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Theoretical study of types of purchases and sales promotion in pharmacy

Summary

Domestic scientists made a significant contribution to the research of pharmacy sales marketing, means of sales promotion and the proper principles of the organization of pharmaceutical service to the population.

But the modern pharmaceutical market is developing, and this requires research and generalization of methods of ethical stimulation of purchases by customers of pharmacies.

Sales promotion is fundamentally different from advertising. Advertising only describes the advantages of the product and thereby psychologically increases the buyer's confidence in the profitability of the purchase, and stimulation always offers the buyer something tangible in return if he decides to buy.

Key words: sales promotion, promotions, advertising, ethical marketing tools, pharmacy sales hall, pharmacist, pharmacist's assistant, pharmacy buyer

Sales promotion is an action to attract buyers by providing them with additional material benefits when making a purchase.

Advertising increases the overall attractiveness of the product, and sales promotion increases the desire to make a purchase. Many sales promotions are carried out against the background of significant advertising support, both for the drugs and for the promotions themselves.

There are three types of purchases depending on the motivation of the buyer:

- clearly planned;
- vaguely planned;
- unplanned (impulsive).

A clearly planned purchase is characterized by the fact that the buyer has determined in advance which drugs he is going to purchase at the pharmacy on his own or with a doctor's prescription.

Usually, buyers who have clearly planned their purchase rarely and reluctantly change their decisions, as they save time and effort. Such buyers do not want to change their habits formed over the years; save time and effort; do not want to take risks – reduce the possibility of an unsuccessful choice of a drug or parapharmaceutical.

Buyers who have clearly planned their purchase include those who have prescriptions from a doctor. If customers understand that the drug prescribed by the doctor is too expensive for them, they are asked to replace it with a cheaper drug – the front desk employee must explain to the customer that the price of the drug is determined by its quality, safety, minimal side effects and contraindications, and other advantages.

Methods of influencing the buyer with a clearly planned purchase:

- advertising in the pharmacy;
- consultations of a pharmacist or first-line pharmacist;
- informing about new medicinal products produced by this manufacturer;
- placement of departments with additional points of sale in such a way that the buyer can see other products (for example,

seasonal products: in the summer – tanning cream, in the spring – allergy medicine);

- informing about products that can be used together with purchased products (together with cold medicines – vitamins).

A vaguely planned purchase – the buyer has determined the type of medicinal product, but has not yet decided on the manufacturing company, form of release, dosage, etc.

Such a buyer can examine the assortment offered by the pharmacy, pay attention to advertising, and consult with the front desk employee. Thus, in this case, the time to make a decision increases significantly and the probability of making an impulse purchase increases.

Methods of influencing the buyer with a vaguely planned purchase:

- advertising;
- presentation by corporate block;
- special thematic showcases;
- showcases from the manufacturer;
- consultation of a pharmacist or first-line pharmacist.

Unplanned (impulse) purchase – the buyer decides to make a purchase directly at the pharmacy. Impulse products are presented in the pharmacy in such a way as to make the buyer want to buy them.

About 40 % of people tend to make unplanned purchases, and most of them are women. The tendency to stock up, interest in the bright, shiny and beautiful, the tendency to be distracted from the main purpose of the purchase, etc. make a woman an ideal buyer of impulse goods.

When sales promotions are held in pharmacies, the product usually goes to the buyer cheaper. Even direct price discounts are possible. However, sales promotion should not be confused with price reduction as such. Sales promotion aimed not at finding the optimal price level, but at increasing demand with the help of price or other temporarily introduced benefits.

Goals of sales promotion:

- stimulation of trial purchase;
- increasing the impact of advertising;

- decrease in inventory;
- familiarizing doctors with the new drug, ensuring the loyalty of doctors;
- stimulating the sale of a new product by trade;
- formation of partnership relations with trade for the promotion of the drug.

Stimulating a trial purchase is particularly effective:

- when introducing a fundamentally new class of medicinal product to the market;
- when introducing a drug to the market that has clear advantages over existing ones;
- if the drug has properties and advantages that are difficult or impossible to describe in words (subjective feelings after taking).

The task of increasing the impact of advertising exploits another important feature of sales promotion as a marketing tool: the ability to attract a variety of skeptical consumers to the drug.

