

Exciting times ahead in 2008

The last 12 – 18 months have seen some of the most radical changes to the pharmaceutical sales model, especially within primary care. This has resulted from the way in which healthcare services are now delivered to the patient – forcing pharmaceutical companies to re-evaluate how they communicate with their customers.

For the vast majority of Pharmaceutical companies the identity of their customer base has changed. New prescribing influences have evolved and it has been essential that the industry has changed its approach to meet the needs of these new prescribers and powerful advocates.

However the changes are not uniform across the U.K, and they also vary in relation to therapy area. Therefore it is extremely difficult now for pharmaceutical companies to provide a 'one fit' solution.

The network of customers and their prescribing influence and habits can vary from PCT to PCT. It is essential therefore that pharmaceutical companies now look at a local level – to assess the skills required of their sales people to perform the role that is now necessary.

As a consequence of these changes it has meant that many Sales Representatives, especially working at primary care level, in some of the larger pharmaceutical companies have faced redundancy over the last 12 – 18 month period.

The model now appears to be far more sophisticated, moving away from high volume noise to a much more strategic planned approach, networking with all the relevant customers in the therapy pathway.

So what has this meant to the Medical Representative?

The type of individuals required for such roles have a completely different skill set. VMC works as a specialist resourcing partner to the pharmaceutical industry and in the last 18 months have had to re-evaluate the competencies of the candidates considered for such specialist roles.

The types of skills required now are:-

- The ability to communicate and network at all levels – bringing customers together so as to deliver a service and a therapy solution that is beneficial to all parties.
- Have excellent relationships with and knowledge of key stakeholders on territory.
- The ability to take full responsibility and accountability for the region.
- Exhibit entrepreneurial approach.
- Extremely self motivated.

So, for sales representatives wishing to remain in the industry, they need to ensure they have the ability to adapt their skills to move forward with these new and exciting opportunities.

2008 will no doubt see further changes and more downsizing, but it will also see the "dawning" of a new era within the pharmaceutical industry – one that is challenging, exciting, stretching the boundaries and entering new dimensions, especially with novel specialist niche products.

However, it is not only the sales model approach that the pharma industry has been reviewing. They are also looking to mirror the partnerships they are forging with their customers, with the resource providers they are currently working with.

At VMC we provide a very customised service. We work with our clients to build a menu of services, that are bespoke to them. We start each project from a clean sheet of paper

and build specifics into the delivery of the service, over a long term partnership. This is especially the case with companies entering the U.K market. Often they have a limited infrastructure and they need to have the confidence that they are working with an organisation that can deliver everything they require at a very professional level.

VMC can provide all of this from:-

- Assisting in new office set up.
- Defining territories.
- Providing customer data (at all levels).
- Provision of teams focussing on any type of customer.
- Bespoke training (including full organisation of ITC's).
- Along with our partners, provide pre marketing analysis and product life cycle management e.g. end of patent strategy/generic/daily tariff advice.

VMC like the industry is adapting its model to move forwards with the changes in the industry. It has already proven to be very successful over the last 12 – 18 months in doing this, building new specialist teams and partnering with customers such as Enturia, York Pharma, Basilea, Alexion. So in 2008, whether you are a candidate looking for a new exciting opportunity or a pharma/healthcare company looking for a new style of approach you need to contact the specialist team at VMC.

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