

Pharmaceutical REPRESENTATIVE

Sales Insight

by Matthew E. Johnson

Overcoming Hurdles

Your CRM system can maximize access to physicians and arm you with valuable information to influence their prescription-writing behavior



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You know firsthand that access to physicians is on the decline and that this decreased face time directly threatens your ability to influence the products that physicians prescribe. This factor, coupled with the impact of the recession, is putting sales reps under intense pressure to achieve good numbers—and it is making the small window of time you have with physicians that much more valuable. If you are like many sales representatives today, you are probably asking yourself: “How do I maximize what little access I have to a physician and best use that time to influence his or her prescription-writing behavior?”

It may not be in the forefront of your mind, especially when you have a lot on your plate already, but your company's customer relationship management (CRM) system actually might be your best ally. Although it often feels tedious to enter data into the system after a sales meeting, the reports and analyses that today's CRM tools can offer are now very sophisticated and often can tell you exactly what you need to know to best influence a time-

strapped physician.

Physicians today are asking for a shift in the sales model. They want sales reps to offer a more customized approach to selling that fits the needs of their busy practice. Interaction between a sales rep and a physician overall has evolved from transaction based to information based. You know that the days of the “dine and dash” are over, but you are still probably trying to figure out how to give physicians the information they want and need in the two-minute appointment you are able to get. If a physician is expecting you to provide them with targeted clinical information, you are going to need to have a more in-depth understanding of the medical practice's needs. Taking a more scientific approach to sales and creating a single view of each of the physicians you are approaching can allow you to increase your productivity, provide product information to physicians in a manner that is more relevant to them and build a stronger relationship with practices.

Here is how CRM can help you :

1 Dashboards: The dashboards your company gives you can provide

powerful reports and in-depth analyses, which can lead to a better understanding of the information that is of value to a physician. These dashboards also can help you develop a deeper understanding of a physician's past behavior and help you predict the future needs of his or her practice. Armed with this information, you can take a proactive approach to serving the practice's needs, which will give the physician the impression that you are a helpful resource, rather than just a salesperson “pushing” your product.

The catch is, however, that these reports will be much more valuable if you are tracking your own data and consistently feeding quality information into the system. If you spend the extra few minutes after each sales meeting or physician interaction to provide data on what happened, you ultimately will be able to pull information from the system that will be a powerful resource for telling you exactly what to do to move a physician to the next level.

2 Targeted Marketing Messages: The relationship between sales and marketing is evolving to be much more

important—and marketing is now much more plugged into the knowledge that is gathered through your company's CRM system. If you enter data on your interaction with key physicians into the system, then the marketing group can analyze this information and get a clearer picture of the target audience. They will then, in turn, be able to develop more targeted messages and useful tools that will help you solicit interest or overcome an objection from a physician.

3 Leads that Actually Lead Somewhere:

Despite what you may have heard

or experienced in the past, in the last few years lead distribution has grown increasingly more sophisticated, especially as company websites are becoming much more interactive. Right now, the marketing department at your company is probably not very effective at pushing physicians to the site, but chances are if they send you a lead from the website, then it is probably worth pursuing.

If you enter quality data into the CRM system, you will be able to conduct powerful analyses that can tell you how to determine the appropriate

levers to influence a physician's prescription-writing behavior, now and in the future. Marketing also can develop targeted and informative materials that will help you maximize a short appointment with a physician or successfully approach a new lead. Integrating some science with CRM into the art of selling can pay off in multiples—something that is invaluable during challenging economic times. [PR](#)

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