The goal of reducing inventory often comes to the fore in relation to repeat purchases.

During a sales promotion, customers who usually use this drug increase their purchases. As a rule, there is no long-term increase in sales in this way. Extra packaging purchased during the campaign will allow the regular consumer to not buy these drugs longer after the end of the promotion.

Thus, the general effect of stimulation will be quite limited.

However, some tactical goals are achieved: companies get rid of excess stocks of drugs that are only months away from the expiration date, or reduce the warehouse stock (and free up «dead» working capital in it) before the seasonal sales pause, for the benefit of themselves and the consumer.

The goal of familiarizing doctors with a new drug/ensuring the loyalty of doctors refers mainly to the market of prescription drugs and is considered in connection with the activities of medical/pharmaceutical representatives.

The purpose of stimulating sales of a new product by trade is related to the problem of distribution of commercial risks between the manufacturer, wholesale and retail branches of trade.

The commercial organization is usually not satisfied with the purchase of a new drug under normal conditions. After all, there may be no demand for it. In this case, the funds spent on it will be lost.

In pharmacy, this problem is particularly relevant due to the huge assortment of products. In most cases, adding one more item to the thousands already available in the pharmacy remains simply unnoticed by the consumer. That is, a small trial batch of 10 packages purchased by a pharmacy can be sold for several months. It is impractical and undesirable to add new medicinal products to a large number of drugs that are slowly sold in the pharmacy.

The purpose of forming partnership relations with trade for the promotion of the drug is connected with the need to eliminate the fundamental conflict of interests of the manufacturer and the trade network. For the manufacturer, any of the drugs it produces is the object of comprehensive attention. It is important that the final consumer buys it, and not competitors' drugs.

But when trading, a specific drug is of interest if it brings enough profit. If working with a competing drug is more profitable, refusing to

purchase this drug is a normal reaction of a pharmacy or wholesale supplier.

To achieve market success, the drug should not just be kept in the assortment. You need to work with it individually: place it in a favorable place in the window, advise the buyer in time, etc. Solving these tasks is the goal of most sales promotion campaigns.

With successful implementation, they are able to form partnerships between the manufacturer and trade organizations regarding the promotion of the medicinal product. During the campaign, it is possible to increase sales significantly (usually by about 50 %).

Also, in addition to increasing the volume of sales, after the end of the campaign there remains a «train of developed habits». A pharmacist or a pharmacist's assistant – an employee of the front desk continues to recommend this drug in certain cases, and an employee of a wholesale company actively promotes it, although the promotion campaign has already stopped.

Stimulating consumers is, first of all, effective when it causes a flow of test purchases and, accordingly, new buyers. The most obvious way to achieve this is through a direct price cut.

Most buyers will not make a trial purchase of an expensive drug at full price, but it is quite possible to purchase it at a discount. The vulnerability of this sales promotion option is that the buyer does not know the normal price without a discount for new drugs.

Therefore, he cannot estimate the amount of savings. This is partially assessed if there are analogues of the drug on the market, the price of which is a reference point.

The most versatile technique that allows you to reduce the price without harming the reputation of the drug is the emphasis during the promotional campaign on the temporary nature of the discounts. The buyer is informed of the base price and the validity period of the reduced price. The downside of this incentive campaign is the impossibility of often resorting to this technique. A discounted price should not be perceived by consumers as the norm.

Prizes are particularly popular among consumer incentive tools: goods are offered for free or at reduced prices to a buyer who has purchased one or more packages of the promoted drug.

A variety of bonuses are «2+1» type promotions, when the same drug that the buyer purchased is offered as a bonus. It is obvious that this technique is equivalent to reducing the average price of the drug per package.

A method of stimulation similar in nature to premiums is the use of large bonus package packages, which, without increasing the price, represent an increased number of units of the medicinal product compared to standard packages of the medicinal product.

Among other end-user stimulation technologies in the pharmaceutical market, there are raffles and contests. A pharmacy visitor who purchased a package of the promoted drug is automatically entered into an instant lottery (usually a win-win) or contest and receives a prize.

The most diverse options for stimulating the consumer are often accompanied by demonstrations at the point of sale. If there is a demonstration of the drug in the pharmacy hall, it can usually be bought right there on more favorable terms. Therefore, it is more correct to consider demonstrations as a component that enhances the impact of a sales promotion campaign.

