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A call for innovation

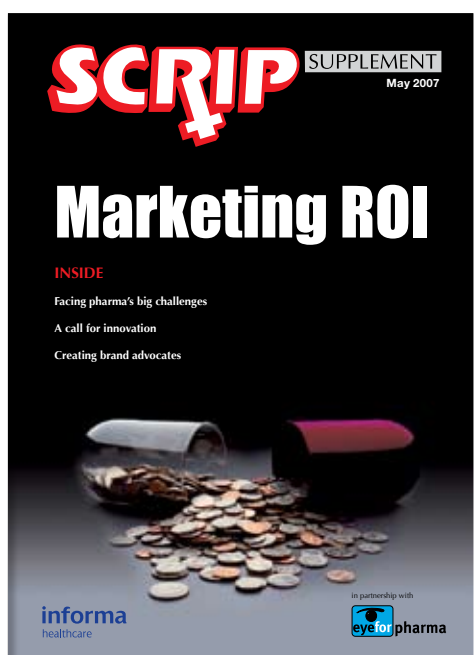
Creating brand advocates



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The biggest splash

John Knapp sings the praises of message mapping and uses the process to tell us which pharma company is making best use of scientific publishing to influence the prescribing market

According to a study by the University of Alabama,¹ clinicians rely on scientific literature to learn about new drugs, advances in therapies and new uses for established products. But generally, they have only a few hours each week to digest this information. In addition, they usually have to glean it from medical journals or conference abstracts containing thousands of articles.

Clearly, no healthcare professional has enough time to review all the materials that come their way but some publications and scientific posters carry more weight than others, and those are the publications more likely to be read. For effective pharmaceutical marketing, what is needed is a systematic, objective means of identifying the best available resources, so that balanced information about your drugs and therapies feature in the publications and posters most likely to shape professional opinions.

The importance of branding

In 2004, *Pharmaceutical Executive* outlined the importance of using business intelligence in guiding pharmaceutical branding: “Drugs do not become blockbusters by accident. Rather, phenomenal successes are the result of product managers’ careful analysis of market information, detailed knowledge of target consumers and competitive positioning, and execution of targeted messaging,” it reported.²

The evolution of pharmaceutical branding is the result of two daunting factors: a fiercely competitive market, and shortening development and approval times. Three decades ago, a drug might have enjoyed ten or more years of market exclusivity. Today, companies can be faced with a competitively marketed alternative therapy within six months of the launch of their own product. (In addition, direct-to-consumer advertising and the internet complicate the challenge faced by marketers in such an environment.)

All this puts enormous pressure on teams tasked with disseminating the messages that distinguish a product from its competitors. And getting the story out

is only part of the job. Arguably, more important is the gathering and analysing of competitor intelligence – and then acting on the resultant knowledge.

Cutting through the noise

As a brand manager, the biggest problem you face isn’t a lack of information. It’s the opposite. In effect, you’re dealing with the same issue as the clinicians themselves – too much information, and not enough time, tools or resources to turn it into knowledge upon which you can act.

Clinicians have their own strategies for cutting through the noise to the data they trust. These methods may be largely based on personal experiences and preferences, but they make a huge impact on your messages’ success. But how do you determine these methods? For brand managers, though surveys and other research can help, non-scientific ways of attempting to ‘think like a clinician’ simply will not work.

So what’s the alternative? There are a number of solutions that promise to provide the ‘right’ information that will help brand managers better calibrate their sales and marketing campaigns. There are few, however, that arm brand managers with the ability to tailor their messages, and position their products, based on the core information from which all other information is derived – evidence-based science.

Clinicians turn to scientific journal articles and medical meeting-content to analyse and assess the strengths and weaknesses of therapeutic options, and then use this learning to reach clinically-supported conclusions about the risk/benefit profile of each therapy. Clinically-supported decisions are what all good clinicians strive to practice, and this is one part of the clinician’s strategy you can attempt to emulate.

Through a clinician’s eyes

One of the most critical aspects of drug development and the related commercialisation process is to understand how published information

supports or detracts from the key clinical concepts and themes that uniquely distinguish a product.

Armed with this core scientific information, you can critically evaluate the strength, diversity and value in the key concepts and themes disseminated in these resources. This in turn enables you to create or refine your clinical messages and product profile in line with the evidence-based science that supports your product’s strengths and your competitors’ weaknesses.

However, accessing this information in a format that can lead to quick action could be a daunting task, even for the largest, well resourced company. It could hardly be achieved manually. And despite their best efforts, an analysis of a company’s products by its own staff might introduce a bias not reflective of a more general prescribing audience.

What is required, at the least, is:

- A simple validated method of collecting and analysing dynamic information that is reflective of a clinician’s perceptions;
- An understanding of the information source to best gauge its value and strength;
- Knowledge of the authors and their institutions;
- A dynamic approach to looking at how each product is being evaluated by clinicians;
- The ability to identify gaps in competitive messaging; and
- The ability to benchmark information about a company’s product against its competitors.

One such process that can fulfil these requirements is ‘message mapping’. The term is familiar to pharmaceutical marketers and its definitions vary but here we refer to it as the process by which the body of information describing a product is analysed, in order to critically evaluate the characteristics of key clinical concepts and themes disseminated in these resources.

A message mapping solution

Among message mapping solutions is the Thomson Message Mapping System. It applies systematic inclusion criteria to identify key resources and then evaluates the quality of the actual material included in its analyses. It applies a patented, validated methodology to characterise and organise the results into tables and trend analyses that can form the basis of intelligent brand management actions.

