

NAVIGATING THE POINT-OF-CARE:

A Comprehensive Analysis for OTC Brands

Revolutionizing OTC Marketing through Increased POC Brand Positioning





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CHAPTER 1:

How OTC Brands Can Strategically Use the Point-of-Care to Connect to Their Consumers

Why OTC Brands Should Own the Experience at the Doctor's Office

Over-the-counter (OTC) marketers know how crucial it is to stay ahead of the game – which means constantly looking for new and innovative strategies to reach target audiences. While many OTC brands gravitate toward more tried-and-true channels, such as TV or programmatic digital advertising, they may overlook the untapped opportunities within point-of-care (POC).

Marketing at the POC presents a unique opportunity for OTC brands to increase sales through important context for consumers – one of established trust with patients and health care professionals. *Context is key.* This leverages the impact of recommendations and goals for long-term wellness in a less crowded channel. Ultimately, reaching consumers where they are most inclined to be influenced.

Nicole Divinagracia, executive director of the Point of Care Marketing Association, explains that "point-of-care partners provide meaningful reach for brands. ... Healthcare providers with POC marketing have more patients and write more prescriptions." POC has already proved its worth to prescription drugs, where in-office marketing has become a standby. It may be time for OTC brands to effectively make an impact within the doctor's office experience.

POC refers to any area where a patient and HCP come into contact. Traditionally, this includes the doctor's office and hospitals, but it has recently expanded to pharmacies, dentist offices, veterinarian offices and more consumer packaged goods-centric areas. Studies show that "patients exposed to ads at point-of-care are more willing to have conversations with their physicians." These productive physician-patient conversations can then lead to OTC medication and health plan recommendations.

With consumers showing more interest in taking action for their health, OTC brands need to take advantage of connecting with their primary audience where health and wellness are always top of mind.³ Brands should aim to be the ones that both patients and HCPs think about first during their important health interactions.

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73%

of consumers are likely to purchase a brand their doctor recommended within one week after a recommendation.



Trust at the Point of Care Is an Opportunity for OTC Brands

Due to the immediate and personal impact of healthcare marketing, there are often emotional responses toward the products. When it comes to personal well-being and the well-being of loved ones, it is only natural to want a product that you can trust. By advertising at the POC, brands are able to receive a "halo effect," where patients associate the confidence they have in their HCP with the OTC brand they see advertised. Just by being in the spaces where a patient feels safe and cared for, the product already gets points in trust.

Physician Exposure and How HCPs Shape Patient Decisions

Consumers aren't the only people influenced by marketing at the doctor's office. Healthcare providers and staff are equally affected, especially when the information is timely, credible and trusted. The data shows that because HCPs are surrounded by this information throughout their workweek, they are encountering these advertisements and learning from them just as much as the patients.^{4,5}

This strategy makes HCPs more likely to recommend the products they've seen around the doctor's office during a physician-patient conversation. A patient's HCP is the ultimate ranking recommendation in credibility and trust.⁶ Studies have even shown that 73% of consumers are likely to purchase a brand their doctor recommended within one week⁷ after a recommendation. Once the HCPs are on the brand's side, the patients quickly follow suit..

Even more specifically, the targeting of POC brands can be focused on specialties that are likely to treat an ailment. When a patient needs allergy medication, they can trust the brand that their ear, nose and throat doctor recommends. Instead of having consumers search online or head to a store with all the competing brands, OTC brands can meet consumers exactly when they are needed.



OTC Brands Can Be Positioned for Long-Term Wellness for Patients and HCPs

Through POC marketing, OTC brands have a perfect opportunity to position themselves as long-term wellness partners for patients and HCPs. Patients and consumers routinely return to their doctor's offices to ensure their personal wellness and health. With OTC marketing, they can produce more stimulating conversations with their HCP. Fierce Pharma explains that increasing health literacy about a product serves the particular brand through brand awareness and conversation.⁸

Patients want to feel comfortable with their care and naturally return to brands that they understand and are familiar with. Trust drives comfort. OTC brands can market in these areas to help raise awareness about living with certain health conditions and to promote healthy lifestyles. When an OTC brand positions itself as a partner along a patient's journey, it can become the go-to product for both short- and long-term use. The goal of ensuring customer loyalty becomes that much easier when establishing oneself as a leader in the POC space.

There Is Less Noise at the Point-of-Care for OTC Brands to Be Seen

The usual channels of the OTC market are becoming visibly overcrowded. Most consumers are bombarded with an extensive array of choices, all in the same space. Outlets such as PharmaVoice emphasize that an OTC brand needs to rise above the noise. Expanding to different and innovative channels, such as POC, is a strategy to directly reach a brand's audience in an untapped market space.

By being a leading brand in a less competitive area, which just so happens to be where all the HCPs are located, the chances to be labeled a No. 1 doctor-recommended product increases. If an HCP is consistently exposed to your brand at their workplace, their preference for it is only natural. OTC brands should aim to have their brand be the first one recommended when a patient goes to the doctor's office looking for advice.





