

Hot Techniques: Detail Material Testing. How to Improve Talking with Physicians.

A conversation with **Jacque Matthews**, President ASI Canada,
the Advertising Research division of Ipsos.

Q: Are there lessons learned from consumer products advertising testing that apply to pharmaceutical advertising?

Jacque: After testing many thousands of ads in both pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical sectors, we have found that the principles relating to effective advertising are the same, no matter what the focus of the communication is. Put very simply: Advertisers need to convey a message, and need to make sure that their message is appealing and persuasive, in that it affects the attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors of their target audience. Where pharmaceutical advertising may be a little different is that their messages tend to be more complex. However, many of the lessons we've learned from consumer products advertising testing on what makes for an effective piece of communication can apply to pharmaceutical advertising as well. Having said this, advertising is like the Olympics—competition is tough and sometimes small tweaks make all the difference. For all categories, the basic premise of effective advertising is consistent, but nuances by category are critical. We have developed a best practice POV on the nuances with DTC advertising in particular, and how to make it the most effective it can be. The knowledge in that POV is all based on fact—derived from an analysis of our DTC database of norms.

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Q: Does the pharmaceutical industry have any unique advertising vehicles to appeal to physicians?

Jacque: They do; they have detailing material, which pharmaceutical reps take with them as sales collateral to their meetings with physicians. Detailing material can take the form of a one-page sell sheet, multiple-page brochure or even computer-based interactive experiences. Typically the detailing material introduces information about a new or existing product, the clinical research behind the product, and the product's benefits.

Q. Do you test detailing material?

Jacque: Absolutely. Pharmaceutical companies have to ensure their detailing material is compelling enough to make physicians prescribe their product. Ipsos ASI can help to understand if the information in the detailing material is different from competitors' messages, and whether the information is believable and relevant to physicians. We can also help identify what parts of the detailing material are most important, so pharmaceutical representatives can focus on what they should be talking about in the short time they are able to meet with busy physicians.

Traditionally, testing the effectiveness of detailing material has been done qualitatively, either one-on-one between a researcher and a physician, or in a focus group setting. While qualitative testing has an important role in Pharma research, we



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continue to hear from clients that there is no corporate memory built; there is no objective normative base to compare results to, no revisiting of the results after the qualitative work is completed. We employ a more Quantitative + Qualitative approach where the respondent base consists of a national sample of physicians who complete the survey online. In this scenario, companies can get that corporate learning from doctors' norms, so they can evaluate the extent to which their communication material is working.

The online methodology certainly has great advantages for time-pressed physicians too; they don't need to carve out time from their busy office hours to participate in an interview because they have the flexibility to complete the online survey around their schedule, day or night. Physician responses, tending to be very homogenous in nature, require a smaller sample size than consumer samples. This usually translates to very quick survey completions.

Ipsos ASI can also look at two or more detail aids to see which one will have the most impact, or perhaps which elements from both aids should be merged together for the best possible detail aid. We also look at message flow; often there are four or five different messages within the detail aid, and we can give direction on which to lead with. Our Hot Spots™ analysis helps us identify where the eye is being drawn to first, and then we match that up with other diagnostics from the research study to show which areas are the most important. And then finally – as with any communication – we look at the overall perception the detail aid is having on the brand and the pharmaceutical company.

Our colleagues in Ipsos Insight Health also have some complementary approaches to measuring rep readiness to use the detail aid, as well as post-detail sales success tracking. Together with our approach to detail aid testing, Ipsos can really help pharmaceutical companies make sure their detailing provides the best return on investment.

Q: *As a consumer, I assume that my doctor is motivated by rational reasons for prescribing medications, but you've applied Ipsos' research and development on the role of emotions in advertising to pharmaceutical ad testing. Why is that?*

Jacquie: We know that all decision making is explained by a combination of both rational and emotional behaviours. Ipsos has always been able to understand the rational behaviour and recently has developed a tool to understand emotion. Our emotional tool helps us understand the emotional response to a particular stimulus, plus the emotional pay-off of the communication as a whole, and how the two work together.

Think of it this way. Just like any other type of consumer, physicians want to know the rational benefits of a product first and then the differentiating benefits, but the product has to meet emotional needs too. The Ipsos Insight Health Group's R&D has shown that the key intangible in the Pharma sector is the peace of mind offered by the product, and that can be difficult to quantify using traditional survey techniques. So we get physicians' reactions to detailing material not only by asking questions in written format but also visually. Since the survey is online, in showing our Emoti*Scape map and emoticons visually depicting over 40 emotions, we ask physicians how the communication piece made them feel by reacting to the icons. It allows us to delve into nuances, like skepticism, confusion, and irritation, and the higher order benefits like peace of mind to ensure the detail aid is creating the required reaction.

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