



## **WHAT IS GAPSULE:**

Gapsule has been conceptualized to fill the knowledge gap and help to improve the interaction between the pharma companies and medical practitioners.

## **BACKGROUND:**

COVID has disrupted many activities with frequent lockdowns and social distancing. These things haven't even spared the pharma industry, as they experienced closed clinics, restricted face-to-face meetings with medical practitioners, or severe restrictions in travel for a product briefing exercise.

Now in this situation, it is imperative to be part of this entire transformation. This transformation, which is led by technology, ensures a better connection with doctors. And the doctors to connect better with the patients using these emerging technologies. It has become more imperative to understand the areas the pharma industry is missing out on.

One of the areas that really impacted during this pandemic was knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing includes the production and dissemination of clinical data, scientific breakthroughs to keep the medical practitioner in the loop of new developments which would help them to excel in their practice. But with restrictions between physician and pharma company meetings due to COVID, the knowledge marketing went for a pause period.

This led to the launching of Gapsule by DOCMODE, an effort to just bring in the top experts from different pharma companies for a panel discussion on focus areas where it could be either around the emerging technologies could be around the emerging trends or could just be discussing what we together need to do in order to build a better future.

## **MODE:**

### **Panel Discussion Series**

- **Session 5: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

## PANELISTS:



**Mr. Abdul Sukkur**

Senior General Manager - Sales & Marketing, Apex Laboratories Pvt Ltd.



**Ms. Priya Hariharan**

Deputy General Manager,  
Emerging Markets - Global  
Emcure Pharmaceuticals



**Mr. Nilesh Kotwal**

General Manager - Marketing  
Zuventus Healthcare Ltd.

## MODERATOR:



**Ms. Zeenat Saba Khan**

Senior Manager - Commercial  
Communication & Digital - Abbott

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- The pharma industry was using digital tools for marketing and engagement even before Covid started, but the lockdown acted as a catalyst to accelerate this digital transformation.
- The pre-covid era needed a digital push, but Covid accelerated the adoption of digital technologies. In the pre-Covid era, marketing was more personalized, and now it has evolved to a hybrid approach (physical + digital).
- Today the marketing approach has evolved towards delivering to the HCPs, based on their requirement, or based on their expectation.
- The consumers are also moving from illness to wellness. Now even the patients are aware of the treatments and understand the diagnosis.
- Pharma industry was a late entrant to the digital space as they were quite reluctant to share information via digital channels. This is because the industry was unsure whether the current information will reach the HCPs. Also, the industry is highly regulated, which made it more difficult to easily venture on digital channels like the FMCG or the white goods industry.
- Nowadays the HCPs community has to invest time in studying the treatments and case studies, as most patients are already well aware of disease conditions.
- With the information overload in the digital space, it is the responsibility of the pharma industry to act responsibly and ensure correct information is shared with patients and HCPs. Misinformation or incorrect information can result in a disaster within the medical field.
- The Indian pharma industry has been at the forefront of innovations and to adopt new systems.
- Almost the top 50 pharma companies in India have adopted digital initiatives with separate departments managing the digital transformation function.
- The medical rep detailing visual aids with HCP has also been transformed on iPads, mobile apps, or videos.
- Now the pharma industry needs to transform itself digitally to be more effective in communication and engagement with stakeholders. To ensure the entire digital transformation, the pharma industry needs to train its entire field force.
- It is important the training needs focus on all aspects of digital transformation, from digital and visual communication with HCPs to report and understand digital analytics for insights and planning.

- We shouldn't compare between the pharma and the FMCG industry, since both are very different, in FMCG the focus is direct marketing, while in pharma the focus is indirect marketing.
- The Indian Digital Healthcare Industry has moved from 116 billion in 2018 to around 480 billion in the current scenario. This is the kind of transition that we are looking at over the next 4-5 years. This itself proves we are very progressive when it comes to digital healthcare.
- Today around 60% of patients who have a visit confirmed with the doctor are using some form of digital media.
- In digital marketing, segmentation is important since we cannot work with the approach of "one-size-fits - all". Going ahead we need to segment, micro-segment, hyper-personalize the patient journey. It is important the pharma industry invests to train their core stakeholder i.e., the medical reps, since they would be playing a major role in educating the patients and HCPs as well.
- Lot of Indian pharma companies get stuck with digital engagements and transformation programs, since they lack effective training of the medical reps.
- Earlier paper was used for communication. Now with digital screens, content has become more engaging and virtual. Most pharma companies either give tablets to HCPs and upload the content in those tablets or share CD or USB. HCPs can access content even if they don't have good internet bandwidth. But if we really want to see digital transformation, we need to ensure proper infrastructure availability to the HCPs.
- Over the years, the learning and development department in a pharma company has gone for a complete makeover. Earlier the L&D was a 25 to 30 days focused training period, but over the years it has become a weeklong program. Soon after, a crash course has now completely shifted on digital channels. Though the pharma training departments have gone for a digital makeover but have lost human touch to those programs.
- The training departments need to work with the marketing departments to work a better training program for equipping the field representatives with digital knowledge.
- Further the education for field staff needs to keep on evolving, since digital marketing is also evolving,
- One thing the Indian pharma needs to ensure, if the content is good, HCPs would listen and engage. The medical reps can use their learning in digital marketing to identify and segment the HCPs based on channels and start engaging on channels of preference.

- It is a known fact that the HCP community wants unbiased studies and reports from the pharma company, though this is a major reason for medical reps to meet the HCPs. But if the medical rep shared irrelevant content to the HCP, they would throw it in the bin along with the sample.
- During the 1st lockdown, HCPs got frustrated with medical reps, as everyone was sharing similar content, which was not helping the HCPs.
- The pharma industry can also create apps for patient engagement and education. The patients can use these apps to manage their diseases. Participation in rural patient journey is critical as adherence to medication has one of the leading issues HCPs faces in the villages.
- It is important to conduct survey or get insights from the medical reps, the front-line managers and the HCPs, as they are the consumers of the content. The pharma company needs to engage to understand the type of content, frequency, the digital channels of preference, etc before launching the marketing campaign.
- There is a thin line between OTX and OTC in Indian marketing, while internationally the OTC market is much evolved. Currently, in India, any brand which crosses 50 cr to 100 cr is shifted to the OTC segment by making small changes. There are no proper guidelines or consensus on how the pharma companies should change the brand from Rx to OTC.



# GAPSULE

## **A First of an Industry Dialogue Series**

**Aimed at Bridging the Knowledge Gap between the Pharmaceutical Industry and Medical Practitioners for Better Treatment Outcomes.**

<https://gapsule.docmode.org/>

*An initiative by*



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