The following can be singled out as modern effective methods of sales promotion:

Sampling. Free delivery of product samples is considered one of the classic methods of sales promotion. There are several goals: to inform the public about a new product, to divert the attention of the audience from the active advertising of a competitor, simply to increase sales of a product at a specific point. If sampling is organized correctly, it can increase product sales by 200%. Combined with other marketing tools, sampling remains an important component of sales promotion, which is used by many companies.

Discounts have long been one of the best ways to drive sales. Numerous sales and product discounts can significantly increase sales.

Contests and lotteries, which are aimed specifically at sales promotion, have somewhat lost their popularity, but are still actively held.

Promotions most often boil down to: «Buy two packages – get the third one for free.» Often such a simple action turns out to be quite effective. Promotions can be calculated both for impulse and thought-out sales. It is important to clearly set deadlines.

«Add-on gift» – receiving a gift when purchasing a product. This method realizes two goals: it promotes the impulse sale of the product and the interest of the audience.

Advertising newspapers. Some pharmacy chains distribute their advertising newspapers right at the entrance. They contain information about discounts on certain medicines. Such distribution of newspapers is designed so that a potential buyer-visitor of the pharmacy will receive information from the newspaper at the entrance and pay attention to discounted goods or other novelties in the premises of the pharmacy.

A money-back guarantee is an important point in sales promotion. Buyers are more willing to buy new products for themselves if there is a possibility of returning money without problems. In recent years, the number of companies that not only guarantee money back, but also openly report about it, has increased.

Encouragement of front desk workers. It is used by pharmacy chains and pharmacies as a sales promotion factor: a fixed salary and a percentage of sales.

For effective design and placement of goods on shelves, racks and showcases in the pharmacy, use of Point of sales (POS) materials and color and visual perception in the pharmacy, I provide the following recommendations.

The facade of the pharmacy functionally marks the place of sale of medicines and helps a pedestrian or a driver to notice the pharmacy from afar. As a method of attracting visitors, it is advisable to advertise in shop windows, where messages about low prices for certain drugs are posted. The facade must provide general information about the pharmacy: a sign indicating the hours of operation, the nearest pharmacies, the next pharmacy.

The entrance is a kind of gateway between the street and the world of drugs. This zone helps the potential buyer (and for now only the visitor to the pharmacy) to adapt and adjust to making purchases, so it should be free. One of the common mistakes is to locate in this area or in its immediate vicinity the showcases with popular «current» drugs. This reduces the profit, as the visitor is deprived of the motive to go further to the pharmacy and purchase the medicine.

The trading hall is a place of demonstration and product selection. Its functional purpose is to create a feeling of comfort for choosing a drug or a related product. It is very important to ensure easy access to shop windows, it is recommended to leave 60% of the hall area free for the passage of customers.

In addition, the design of the hall is an important feature that determines the overall impression of the pharmacy.

For example, it can emphasize the elite nature of the pharmacy, or the functional nature of the pharmacy («no extra expense is spent on the furnishings, that's why the prices are low»).

Various presentations and promotions are organized in the hall, the pharmacy staff comes into direct contact with the visitor.

The display area (open self-service shelves, display window) is of the greatest interest, as it is where the practical selection of goods takes place. It is in this zone that a competent presentation and targeted advertising (for specific drugs sold) should be carried out.

Effective places for displaying goods are allocated:

- the best place to place the product is at the buyer's eye level (140–170 cm);
- the package must be returned to the buyer with the front side (the one where the name of the drug is indicated) to the buyer, the buyer must see the package and the inscription on it;
- the location of the product, in addition to focusing on the convenience of the visitor, also performs other functions (prevents theft, protects against direct sunlight, provides separation from heating devices, etc.);
- the location of the product should not interfere with the free movement of the pharmacist/pharmacist's assistant.

The cash register is a zone of so-called psychological stress. Here, the buyer makes the final purchase decision, spends money. At the cash register, it is important to create all the conditions for impulsive buying (placement of additional points of sale with the most popular over-the-counter drugs and various goods – chewing gum, toothbrushes, etc.).

