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ut sourcing Medical Information:

A Great Success Story!



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Outsourcing, in the pharmaceutical industry began in the 1980s. During the 1990s, it exploded in to three core areas: clinical trials, contract manufacturing and sales force solutions.

Despite this explosion, pharmaceutical companies have been (understandably) reluctant to do the same with their medical information services. There are good reasons for this: the liability risks, the lack of experience in dealing with suppliers for this service and the uncertainty concerning a vendor's ability to effectively appreciate and commit to the client's value system.

Only recently have major pharmaceutical companies cautiously outsourced their medical information needs. One success story follows, demonstrating that with effective partnering, medical information can be safely outsourced with confidence.

Outsourcing project

In 2003, our client (a large pharmaceutical company supporting a medical information service with more than 2,000 calls annually), made the decision to outsource their medical information service. McKesson SPS built an infrastructure to achieve the following mutual objectives:

- To meet the diverse information needs of all customers in a timely manner
- To ensure that the appropriate information is disseminated in an efficient manner
- To identify and limit the potential risks, such as a decline in the quality of service deliverables

A collaborative and mutually supportive partnership was established.

Outsourcing success

After the first full year of this outsourced initiative, a customer survey was conducted by the manufacturer in 2004. Healthcare professionals (HCPs) and consumers were sent surveys which aimed to measure the efficiency, quality and value of the service, as well as the quality of the information provided and to detect any difference between direct manufacturer and vendor-provided service levels.

Overall rating of information

The following were the results of the overall rating of information:

- Ninety seven per cent of respondents rated the information as "excellent," "very good" or "good" (Figure 1)

In a marketplace filled with increasing pressures, outsourcing is not an option, it is the only way.

- Eighty nine per cent of the respondents felt the response addressed their question
- Ninety seven per cent of the respondents said they would contact the service again
- One hundred per cent of the French speaking callers said they were satisfied with the service

Specifically, the HCPs found the information was:

- provided in a timely manner (96%),
- scientifically balanced and fair (91%),
- useful and medically significant (95%).

This enabled 62% of HCPs to make an informed decision while caring for their patients.

Ability to meet consumer needs

The following were the results of the service’s ability to meet consumer needs:

- Ninety per cent of consumers rated the ability of the service to meet their needs as “excellent,” “very good” or ”good” (Figure 2)
- Ninety two per cent of consumers felt the information was helpful
- Seventy seven per cent of consumers felt their understanding of their medication was improved

Vendor level of expertise

The following was the result of the vendor’s level of expertise:

- Nearly 75% of respondents rated the level of expertise offered by the vendor as “expert,” “very good” or “good” (Figure 3)

Today, outsourcing is a strategic imperative that can not only provide a cost-efficient alternative, but it can also improve efficiency and speed and flexibility of program deliverables, while maintaining, if not exceeding, established quality levels.

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To discuss how outsourcing may provide new possibilities for your medical information department needs, please contact Paramjit Kaur at 1 (800) 811-9880 ext. 126, or at pkaur@phase4health.com.

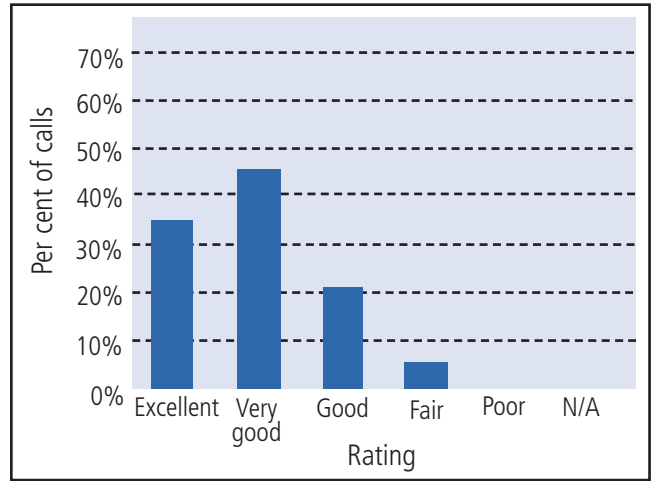


Figure 1. Overall rating of information.

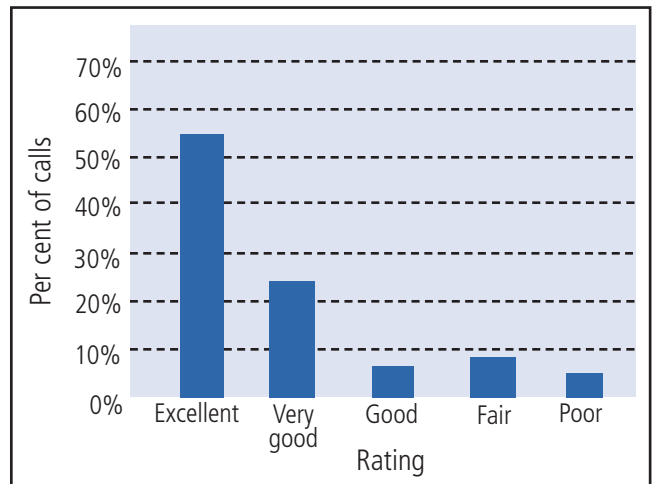


Figure 2. Ability to meet consumer needs.

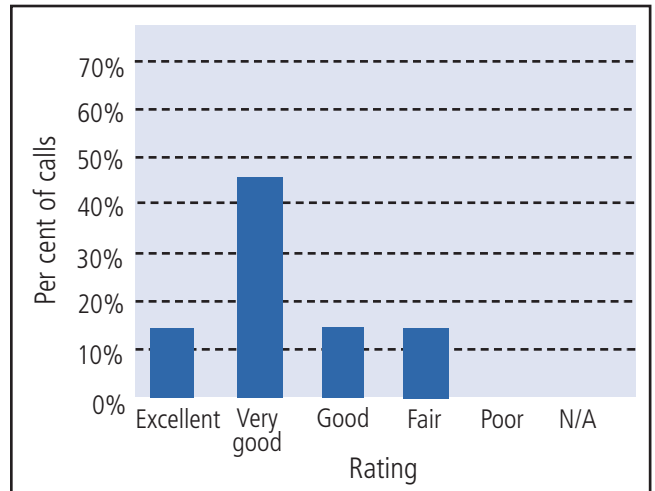


Figure 3. Vendor level of expertise.

McKesson Specialty Pharmaceutical Solutions (SPS) is a division of McKesson Canada that offers outsource medical information, medical writing, pharmacovigilance and direct-to-patient services to the pharmaceutical industry.