***COMMUNICATION***

***UNIQUENESS OF PHARMACEUTICALS SELLING:***

* Pharmaceutical selling is different.....entirely different from the usual "selling."
* The primary difference is that the person who is in fact paying for the drugs is not the decision-maker.
* The decision making authority is someone else... the doctor. The patient or the end user, in turn is the doctor's customer.
* So basically two customers need to be satisfied, the doctor as well as the patient.
* The job of a pharmaceutical salesperson is also very interesting in the sense that he has nothing to "sell" to his customer on the spot, nor can he deliver a live demonstration. He has to sell the concept, the research, the features and benefits and the scientific knowledge, a job much more difficult than is perceived.
* But still there are thousands and thousands of pharmaceutical sales people worldwide doing a fine job and satisfying their ever-demanding customers. The role of a pharmaceutical salesperson has shifted over the years from a typical salesperson to that of a consultant or a facilitator. Knowledge has made the difference.

**SKILLS:-**

Selling is a multifaceted and demanding line of work. To be a successful sales person, it demands several skills. The list of skills a pharma sales man should possess is lengthy, to make it crisp few important skills are mentioned below.

1. Communication skill

2. Product Knowledge

3. Recognizing Systems and Process

4. Objection Handling

5. Identifying Buying signals

6. Negotiating and Closing.

**4 PILLARS OF COMMUNICATION SKILL**

***A. Effective Listening:-***

*Listening, without your thoughts wandering or planning your response, is an act of caring. It is immediately felt and it builds the rapport and connection that speaking does not.*

Too many salespeople believe that listening well is simply repeating back what they have heard in order to prove that they heard what was said. Besides annoying your prospect, it can be done without truly listening for the meaning and without really understanding. It is simply a tactic, not true listening.

I had a great mentor in sales that won more deals with fewer spoken words than I ever imagined possible. If there were an effectiveness measurement for revenue to words spoken, he would surely be one of the most effective salesperson. He was a brilliant listener, asking questions and then sitting quietly and listening, prompting the client with more questions only when they were completely finished speaking. He asked clarification questions when necessary. Then, when he gathered all of the information he needed, he neatly summarized the points for confirmation.

***Practice the art of listening by first controlling your desire to speak*.**

Care deeply about what the other person is saying, so that you don’t have to repeat everything back. Stop planning what you will say next, and be open to the idea that you don’t already have the right solution just because you have seen their challenges before. Prompt for more information to clarify the meaning and to acquire a deeper understanding. Then, neatly summarize all of that you have heard to confirm you understand.

*Most of all, care enough to pay attention.*

***B. Effective Speaking:***

In pharma selling what we speak will make a strong impact on customer mind and if it suits to the necessity of customer, the conversation would be productive. For a successful conversation Probing the customer is a key skill

**C.PROBING:** The first key to a successful sales call.

Ideally, a pharmaceutical representative’s sales call with a physician should consist of opening, probing, proving and closing. From a sales perspective, probing and closing are probably the two that best determine success. Ironically, if you ask physicians what parts of the interview process they often find objectionable, the answer is likely to also be probing and closing.

In this article, I will focus on effective probing, while a future article will deal with successful closing. I define probing as the art of obtaining information, establishing needs and uncovering objections in a non-confrontational, collegial atmosphere. Probing is specifically designed to obtain information – both positive and potentially negative – about a product, allowing the representative to tailor presentation that will optimize sales success.

BE CAREFUL WHEN CHOOSING YOUR WORDS:

* Never condemn what they are using.

**AVOID SAYING BETTER TO SAY**

* **Potent Effective**
* **Safe Tolerable**
* **The Best Good Choice**
* **Cheap Economic/Affordable**
* **I think Fact is**
* **Your objection Your concern**

***D.BE NON-AGGRESSIVE:***

If I had to name a major factor that separates the successful from the average reps, that factor would be the ability to probe. Doctors, as a rule, especially in geographical areas where prescription information is limited, are guarded about their prescribing habits. If a doctor is using product X, that physician does not want to be told by the representative for product Y that he or she is doing something wrong. Typically, most reps would not be aggressive enough to tell a physician directly that he or she was prescribing an “inferior” product, but in the physician’s mind, this is a possibility he or she would like to avoid. The more the sales representative appears to use an aggressive, business-oriented approach or style, with the mandate to “sell” something, the more likely his or her message is to be viewed with

Open Question: Invites an extended doctor response, it should start with What, When, Why, Where, Who & How

Closed Question: Invites a “Yes” or “No” reply from the doctor, to start with Do, Will, Is, Should

Choice Question: Give doctor two or more positive options in order to rule out a negative “No” response.

Benefit tag questioning: Benefit is presented in the form of a statement supported by a Feature and followed by a Closed Question

Tag on questioning: Tag on questions are used when doctor makes a positive statement which you want to reinforce

**Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) 2024**

On March 12, 2024, the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers (DoP), unveiled the revised Uniform Code for Medical Device Marketing Practices (UCPMP 2024) with a view towards providing a set of guidelines that would mitigate unethical ensure transparency, integrity, and accountability

India does not have a specific law at present that regulates promotion and marketing of drugs and medical devices by companies before health care practitioners (“HCPs”). Advertisement of drugs and medical devices to end consumers, on the other hand, is heavily regulated . The Central Government had published a set of guidelines in December 2014 called “Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices” (“UCPMP”) as guidance to the industry for promotion and marketing of drugs and medical devices.

However, these guidelines are voluntary and do not have the force of law, at present. The government is contemplating a separate code for promotion of medical devices called Uniform Code for Medical Device Marketing Practices (“UCMDMP”). However, the code has not yet been finalized.

 Until UCMDMP is officially published, the UCPMP should be treated as the official guidance for promotion of medical devices by medical devices companies. Accordingly, in the paragraphs below, the reference to the word “drug” should be considered as a reference to “medical device” as well.

**Important and Relevant Clauses pertaining to MSR:**

4.2 The medical representatives must at all times maintain a high standard of ethical conduct in the discharge of their duties. They must comply with all relevant requirements of the Code.

4.3 The medical representatives must not employ any inducement or subterfuge to gain an interview. They must not pay, under any guise, for access to a healthcare professional.

**8 Relationship with Healthcare Professionals**

**8.1 Gifts:** No gift should be offered or provided for personal benefit of any healthcare professional or family member (both immediate and extended) by any pharmaceutical company or its agent i.e. distributors, wholesalers, retailers, etc. Similarly, no pecuniary advantage or benefit in kind may be offered, supplied, or promised to any person qualified to prescribe or supply drugs, by any pharmaceutical company or its agent i.e. distributors, wholesalers, retailers, etc.

**8.2 Travel**: Companies or their representatives, or any person acting on their behalf, should not extend travel facilities inside or outside the country, including rail, air, ship, cruise tickets, paid vacations, etc., to healthcare professionals or their family members (both immediate and extended) for attending conferences, seminars, workshops etc., unless the person is a speaker for a CME Program.

**8.3 Hospitality:** Companies or their representatives, or any person acting on their behalf, should not extend hospitality like hotel stay, expensive cuisine, resort accommodation etc., to healthcare professionals or their family **members** (both immediate and extended) unless the person is a speaker for a CME program.

 **8.4 Monetary Grants**: Companies or their representatives should not pay cash or monetary grant to any healthcare professional or their family members (both immediate and extended) under any pretext. Where any item missing, the Code as per the Indian Medical Council (MCI)

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