

Unique, emotion-led methodology takes the pain out of engaging doctors in the Middle East

KANTAR HEALTH

The catalyst for
successful decision
-making in the life
sciences industry

Challenge

A leading international pharma company was looking at launching a new brand in the Middle East in a therapy area where they already have a substantial portfolio. They came to us for advice on how they could win market share in a difficult market with significant value. They also wanted our input on the positioning of their brand within their existing strong portfolio.

We advised that, in a region with a substantial threat of generics, the challenge would be to capture market share for a more expensive drug. Knowing that when physicians prescribe drugs, they are working toward a promise of a better reputation and a better career, we also advised our client that stressing functional differentiation simply wouldn't work as nothing about the process of prescribing drugs is rational or objective.

Process

Although we always assume doctors are rationally led, the fact that the prescription process is so tied to career advancement and reputation, meant that doctors' choices were driven by emotion more than anything else. However, getting physicians to talk about themselves in terms of having particular needs and attitudes is very difficult. We proposed a needs-based segmentation and positioning strategy, using a psychological framework and projective techniques in a quantitative and qualitative setting to understand the physicians' emotional responses to the brand.

Using core physician archetypes based around psychological types as the basis of our analysis, we studied the segments to understand their behavior and determine profiles. From interviews with the various segments, we ascertained their awareness, perceptions and attitudes toward brands, factors that influence prescription behavior, whether they orient prescribing certain brands for certain patient types and any concerns/anxieties they might have.

Outcome

We advised the client on different physician typologies, their respective emotional needs and their feelings on our client's brand identity and positioning versus those of competitor brands. Our techniques uncovered some unexpected responses and negative emotions that could affect success if left unchecked. Brand image – good packaging, clear instructions, premium positioning – was also found to be very important to the physician's own image in a market where consumers can buy prescription drugs without visiting a doctor taking precedence over scientific concerns.

Catalytic moment

We believe we were the first company in the Middle East to take an emotion-led approach to research. It was also a completely new approach for our client, and it worked extremely well for them. Through the research, we identified a unique brand positioning that won the hearts of the physicians and completely differentiated the new drug in its existing portfolio. The client commented, "We were extremely impressed not only with the strength of local knowledge but the boldness of their emotion-led approach and the confidence that installed in us. Their WPP heritage ensures they have a strong commercial as well as scientific approach."

