

Diagnosing an Underperforming Drug

Challenge

A new hormone-replacement product's lackluster launch confounded the maker, performing far below optimistic expectations.

Solution

Valuable tactics emerged from an innovative and interactive examination of misconceptions held by low prescribers. This process, called Iterative Response, was also informed by insights from high prescribers.

Results

The drug rebounded, becoming one of the customer's top sellers.

Through each series of interviews, we progressively uncovered the bigger picture — discovering opportunities for success.

Challenge: Unknown Sales Failure Factor

When a mid-sized biopharmaceutical company launched a new hormone replacement product into the market, they expected huge success. But it quickly became obvious; the drug wasn't performing up to its potential. What wasn't clear was why.

The drug had a unique, convenient delivery system that the company hoped would differentiate it from the competition and build their franchise in the product category. However, that seemed to be the very feature that turned off prescribers and became the biggest obstacle for sales representatives to gain physician adoption.

As a longtime customer, the company engaged Quintiles to uncover why the product wasn't making the anticipated inroads into the market.

Solution: Triangulate the Problem Using Multiple Sources

To bring the product's underlying problems to light, we employed an innovative, interactive approach called Iterative Response. We conducted one-on-one interviews with individuals from several influential groups, using responses from each group to inform conversations with the next.

Our team initiated this process by interviewing low-performing sales representatives for the drug, asking them about their sales pitch, how they positioned the product and typical objections they encountered from physicians. Then we approached high-performing sales representatives and asked them what worked and how to address the problems for the low-performing group, including ways to overcome physician objections.

Subsequently, insights from the sales reps were used to help gather input from the prescribers. As with the reps, we

Sometimes, the unique quality that differentiates a promising drug can be the very obstacle that generates hesitation in the marketplace. Quintiles uses deep insights to reveal the big picture clients need to build understanding, sales and market success.

interviewed low prescribers first to find out why they weren't using the product. We introduced those findings to a group of high prescribers and asked why they were enthusiastic about the drug and how to address the doubts of the low prescribers.

Finally, we assembled another group of low prescribers. This time we provided them suggestions and insights from the interviews with high prescribers. As a result, we identified the most useful tactics for building sales and market success.

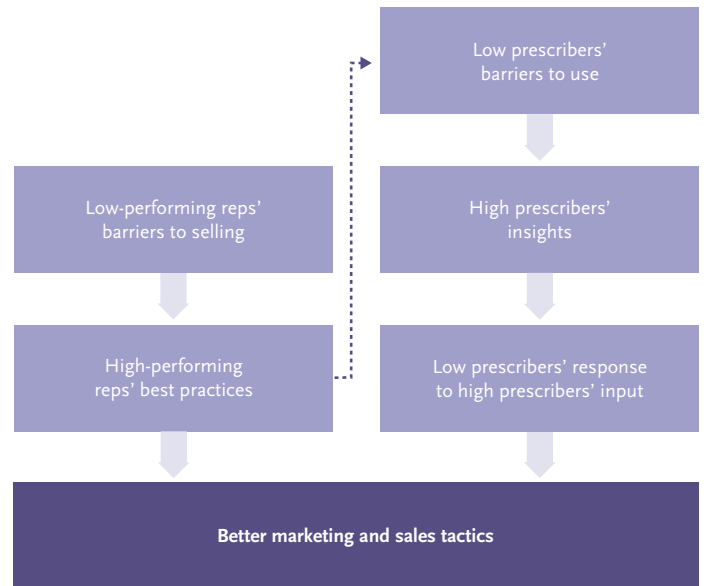
Outcome: Minor Adjustments Create Major Improvements

Through each series of interviews, we progressively uncovered the bigger picture — discovering opportunities for success. While we did identify several product-related issues that could be addressed over time, our most important findings applied to the customer's marketing and sales tactics. First, the product messages needed to be sequenced more clearly to avoid misunderstanding and confusion for reps and prescribers. On top of that, the reps needed further training, for example, teaching them how to educate nurses and how to demonstrate the product's delivery system properly. We also identified additional prescriber groups the company hadn't yet targeted.

From our research, we were able to make a number of recommendations to our customer on how to optimize their marketing and sales strategies. Based on our findings, the customer created a product sampling effort to help skeptical physicians and patients overcome the hurdle of the delivery system. They also reworked the benefits story for their sales and promotional materials and developed a training module to help their sales reps communicate the benefits clearly to the prescribers. Finally, they created a refocused calling list based on the targets we uncovered with potential product interest.

The result: The drug excelled, becoming one of our customer's top three sellers. Highly satisfied with the solutions we provided, our customer has since entrusted us with more than 40 projects for other key products in their portfolio.

Iterative Response Approach



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