The Thomson Message Mapping System assesses each article, abstract and poster in terms of its scientific content, the appropriateness of the methods used by the investigators and how well the information has been presented. It then assigns each study a score (called the Thomson Source Score) ranging from 0% to 100%. 70% or more generally indicates a well written, thoughtfully designed, scientifically-valid study.

This unique model has been independently tested on a wide range of clinicians to ensure that it reflects the ways in which they think and assess the value of the information they receive.

In this way, the Thomson Message Mapping System can analyse both the quantity and the quality of the scientific information being published.

Message mapping provides a novel means of identifying product assessments based on scientific information, and of implementing strategic and tactical development and marketing programs based on the findings.

For brand managers, message mapping tools are an important advance in that they enable a marketing plan to be refined to best present the value proposition of a product to its target prescribing market using solid, balanced science.

References

1. Liberti L, Casebeer LL, Shillman RS, Conaway S, Critical appraisal of medical literature by physicians and its relevance to practice.
2. Hall J, Business intelligence turns data overload into a competitive advantage. Sep 1, 2004 *Pharmaceutical Executive*.

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Case study

The international pharmaceutical industry sponsors much scientific research, so it is understandable that some of the most widely published authors of scientific articles are affiliated with, or sponsored by, pharmaceutical companies. But which company is having the greatest impact?

To find out which organisations made the biggest stir between December 2006 and February 2007, we first identified the number of articles, abstracts and posters they sponsored in key journals and at key conferences which meet the assessment criteria, and then calculated the average Thomson Source Score for all these materials.

However, the impact a particular organisation makes on the healthcare community is likely to be a product of both the quantity and the quality of the publications it issues. We therefore used the Thomson Message Mapping System to multiply the number of each organisation's published articles, abstracts and posters by the average Thomson Source Score for those materials.

The resulting Thomson Institutional Recognition Score provides an objective, quantitative measure of the impact the organisation has made – and the results may surprise you.

While big pharma features prominently in our rankings (the first seven entries on the list are among the world's leading

pharmaceutical companies), of note are the smaller companies that have also made their mark.

For example, while the level of their publication activity was lower than that of most big pharma companies, Sepracor achieved the highest average Thomson Source Score for their publications of all the companies on our chart. And the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, one of the 27 research centres operating under the umbrella of the US National Institutes of Health) sponsored an impressive 51 articles and abstracts during this period, giving them an average Thomson Source Score (79%) that rivals that of big pharma.

We took our analysis a stage further by comparing the Thomson Source Score for all the articles, abstracts and scientific posters sponsored by the pharmaceutical industry with the scores for those sponsored by individuals, research institutes or other non-commercial organisations.

Between December 2006 and February 2007, the average Thomson Source Score for the literature sponsored by non-commercial bodies was 72%, compared with 76% for that sponsored by industry. Because of the large numbers of articles reviewed during this quarter (847), this difference in average quality score was highly statistically significant, in favour of articles supported by the pharmaceutical industry.

Figure 1: The organisations making the biggest splash December 2006 – February 2007

Sponsor	Number of Sources	Thomson Source Score (%)	Thomson Institutional Recognition Score
GlaxoSmithKline	125	80	10000
AstraZeneca	121	79	9559
Merck	121	74	8954
Pfizer	100	80	8000
Eli Lilly	102	78	7956
Bristol-Myers Squibb	89	76	6764
Novartis	73	76	5548
National Institute of Mental Health	51	79	4029
Boehringer Ingelheim	43	78	3354
Sankyo	42	70	2940
Janssen	37	76	2812
Wyeth	34	78	2652
Sanofi-Aventis	30	79	2370
Schering	28	83	2324
Sepracor	25	84	2100

Thomson Scientific

Pharmaceutical information, services and technology

COMPANY DESCRIPTION

Thomson Scientific is a business of The Thomson Corporation, a pre-eminent global information company with more than 20 million users. Its solutions aid the world's leading researchers, information specialists, and professionals in fields ranging from biotechnology and engineering to financial services and law.

We are an established, trusted, and authoritative pharmaceutical resource. But we offer far more than just content sets. Our solutions are enriched with unique abstracts, commentaries and analysis prepared by our team of industry experts.

All over the world, pharmaceutical decision-makers depend on us for the essential knowledge that can justify their strategies, promote outstanding research and business growth, and keep them abreast of the market.

PRODUCTS/SERVICES

- Thomson Pharma — the comprehensive global pharmaceutical information solution
- Thomson Message Mapping System — see your messages through a clinician's eyes
- IDdb — the pharmaceutical competitor intelligence service
- Derwent World Patents Index (DWPI) — a comprehensive database of value-added patent documents
- IDRAC — a single source of worldwide regulatory requirements
- Liquent InSight Suite — supports the entire regulatory product management lifecycle
- Regulatory Online Learning — the latest knowledge direct to your desktop
- Horizon Global — powerful integrated global generic drugs information

The Thomson Message Mapping System measures the potential impact of published scientific information on the clinical practices of healthcare professionals by ranking it in a way that reflects their selection and reading processes. You can critically evaluate how the information published about your products, in scientific literature or at major medical meetings, supports or detracts from the key clinical concepts and messages associated with those products. You can understand the role and impact of key scientific publications on clinical practices and ascertain how messages about your product are being perceived from the point of view of the prescribing clinician.

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*Thomson Message Mapping System*SM

- Measure and compare the potential impact of published scientific information
- Differentiate the position of your products in the market place
- Plan more effective branding and publication strategies
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