



Marketing Matters

By Richard D. Czerniawski

THE FUTURE IS NOW



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The title of a FIERCE Pharma article announces, “Amgen cuts 500 U.S. jobs, primarily sales reps, as COVID-19 speeds a shift to digital.” The company is turning to its use of those digital marketing tools it employed during the pandemic for the long run.

Amgen is re-engineering its commercial model to make it more effective and efficient. The company is extending its use of digital technology, reducing its reliance on face-to-face sales calls.

10-years ago, a shift in the commercial model from sales to marketing would neither have been entertained nor voiced! The mere suggestion of reducing sales personnel “face time” with HCPs (Health Care Practitioners) would have undermined senior pharmaceutical managers’ confidence in you.

Face-to-face sales calls were considered the leading tool for generating sales. Yet even 10-years ago, it should have been clear that HCP’s interest in receiving sales calls and, therefore, call effectiveness was waning. Many HCPs granted limited engagement time to sales personnel, and often it was contingent upon the sales personnel providing lunch for the office staff.

The handwriting was on the wall. HCPs were signaling, "If you don't have anything of value to share, why waste my time?"

The COVID crisis gave birth to new approaches such as screen-to-screen sales calls provoking marketers and their organizations to rethink their commercial model. The smart organizations did not, nor will not, let this crisis go to waste.

Now, this isn't to downplay the importance of sales personnel and face-to-face selling. It's about a reallocation of resources. It's about investing where we can generate the most favorable returns in generating incremental sales and profit.

Face-to-face selling is likely to prove far more effective for new product launches versus established brands for which no new information is available. In the latter case, screen-to-screen, or non-personal marketing promotion, may be more effective and efficient.

Those organizations and marketers currently trying to figure out what the future will look like are behind the proverbial power curve. The future has been with us for a long time. Many had not recognized it until COVID struck and forced new thinking. The future is now!

So, what is your future of "now," and what will you do about it for your brand and business? By the way, switching, adding, and reallocating the tools we use for messaging is only part of the effectiveness equation. How we use these tools is a major component in impacting effectiveness.

In one case, the tool might be appropriate, but the message is wrong. In another, the means and message are correct, but there is no idea to give it wings. Nothing to resonate with the target customer. The resultant outcomes from these two cases will not be satisfactory.

However, if the tool is appropriate, the message is on target, and it is fueled by a campaign idea that gets the target customer to realize the benefit promise, then the marketer will generate positive results.

The future is now. Get your messaging to where it is relevant and meaningfully differentiated for your target customer. Experiment and measure changes to your commercial model within the context of effective messaging delivered compellingly.

This is the sign we marketers have been looking for. Marketing has an opportunity to prove its value as, what Peter Drucker refers to, one of the two essential functions—along with innovation—of the organization.

Don't let a good crisis go to waste. Roll-up your sleeves and get to work to make your marketing matter more.

Take your marketing to the next level! Read my most recent book, **AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing**. It will provide you with a list of common marketing errors to avoid and, importantly, effective ways to make your marketing matter more. Learn more here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>

Peace and best wishes,

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