

# Learning from Experience



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*The Canadian Pharmaceutical Marketing Program provides participants with a perspective on the current challenges and best practices for designing and implementing successful brand strategies in today's marketplace. Core to the design of courses in the Program is the involvement of senior industry faculty speakers sharing their experiences and knowledge. It is through their insights that the participants gain "real world learning." This column will feature the faculty speakers' experiences through their topic discussions and the questions posed by participants.*

**Q** *The product life cycle is a core marketing concept that can be applied across products, services, industries and sectors. How do you believe the product life cycle model for a pharmaceutical product might differ from other product categories?*

All products, in all industries, have life cycles. An example of a short life-cycle is the eight-track tape (a few years); a somewhat longer one in the same industry would be cassette tapes. An example of a product with an enduring life cycle is Aspirin®—over 100-years-old and continuing to grow. Like all products, pharmaceutical products can be eclipsed by a better mousetrap (more effective, less toxic therapy). The presence of generics and the legislation allowing substitution is the primary factor that makes the life cycle of a pharmaceutical product unique and usually allows the pharmaceutical marketer to more accurately forecast the branded product life cycle.

**Q** *What is the goal of product life cycle management within brand and corporate strategy development?*

**A** If one can envision a simple graph with total sales in dollars on the vertical axis and time on the horizontal axis, the goal of life cycle management is to maximize the area under the curve. Methods to achieve this include:

- New indications
- New clinical evidence
- Formulation improvements
- New dosage formats
- Patents on processes
- Contracting
- Understanding the pharmacokinetic profile of your product
- Promotion/sales force

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**Q** Bayer launched *PR* Adalat® (nifedipine) in the early 1980s and it is still thriving in the calcium channel blocker market today. How did Bayer employ life cycle management strategies to support the continued success of Adalat® in an evolving market place?

**A** Adalat® is truly a life cycle success story—the original version launched in 1982; the latest version, Adalat XL®, achieved record annual sales in 2006. A number of different initiatives lead to this successful legacy:

- Moving the product from a three times a day dosage (Adalat®) to a twice a day dosage (Adalat PA®) to an every other day dosage (Adalat XL®). This improved compliance and tolerability and reduced concerns about the rapid BP drop that occurred with the original version
- Launch of Adalat XL® 20 mg, to add to the 30 mg and 60 mg dosages
- Investment in major clinical trials, A Controlled Trial Investigating Outcomes of Exercise TraiNing (ACTION) and International Nifedipine GITS Study: Intervention as a Goal in Hypertension Treatment (INSIGHT), showing that Adalat XL® reduces mortality
- Investment in understanding the pharmacokinetic differences between Adalat XL® and generics and ensuring key opinion leaders, reimbursement officials and Health Canada were aware of the potential patient impact of substitution **CPM**

*This opportunity to “Learn From Experience” is based upon a presentation by Greg Ball entitled “Life Cycle Management” to the participants at the Humber “Marketing Pharmaceuticals in Canada” Program run in partnership with Pangaea Training and Development.*



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