The presentation or advertising of the product in the pharmacy is carried out by placing information, advertising materials, trade equipment and devices that perform advertising and demonstration functions (stands, displays). Areas of location of informational and advertising materials can be: the facade of a pharmacy organization, shop windows, sales equipment, walls, windows, columns, doors, floor, ceiling, points of sale, etc.

In pharmacies that use an open form of product sales, advertising materials can be attached to baskets for selecting products.

The most common means of informational and advertising polygraphy are:

- advertising posters;
- postcards;
- stickers on shelves (shelf tokens);
- hanging mock-ups of the product, made larger than life size (mobile phones);
- wobblers (from the English «wobble» «oscillate, swing») pendants on a movable leg, which is attached to the surface at one end;
- dummies – life-size or enlarged copies of goods or their packaging;

- flags, pennants and garlands;
- saucers for receiving money with the company logo or brand name, etc.

The first principle when placing means of advertising and informational support is their optimality. It is especially relevant for pharmacy organizations, given the restrictions on the use of advertising materials for prescription drugs. It is optimal to advertise for no more than 15–20 % of products.

When presenting and delivering informational material to the consumer, the KISS principle («Keep it short and simple» should be followed). Informational and advertising materials must be placed taking into account lighting and the angle of view of the buyer.

The rule of presence is that the assortment that arrived at the pharmacy must be transferred to the sales hall in a timely manner, and the advertised positions must be on sale.

The principle of FIFO (First In, First Out) is used to rotate medicines on the shelves and sell them according to their shelf life– the previously laid out medicine must be sold first.

To increase sales, pharmacies, especially with high traffic, use external advertising. The key task of outdoor advertising is to make the pharmacy as visible as possible to pedestrians passing by it. Usually, the most important factor of visibility is a large outdoor advertising element that lights up and is located perpendicular to the flow of pedestrians. Also, bright and noticeable external showcases, light boxes, etc., play a significant role.

The appropriate theme of shop windows is the products presented in the pharmacy. It must be taken into account that the bulk of buyers come for medicines and the predominance of parapharmaceutical products in external advertising may repel some potential buyers.

The visibility of the name, logo, slogan (advertising mottos that are well remembered, especially if they correspond to reality) are appropriate and useful.

In the case of wide sidewalks, it is advisable to install billboards in front of the pharmacy, which attract the attention of those passers-by who did not notice the sign and showcase.

Usually, for pharmacies with low traffic, outdoor advertising plays a much smaller role. Most customers visit such pharmacies purposefully; the number of «spontaneous» buyers is small. For inconspicuous pharmacies located in courtyards, in the depths of shopping centers, signposts (signposts) that help to find the way play an important role (especially at the stage of opening a pharmacy): arrows on the walls, poles, etc. The exterior of a pharmacy with low traffic should be quite attractive, but it is better to minimize the design cost.

Comfortable and effective advertising in the sales hall of the pharmacy is:

- placement of large mock-ups of the product and posters in those places where placement of the product itself is ineffective (above human height, in the background, etc.);
- for some products (cosmetics, medical equipment, biologically active additives and non-prescription drugs with a wide range of consumers) effective presentations, specialized consultants of the manufacturer, price promotions;
- leaflets in «pockets» along the counter and near the windows, in which the corresponding product is placed, are an important additional stimulus for impulse demand;

- the main part of leaflets in other places (for example, on a table in a «quiet» corner of a pharmacy) is ineffective and mostly goes to waste. Useful reminder advertising: in shop windows, on cash register plates, wobblers;
- similarly, as for external showcases, advertising of manufacturers in the pharmacy hall must be controlled to avoid negative effects. In pharmacies, where the majority of visitors come for medicines, excessive advertising of non-pharmaceutical assortment can harm the pharmacy's attendance;
- advertising of manufacturers in the pharmacy hall (for example, posters) plays an auxiliary role in comparison with merchandising and should not occupy the best places, which should be given under showcases displaying the most profitable products.

The main purpose of placing POS materials in the sales hall of the pharmacy is to direct the potential buyer of the product to the place where it is displayed, to help navigate the entire variety of the offered product, to get acquainted with the new products of the market and to increase the level of sales.

