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Harnessing the Power of Reprints: Getting Greater Results with Focused Effort



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The need to convey concise data efficiently is a challenge facing everyone regardless of whether you are in sales and marketing, training or product development. We sought out Erik Schreter and Howard Fried of IsaiX Technologies to help us discuss this issue. Their teams have partnered with a myriad of pharmaceutical companies to improve training and marketing strategies and to transfer key information to representatives in the field. We asked them what tools they found most useful to enhance their results.

Q: In your experience, what are the common sales team issues?

Erik: I often hear frustration in the voices of clients when I ask them about team training—specifically on clinical studies. More than ever before, physicians require representatives to be more knowledgeable on new evidence. Mastering and utilizing clinical evidence with a physician has become a critical success factor for representatives. While companies use a variety of methodologies to train on clinical studies, many rely on paper-based/PDF methodologies often using highlighting to emphasize key points. Regardless of the system, it still takes too much time to get the new information in use in the field.

Q: How can a company train its sales representatives to pass on the key technical information “quickly and effectively,” as you say?

Howard: I know that if two pharmaceutical companies are releasing two competing products at the same time, each company wants its sales representatives to be able to highlight their respective competitive advantages. We developed a reprint tool that identifies, for the representatives, the salient scientific components of a reprint and transforms these seminal passages into key points—developed by marketing people—so those points are easy to see and understand. Then representatives are ready to use the latest clinical evidence for the greatest impact. This is a huge advantage.

Q: Representatives are already reading so many new clinical reprints; how do you manage that much information?

Erik: The important part is to identify key information. By using the reprint guide, the company has the ability to focus on key messages in the reprint AND to show how this information should be marketed to the physician. So, it helps in training, but is directly related to marketing. Ultimately, with the reprint guide, messages emanating from the reprint are consistent and portable.

Q: So it's an educational tool?

Erik: Yes and no. Yes: representatives' knowledge and information retention is pertinent to all concerned. Whether you want to advance product benefits, share step-by-step assembly instructions, report industry regulations, or whatever, you have to learn the material.

No, because the Reprint Guide crafts and packages the message so it is clear and concise. In that sense, I would consider it a marketing vehicle.

Q: You mentioned the pharmaceutical sector. Let's go back to the impact on the physician for a second. With less detailing time available to the representative, can you elaborate on the importance of using your time as a representative effectively?

Howard: If the physician sees the representative as a provider of scientific information that is valuable to their professional development and to their practice, the more apt they are to invite the representative in. This is the idea behind evidence-based medicine. Rather than flogging a product, the representative fully owns the content of the peer-reviewed study. They can clearly lay out the clinical evidence in a specific way that the physician finds of interest and value—and it's linked to a verifiable source.

Q: Does the Reprint Guide only work for reprints?

Erik: It has been battle-tested, so-to-speak, with reprints, but it would apply to any document where sales representatives should be reading technical information on an ongoing basis. We come across frequent anecdotal information about representatives not reading what they are supposed to read. The Reprint Guide does not just provide the talking points reminiscent of a detail aid, but it ties directly to the source. This makes any technical information accessible and guides the representative to better information delivery. Often, we have seen our tool used for detail aids, product inserts and a myriad of other documents.

In conclusion, there is a sense that if there is something that can help support the bottom line, the industry needs to know about it right away. It is one thing to think we are training our teams, but aside from making sure that the representatives have a grasp of the available current information, we need to help them retain the important information within its context. Technology should be used to our advantage. Knowledge has organizing power. Organized means efficient and efficiency impacts the bottom line. **CPM**

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