



## Short Communication

# E media and training of pharmaceutical sales representatives in Covid era

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## ABSTRACT

Medical sales representatives are a key link between medical and pharmaceutical companies and healthcare professionals. The Medical Sales representative is a high-risk sector with job stress. It requires more skills, wider knowledge and emotional stability than the other professions. Due to extensive traveling, and waiting time, target issues, work-life balancing problems and lack of job security the medical representative life cycle is full of psychological stress. E-learning is use of technology for learning outside the boundaries of the physical classroom. New E training modules are more useful which facilitate distance learning, which are safer in new covid era. Product Training can be conferred at specific website created by Pharmaceutical companies.

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## 1. Introduction

There are many Modular Training for sales representatives. Generally five types of training are covered in the sales training curriculum for medical representatives or Business Executives. *Module 1* Anatomy and Physiology, *Module 2* Disease Process, *Module 3* Drugs used in clinical condition and advantages of molecule marketed. *Marketing module 4*: How the therapeutic molecule will be sold based on SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threat) *Module 5* Handling Objections representatives are trained on how to handle the doctors' objections. How to reply in a dignified way without being harsh with the prospect. *Module 6*. Etiquette and dress code to impress and influence client. The view of Medical Representative is "that tiny little spot in my customer's mind to absorb and accept my product message, so that I can get the prescriptions that any pharma marketer so earnestly works for. Transportation cost, paper cost, prints of visuals and the training venue add to the cost as compared to E platforms.<sup>1,2</sup>

## 2. Digital Learning

Digital marketing is the marketing of products or services using digital technologies, mainly on the Internet, but also including mobile phones, display advertising, and any other digital medium.

### 2.1. Multimodal

Use of different modalities, such as a web page or mobile app, in the same space. These modalities include text, graphics, audio and video.

### 2.2. Multiplatform

Learners access content on many different devices, including desktops, tablets and phones.

### 2.3. Personalized

Ability to individualize content, according to requirement.<sup>3,4</sup>

2/ 3<sup>rd</sup> of pharmaceutical representatives of agreed that they gave balanced information to doctors (i.e. about negative as well as positive aspects of products). It is the

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responsibility and duty of the medical representative to give complete information, especially if it is about a new product or an information update (references print or preferably through E mail).<sup>5</sup>

The basic education of Business executives in India is Bsc , Msc, B or M Pharma , some of them also have MBA degree , with appropriate product training , they can effectively detail medical consultants about products.

#### 2.4. Telemedicine

During the COVID-19 pandemic, telemedicine is the safest interactive system between patients, both infected and uninfected, and clinicians. Telemedicine platforms (continuous care for health) have doctors that pharmaceutical brands ultimately try to reach out in a bid to educate them about their products and services. Case presentations on various therapeutic areas can be for Health Care Professionals for training. This can be though sales representatives to enhance the clinical acumen of physicians.<sup>2,6</sup>

#### 2.5. Visual media for projection of medical text

Visual aids are items of a visual manner, such as graphs, photographs, video clips etc used in addition to spoken information. Instead of paper visual aid, Tablet computers like iPad and Android based tablets are used. They are pre-loaded with everything—textbooks, manuals and training videos. They can be carried everywhere. Most of the doctor queries are handled through E mail, instead of printed communication, For specialty divisions , the required slide texts for physicians can be provided by sales representatives for the consultant presentation in CME, as academic support which is rendered effectively. Most of the clinical updates in oncology , rheumatology , hepatology, neurology and cardiology are provided by sales representatives to the busy practitioners, this is a support activity generally rendered of medical division. of company Product update is loaded , which can be achieved any time.

#### 2.6. Advantages of digital training

1. Access courses anytime, from anywhere, and from any device,
2. Self-directed study and digital record keeping.
3. 24 hour resources and Immediate feedback and recognition.
4. Cost effective — sales representative cost to doctor is eliminated.
5. Ethical sales are achieved as there are no Promotional Gifts are provided , which are as such abandoned by IFPMA Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices.

E-learning industry in India is growing at a rate of 25% year-on-year. By adapting a digital learning approach, many of

the recurring costs associated with classroom training. MP3 players, tablet PCs, and other handheld devices representing mobile learning, can provide even more convenient access to e-Learning. The interactive e-training removes nervousness and apprehension makes sales executives more confident.

#### 2.7. Disadvantages of digital learning

1. Inability to focus on screen- the biggest challenges of online learning is the struggle with focusing on the screen for long periods of time. Most of the time monotonous lectures play distraction.
2. Challenge of online classes is internet connectivity. — Connectivity and signal issues are the most prevailing problems faced by sales force while attending online classes. 72 percent of the respondents use mobile hotspot to abate problem. Repeat Buffering is a constant issue For streaming video content Sky Line/Sky Best recommends to have an internet speed of at least 45 Mbps. However, if there are multiple users of internet its recommend to have 100 Mbps or more to accommodate everyone.
3. In an online class, there are minimal physical interactions between students and teachers. This often results in a sense of isolation for the students.
4. This increase in screen time and intermittently loss of presenters voice is one of the biggest concerns and disadvantages of online learning.<sup>7</sup>

#### 2.8. Attributes : online sales training

1. Ease of use: any salesperson, can learn from an online sales training program.
2. Interactive questions can be raised and answered in real time. With online sales training programs anyone can be trained at any location in any language.
3. Instant access: training programs are available to learners all day,
4. Customization of training process, as per need of company.
5. Flexibility: online sales training programs.
6. Free online Sales courses, can be downloaded.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Conclusion

Medical Representatives are building blocks of company, and they create demand for an existing product or launch new product ensuring availability at retailers and stockists. Medical Representatives are trained by professional doctors to impart basic medical skills. They are trained by dedicated faculty to transmit product benefits of products marked by company to the target doctors who are responsible for product prescription. Before COVID-19, 64% of meetings with pharma sales reps were held in person. During the pandemic, this shifted to 65% of meetings held virtually. Training has seen dramatic changes from overhead projector

to projector using slides to laptop , finally online teaching modules using google net (safe, secure and powerful) Teachmint, Microsoft teams (schedule meeting anywhere) , Zoom (Seamless transition, Screen sharing and remote control , good video quality) etc in era of covid infection where now distance training is present norm. Electronic detailing (e-detailing), the use of electronic devices (Tablets (iPad and Galaxy Tab) , Laptops) to facilitate sales presentations to physicians, has been adopted and expanded in the pharmaceutical industry replacing the conventional visual folders. It is imperative that the Medical advisor continuously upgrades his/her knowledge and methodology in order to enhance the quality of teaching.

#### 4. Source of Funding

None.

#### 5. Conflict of Interest

None.

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