

VALIDATING RETAIL ASSUMPTIONS FOR A GLOBAL PHARMA LEADER

Our research gives a pharma company insight into the “moment of truth” in antidiarrheal drug purchases.

The client

A Brazilian pharmaceutical organization that manufactures an over-the-counter, fast-acting probiotic diarrhea treatment.

Situation

The company established its medication as a leading brand in Brazil's antidiarrheal drug category by the second half of 2013. On the back of an aggressive marketing campaign, it drove consumer engagement with a brand traditionally associated with the prescription space and grew sales 42% over the previous year.

Yet the company was facing major competition from cheaper alternatives, especially generic versions of the drug. It suspected that its marketing campaigns were also benefitting its rivals by creating shopper interest in over-the-counter antidiarrheal medicines. The organization asked us to investigate.

Approach

This pharma manufacturer was particularly interested in understanding the “moment of truth” in the shopping experience – when a customer decides which brand to buy. Our methodology allowed us to explore the behaviors of both protagonists

in this event, the store sales representative and the shopper.

We went on shop-along expeditions with consumers and interviewed them face to face to get a qualitative understanding of their behavior. We also did a quantitative, web-based study to measure the drivers of their actions.

Then, we initiated mystery shopping to understand the actions of the pharmacy attendants. In particular, we wanted to verify or disprove our client's assumption that the drugstore staff offered the customer a generic at the moment of the sale. We simulated two scenarios – a consumer requesting our client's treatment in particular and a shopper asking for an antidiarrheal drug.

Outcome

Our findings showed the client that many of its assumptions about the behavior of the shop clerks and shoppers were not accurate. This gave it a rich set of insights that it could use to optimize marketing to consumers and merchandizing through the trade. Rather than acting purely on hypothesis, the company had quantifiable data to drive its decisions and could use it to invest in brand communications and point of sales activation.



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