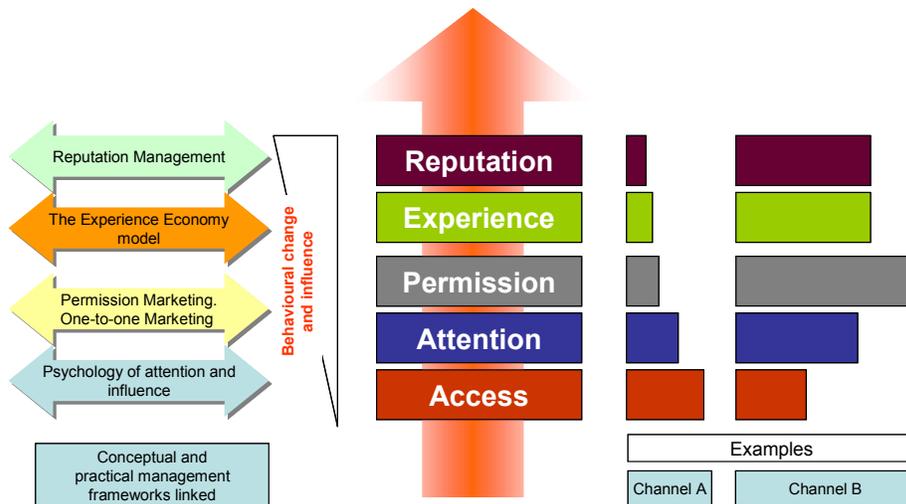


ARTICLE: Behavioural Change for Sales Force Effectiveness

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By Jonathan Gardner



THE CHALFONT PROJECT Sales Effectiveness Model©

People have been talking about Sales force effectiveness in the pharmaceutical industry for decades but there has been little real progress. In recent years the advent of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has often been seen as the salvation of the pharmaceutical industry's race for the greatest "share of voice" in the market. But have we really fixed the issue of sales *effectiveness* or have we simply created a new way of measuring the frequency of calls and made it possible to have a more *efficient* sales force. That is a question that many pharma companies have dealt head on by creating positions of *Head of Sales Force Effectiveness*. But do they go far enough? Most of these positions are focused still on targeting and segmentation and training, all of which are vital but is training enough to get a change in rep behaviour. Is knowing which doctor you should be targeting enough to get a change in rep visits? And further to that will simply targeting doctors better create a more *effective* sales force?

If we look at the psychology of influence and see what the social sciences have to teach us about influencing peoples decisions we may be able to get a better sales *effectiveness* model. Most companies focus on the "access to customer" issue (i.e. number of visits and or call targets) and measure these things to track success. Obviously the access issue has become more important over the last decade as doctors have started seeing fewer reps for shorter periods of time and there are more reps to go round the doctors. It is right to deal with this issue through targeting and good planning, however, surely to persuade someone to prescribe your drug, or put it on formulary you need to do more than just get **access** to them. The next step has to be to get their **attention**.

It goes almost without saying, but often gets forgotten in the grand scheme of a rep's bonus and or appraisal based on number of calls. How many of your reps can you be

sure are after the attention of their customers as apposed to just getting access? My guess is that it is not many judging by a comment from a Pfizer Sales Force Effectiveness director: *“Often I ask the reps what the specific call objective is before going in. More often than not, I get the response that they’re going to detail Lipitor, or whatever the product might be. It’s not what they talked about last time with the customer, or their response, what objective they had, or what they’re going to do on this call to take the customer one step further.”* (source www.eyeforpharma.com) Unless the rep is thinking about the next step each time he/she has *access* to a customer you will not get much effectiveness. They need to be thinking how to get the attention of that doctor / payor, but again this is not just for the *attention*’s sake.

The aim has to be to continually gain and improve the attention of the customer, but also to move beyond that to get the **permission** to come back and continue to remain in touch. It is at this point that the rep needs to move beyond the psychology of attention and influence and move towards permission marketing models. But again that is not enough. Permission to return will not get the rep very far if he is not seen as having any experience or credibility. However, permission obtained and pursued will, if the rep sets this as his aim, lead to an **experience**. But we are not talking here about just the reps experience but rather “an experience” for the doctor. The idea here is that the whole world is moving to a more experientially based view of life. Products are not enough any more – any company can produce a product – it is the consumer experience that counts. The same is true in the doctor’s surgery or the payer’s office. Any company can send a rep around, but does your rep give the customer an *experience* which will set him apart from the rest? Ideally you need to look into the ‘experience economy’ with its own principles and practices to get the most out of this stage. But even here you can move on.

Once an experience has been gained and established you are getting close to the maximum level of effectiveness, however, it is at this stage that **reputation** comes to the fore. It is important that the rep builds and manages his own reputation and that of the firm, he should be constantly trying to create the position whereby his reputation is high and the customer values him.

Here is the key though: how do you effect this change? As expressed in the figure, the degree of behavioural change and influence necessary varies. As we expressed at the start many sales effectiveness models still only focus on *access* as a single key driver. To change the reps behaviour to look beyond that will require a behavioural change methodology aimed at installing new habits and breaking old ones. It is important to realize that any such methodology must include a full analysis of the current behaviours and their drivers as well as a full overhaul of the compensation and benefits scheme. To change a behaviour you need to have the right reinforcements there. And that doesn’t just include bonuses and salary, but also management actions and measurement metrics and much more besides.

The other interesting thing to note with this model is that it can be applied to more than one marketing channel. Each channel will vary in the amount of access, attention, permission, experience, or reputation it produces or sustains, and this, as an aside, can be

very useful for exploring and validating a multi-channel strategy as linked to a CRM programme.

Conclusion:

So to conclude, to increase sales effectiveness in your company, it goes without saying that you need to go beyond just *access* however, are you really doing it? Do you have a plan in place to change the metrics used at the moment, where are you going after *access*?

You need to define the behaviours associated with moving beyond **access** to gaining **attention** to getting **permission** to come back, to constructing the **experience** for the customer and finally to building up **reputation**. But don't forget that that is not the last word – without the right reinforcements in place any change will be short lived at best. Make sure that your whole sales force system is adapted to the change in focus or the message will be blurred and the results unsatisfactory. Behavioural change is key to this.

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