So, the most effective types of internal advertising are defined as:

Posters are wall-mounted advertising media of large sizes. They are colorful and have a small amount of text. Quickly attract attention to the advertised product.

Labels and stickers – they are attached next to the product itself, directly on the product. The advantages are small size, ease of use and a clear, understandable meaning. Disadvantages – after use and traces of the adhesive mass remain. Can be used as «entrance» advertising when placed on the front door of the pharmacy.

Reference catalogs containing a list of products with detailed characteristics, price, terms of sale and product image.

Booklets – sheets printed on both sides and having one or more folds. They are most often made in color with drawings and photographs.

Postcards – standard format pages with text on one or both sides. Advertising information about a specific product is reported.

Prospectuses – advertising materials in the form of brochures with a predominance of photographs or diagrams to demonstrate the pharmacy's products or services.

Mobiles – hanging mock-ups of the product, made in a size that exceeds the real one. Their feature and difference from other means of internal advertising is that they are attached to the ceiling and can be seen from anywhere in the pharmacy. Usually, mobile phones are used in pharmacies with an open display of goods, where a clear classification of the goods is important for the buyer, because the main function of mobile phones is to indicate where this or that product is placed. Some mobiles can rotate, thereby drawing additional attention to the product.

Dummies – copies of goods or their packages, which are enlarged in size or have natural size. They can be placed on shop windows in cases where it is not possible to directly display the product itself on the shop window due to its properties (for example, heat-labile drugs), as well as when designing the external shop window of a pharmacy.

Shelf racks are designed to highlight a number of products of the same brand. Most often, they are fixed on the end part of the shelf. They are most effective when placed vertically. The shelftalker has

two functions – advertising and protective (protects the product from falling and damage in case of its open display).

Shelf organizers – help to visually separate part of the shelf and organize the display in this part. Separate one type of product from another. They help to separate individual products, ensure the accuracy of product presentation and make the buyer «stop».

Wobblers are advertising images on a movable leg, which are attached to the surface at one end and attract attention due to their vibration.

Saucers for receiving money (coin boxes, cash plates) – special saucers on which advertising information about the manufacturer of the product or about the product itself can be applied. Placed at the cash register.

Souvenir products – packages, calendars with pharmacy or product advertisements, wall, pocket calendars, shelf calendars, pens, notebooks, key chains, etc.

Conclusions

Sales promotion is one of the most important tools for promoting over-the-counter drugs. With the development of the pharmaceutical market, there is an increasing variety of ways to stimulate sales of medicinal products.

These include: purchase incentives by awarding prizes; raffles for buyers of certain drugs; promotions of the «2+1» type, when a pharmacy visitor who bought two packages of vitamins is given a third for free.

But the work of manufacturers with distributors and pharmacies, or wholesale suppliers with retail networks (a complex system of discounts, special conditions, etc.) is also an incentive.

Резюме

Теоретичне дослідження видів покупок та стимулювання збуту в аптеці

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Вітчизняні науковці зробили значний внесок у дослідження маркетингу аптечного збуту, засобів стимулювання збуту та відповідних засад організації фармацевтичного обслуговування населення.

Але сучасний фармацевтичний ринок розвивається, а це потребує дослідження та узагальнення методів етичного стимулювання покупок споживачів аптек.

Стимулювання збуту принципово відрізняється від реклами. Реклама лише описує переваги товару і тим самим психологічно підвищує впевненість покупця у вигідності покупки, а стимулювання завжди пропонує покупцеві щось відчутне натомість, якщо він вирішить купити.

Ключові слова: стимулювання збуту, акції, реклама, інструменти етичного маркетингу, торговий зал аптеки, фармацевт, асистент фармацевта, покупець в аптеці

Stimulating the implementation of a trial purchase with some degree of conventionality can be called the core goal of sales promotion.

This motive is intended to force the buyer to try the drug in order to temporarily draw it into use.

The effect and advantages of the medicinal product are revealed only in the process of their actual use.

The effectiveness of the inventory from the point of view of merchandising is related to the rules of assortment and trade inventory.

A group of rules related to effective inventory of goods deals with the problems associated with creating a level of inventory sufficient to meet consumer demand. In practice, this means that preference will be given to those suppliers that provide a convenient and reliable delivery system.

Additional Information. The author declares no conflict of interest.

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