

Development of an Omni-Channel Marketing Communications Plan for a Novartis Launch Product in Germany

Bachelor Thesis

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Date of Submission

May 5th 2020

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WIN17A

Executive Summary

With the rising number of product launches in the pharmaceutical industry, the competitive pressure among companies continues to increase. The overall high information overload leads to the fact that marketing communications measures towards health care professionals lose their attractiveness making it difficult for pharmaceutical companies to differentiate.

Over the past years, omni-channel marketing proved its worth in many industries by providing each customer segment one targeted and consistent message via integrated online and offline channels. The approach is now emerging in the pharmaceutical industry promising great potential for differentiation. However, due to legal regulations and the resulting differences in the marketing environment an analogous application of the omni-channel marketing approach is not feasible for medicinal products.

Therefore, the objective of this thesis is to ascertain how omni-channel marketing can be leveraged in the pharmaceutical industry. For this purpose, an exemplary marketing communications plan is developed for a launch product of Novartis.

The research bases on secondary market research data as well as primary data in form of expert interviews with Novartis employees with the aim to understand the internal and external marketing environment for Novartis' launch product. Following the process of marketing communications planning and incorporating the dimensions of omni-channel marketing, the thesis focuses on the question which messages and (digital) channels Novartis should use in its communication towards specialists and general practitioners.

The results of the research show that not all dimensions of omni-channel marketing are recommendable in the marketing communications plan for Novartis' launch product. In particular, the use of only one consistent message is due to legal circumstances not feasible in the pharmaceutical industry. However, a considerable potential was observed for personalised messages and channels per physician group. Substantial differences in the level of knowledge, attitude and behaviour between specialists and general practitioners demonstrate the importance and need for personalisation. Further research could therefore focus on a deeper segmentation of physicians in order to deliver more closely tailored communications.