

Generating pre-launch marketing awareness is turbo-charging pharma product market share gains. Harte-Hanks SVP, pharmaceutical markets, **Julian Parreño** discusses how 'hypermarketing' has helped Teva Neuroscience drive rapid market penetration

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Teva Neuroscience faced formidable challenges in advance of the anticipated FDA approval of its Parkinson's disease treatment Azilect. There was a desire to have a pre-launch readiness plan, including the development of a database populated with qualified patient and caregiver prospects where none existed.

Teva also faced competition from other drug manufacturers working on treatments for the same disease. To manage these concerns, a strategy was crafted to aggressively place salient non-branded, disease-specific messages with patient and caregiver populations in advance and in anticipation of FDA approval. Known as "hypermarketing," this approach is designed to achieve rapid consumer product trial and adoption by implementing creative, data-driven, non-branded strategies and tactics pre-launch.

An effective hypermarketing strategy serves to educate consumers and caregivers with non-branded multi-channel communications, making them aware of the potential benefits of a future treatment option ahead of its market availability. It's also an effective way to identify potential candidates for specific medications during the treatment's pre-launch stage, keeping them interested and engaged through disease-oriented communications and resources and, eventually, making candidates aware of the official availability of the brand after FDA approval is received.



Conversion initiatives for Azilect included direct mail pieces (below), point-of-service 'take-ones' and transactional emails



Maximizing the lifetime value (LTV) of strategic brands has become increasingly critical in light of the slowdown in NME approvals, patent expiration of major brands, pricing pressures and a decline of in-office selling time. In an effort to “turbo charge” market share gains at launch, speed overall return on investment (ROI) on their marketing expenditures, and recoup research and development costs faster, rapid market penetration has become a key strategic objective. In recent years, the standard benchmark has been to approach the \$1 billion-plus domestic sales threshold within three to five years post-launch. Past blockbusters, such as a Eli Lilly’s Prozac, took several years to reach the \$1 billion mark. Conversely, Pfizer’s Lipitor reached the \$1 billion mark within 18 months and it took Pfizer’s Viagra and Lyrica just one year on the market to achieve blockbuster status.

Strategy for a changing marketplace

A series of studies conducted by Best Practices, LLC, which analyzed more than 20 blockbuster products managed by more than 15 companies, revealed that long-term strategic planning goes a long way toward shaping a brand’s true market potential and increasing its optimum LTV. Such dramatic acceleration of product adoption is one manifestation of hypermarketing. A hypermarketing strategy begins in advance of traditional branded direct-to-consumer (DTC) and professional communications and requires a highly structured plan designed to: reach out to potential patients and caregivers meeting a certain profile; pre-heat the market for the eventual brand introduction; and educate physicians on the program (at launch) by creating an environment that facilitates dialogue and post-approval. By targeting consumers as well as caregivers, marketers are able to generate patient “pull” to complement physician “push.” This approach creates interest within a therapeutic category in advance of official approval, as well as immediate conversations once the brand is approved. According to IMS Health data, a majority of physicians will prescribe a named drug if requested by a patient to treat a specific condition.

“Further, online registration rates during the media campaign have run consistently at 8% and open rates for newsletters distributed via email have recorded a strong 42%”

Probing patient needs

The pre-launch marketing program for Teva Neuroscience’s Azilect was developed with the goal of learning more about how patients deal with the disorder and to identify specific unmet needs. Program design elements included these key deliverables:

- While the FDA reviewed the new drug application (NDA), the company built a database of potential patients and caregivers. The program utilized multiple response-generating tactics to gather data elements, among them direct mail surveys and non-branded websites.



