \$5 billion was spent last year by leading pharmaceutical firms to build new and repeat prescriptions. “The reason retailers aren’t able to access these sources on their own is because drug manufacturers consider these funds as account-specific programs,” explains Hutchins.

But MediZine and other third-party educational marketing companies, he contends, can gain access to those national advertising dollars even when chains cannot by acting as an effective conduit. National point-of-care educational programs, he continues, can secure significant funding because of the depth of their reach and, in the process, provide “free” information for the retailer to pass on to its customers.

“Third-party educational marketing companies also bring an added benefit of content credibility provided by dedicated editorial staff and nationally respected health advisory board members,” comments Hutchins. “The sweet part is that it has a huge, definable ROI for the pharmacy in terms of increased script levels, as well as driving front-end sales — revenue acquired with absolutely no out-of-pocket expense for the retailer.”

MediZine, for example, provides its publications — two of which, *Healthy Living* and *Diabetes Focus*, were cited for excellence this year by *Medical Media & Marketing* magazine — each quarter to retailers in pre-assembled display racks, and includes a “Dear Pharmacist” newsletter that top-lines each issue and timely D-T-C messages for the pharmacist.

The bottom line is that retailers have the opportunity to take the lead in filling the education void for their customers while increasing profit through this third-party education marketing process.

Consumer analytics is the best measure

NEW YORK — One of the key attributes of pharmacy education marketing programs and campaigns is measurable results.

To quantify their power, the companies behind such initiatives have turned to such market research firms as Crossix Solutions. Crossix partners with pharmacies to convert prescription data into valuable consumer analytics in a privacy-preserving way, says chief executive officer Asaf Evenhaim.

Crossix, he emphasizes, is the only such company entirely focused on consumer analytics as opposed to prescriber analytics. It is also the sole company with the methodology to provide marketing managers with real time answers (monthly reports) on the performance of programs and campaigns, he says.

Through its major network of pharmacies and PBMs, the

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company has looked at pharmaceutical marketing programs across the board — whether at the point of care (pharmacy), via print advertising, online or even direct response TV — to gauge their effectiveness. And it has benchmarked various types of communications channels as well as different vehicles.

“Through that we have experience in measuring the quality of insights being collected and the effect of programs on establishing new patients and retaining old ones,” says Evenhaim. “Seeing how many people get started on a prescription product is a very important measure

in terms of understanding how effective a communication is.”

And the company’s measurements have revealed that the point of care is an ideal setting for a targeted approach. Such communications vehicles as MediZine’s customized educational display material reach “the right audience with the right mind-set,” he says.

Crossix has gleaned evidence that point-of-care marketing by the likes of MediZine provides a substantial advantage in the quality of “leads” that drug makers get into their markets, and significantly boosts the number of patients taking a

drug. The upshot is “a positive ROI for manufacturer and retailer and, when it comes to customer retention, a very positive outcome,” Evenhaim remarks.

He says that understanding the quality of leads allows a manufacturer to know if it is communicating with the right target audience to optimize their programs. “Manufacturers are very focused on who they believe they should be communicating with,” he notes.

Crossix is also measuring programs to increase compliance. “The point of care is a great place to start those programs. It’s where patients come to begin filling scripts,” says Evenhaim.

Crossix can help measure such programs’ effectiveness and optimize them, “but nobody knows without measuring what would work better in terms of keeping patients compliant,” he says.