Teva's Life in the Balance newsletter helped drive patients to their doctors to ask about Parkinson's treatment options

- Disparate customer data were integrated in real-time to obtain one view of each customer across two main communication channels: the web and direct mail.
- Analytics experts segmented the audience into three distinct prospect clusters—patients diagnosed by a physician, caregivers and patients with undiagnosed symptoms. Further segmentation included severity of disease and length of illness.
- Using segmentation analysis, the brand team and its agency partners devised a plan for gathering comments and insight from prospective patients and caregivers, with the goal of ensuring relevant communications based on their stated channel preferences and corresponding segment.
- The team created five waves of direct mail, targeting individual segments and offering a survey seeking input from both patients and caregivers. The mailings included a \$1 incentive check and an opportunity to request more disease-specific information, as well as daily living tips via a proprietary newsletter that served as a key, trust-building communication vehicle. A search engine media plan was crafted to aid those who preferred online channels for communicating. Completed surveys enhanced the value of the information contained in the database, ensuring subsequent use of collected responses once the eventual product launch was approved.
- The patient education newsletter was created to provide a multi-channel acquisition approach and served as the heart of the hypermarketing strategy. Available in both online and offline versions, the newsletter successfully enrolled patients and caregivers into the program. An unbranded website was developed to further support patients’ needs and provided yet another launching mechanism for acquiring new names. While Teva awaited final FDA approval, its non-branded pre-launch program acquired close to 58,000 patients and caregivers—each pro-

Six secrets to pre-launch success

To be effective and impactful, a hypermarketing strategy requires a comprehensive approach. It should encompass all facets of a multi-channel marketing program, including list rentals; database development and maintenance; market research and planning; offline marketing (mail, radio, TV, print); online marketing (websites, online communities, e-mail, search engine optimization, online advertising) and data analytics.

It also should be integrated across all touch points with consumers, patients, caregivers and physicians and throughout the brand's lifecycle—pre-launch, launch and post-launch stages. Teva's hypermarketing program design included these key deliverables:

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filed in the database—with the number growing monthly post-launch. Some 90% of the database received at least two newsletters, with two to three issues scheduled to be distributed during the coming year. By increasing distribution and awareness, the newsletter drives more patients to their physicians' offices to ask about new research and the recently approved new treatment for this disease.

Further, online survey registration rates during the media campaign have run consistently at 8% and open rates for newsletters distributed via e-mail has recorded a strong 42%.

Once the drug was approved by the FDA, the first direct-to-patient branded tactic served as the springboard for setting up an ongoing branded patient acquisition, conversion and retention program. Conversion initiatives included direct mail, point-of-service "take ones" in physicians' offices and online dynamic, transactional e-mails where the database identifies all those who opt in and select the appropriate newsletter campaign via already collected survey answers.

Continuing the lead flow is especially important for Teva, now that the therapy is in its post-launch phase. Media tactics have been developed post-launch to drive visitors to either the pre-existing unbranded website or to the branded website. Both sites serve to generate leads. The branded site also offers a survey that provides Teva with the segmentation information required for outgoing targeted, relevant patient communications. The unbranded website serves as an ongoing acquisition driver for the brand and contains educational content specifically about the neurological condition. Current retention efforts include e-messaging and microsites, direct mail, mobile messaging, RSS feeds and interactive tools such as closed blogs and live chat with healthcare professionals.

Making the hypermarketing investment

It's important to note that hypermarketing to potential and existing patients is not intended to replace more broad-based media buys and advertising. To the contrary, hypermarketing is designed to support and augment all types of consumer and professional marketing initiatives. The broader media serve to reinforce key messages communicated through hypermarketing programs. Some marketers have compared the benefits of hypermarketing to an investment plan, describing that small sums of money invested early on will compound over time with impressive results.

It's never too early to embark on a hypermarketing initiative, and competitive factors may help drive the decision. For some current blockbusters, pre-launch marketing was initiated during early Phase III, sometimes two years ahead of launch. While there's always a risk that FDA approvals will not be as forthcoming as expected, that risk needs to be calculated against potential benefits should all go according to plan.

In short, hypermarketing is working to maximize the value of the very finite "patent clock." It's about improving patient outcomes faster, maximizing total prescriptions, hitting peak sales faster and subsequently maximizing a company's "share of medicine cabinet" for a given therapeutic area. These objectives add up to make hypermarketing worthy of serious consideration by many pharma marketers. ■

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