POC Marketing Can Help OTC Brands:

1

Increase Trust From Their Consumers

2

Build Stronger Relationships With HCPs

3

Promote Adherence

4

Decrease Competition

5

Be Top of Mind for Patients, HCPs and Consumers



Being Top of Mind

OTC medicines have a unique sales cycle since most patients purchase OTC medications when they are immediately needed – a sudden headache, allergy season, upset stomach and so on. In fact, the Consumer Healthcare Products Association explains that OTC medicines are the first course of action, being a 24/7, conveniently available health care option for symptomatic relief.¹¹ So, being top of mind is key. And what better place to have advertised than to an audience whose entire focus was on their health? Once an OTC brand has fully run its marketing process, the brand can become a top contender in the patient's mind the next time something occurs. At that point the brand has gotten the consumer through its trust, credibility and familiarity.

In conclusion, the POC space provides a valuable opportunity for OTC brands to reach their target audience in the most trusted and effective way. Some brands are already beginning to utilize these channels. Through POC marketing, OTC brands can increase trust from their consumers, build stronger relationships with HCPs, promote adherence, decrease competition and, ultimately, be top of mind for patients, HCPs and consumers alike.

In our next article, we will convey the specific tactics that are necessary for OTC marketers to succeed at POC.





CHAPTER 2:

The Three Pillars OTC Brands Need to Follow at POC



By reaching consumers in a less crowded space, and ensuring the messaging will reach the right audience, a brand can make a stronger and more lasting impression.

Beyond the Counter: Best Practices for OTC Brands at Point-of-Care

For over-the-counter (OTC) brands, outreach on traditional TV and digital channels can be incredibly competitive. Within these markets, OTC brands compete for their consumers' attention against all brands with a budget – requiring every media dollar to be spent as efficiently as possible. This situation puts an incredible strain on marketers: hoping their marketing strategy is accurate, their research is exact and their messages resonate to drive consumers to convert.

What's more, health-focused brands face an unspoken challenge that's inherent in these channels: the consumers you reach are not necessarily focused on health needs. But marketing at the point-of-care (POC)can eliminate the obstacle completely, with your message going directly to the relevant audience.

OTC brands can capitalize on health-focused audiences at the POC. By reaching consumers in a less crowded space, and ensuring the messaging will reach the right audience, a brand can make a stronger and more lasting impression. POC advertising, as shown by extensive research and real-time results, provides the proper context to reach consumers where they are more receptive. If content is king and context is queen, the POC offers both.



Waiting Room Activities:



Reading magazines with advertising cover wraps



Watching waiting room TVs



Reading check-in tablets or IPads



Let's examine the best practices for OTC brands to effectively utilize POC for the highest return on investment (ROI).

When marketing at the POC, a brand must understand that patients spend their time watching waiting room TVs, reading magazines with advertising cover wraps, and reading check-in tablets or IPads. 12 Brands can take advantage of this waiting time. During the crucial moment before a patient contacts their HCP and other health staff there exists an opportunity for brands to establish relationships with the brands they encounter. These brand messages can then influence important conversations with their HCPs and help them gain essential knowledge on their own health and next steps.

OTC brands must approach these targeted consumers through a patient-centered approach, with messaging catered toward consumer outcomes rather than "selling products". A brand can show understanding through the inclusion of "real people" and "real stories" in their content, as well as providing crucial education for a patient. By employing these practices, OTC brands can optimize their campaigns, connect with their targeted audiences and ultimately drive more consumers toward their products.



At the POC, brands become more than just a brand. They become partners, educators, and sources of comfort.



Embracing a Patient-Centered Approach

The POC is an environment of trust where patients already have a preconceived feeling of comfort and dependability toward their healthcare providers. This inherent trust is then transferred to the advertisements and recommendations they are exposed to. When marketing at POC, an OTC brand must reinforce its audience's belief in them by prioritizing a patient-centered approach.

The central aspect of a patient-centered approach is to market for consumers' and patients' needs first, rather than leading with a brand message. Brands should act as a partner in a patient's health journey, understanding and meeting the needs of patients and consumers. This approach should recognize the value of, "personalization, customer experience, and targeted omni-channel marketing for the right product" tailoring their marketing to deliver the product "at the right time, to the right user, and using the right media." ¹³

By marketing at POC, an OTC brand is already participating in this patient-centered strategy. It is taking steps to understand its audience, and target relevant patients who would likely be interested and engage with their brands. At the POC, brands become more than just a brand. They become partners, educators and sources of comfort.



Within the healthcare sphere in general, brands are held at a higher standard than companies in other industry sectors, not only by consumers but also providers, who play a key role in this market. It's no longer enough to provide a good product. Data reveals that HCPs place importance on corporate reputation, when deciding on preference in drug recommendation. He by following their consumers to where influential health decisions are made, and doing so credibly, they can become a presence in the "room where it happens".

That room, by the way, can take a variety of shapes in the current landscape. The POC is not just a doctor's office any more, but can be a pharmacy, church, community health centers or other places that deliver health care. Brands should keep this in mind, when accompanying their consumers through their health journey in order to "deliver more than just medicine" ¹⁵.

By becoming a partner that cares about the entire consumer journey, a brand can build value, trust and loyalty to their OTC medications. POC provides a perfect platform for OTC brands to take advantage of and reap the benefits. OTC brands that utilize the POC will be the ones to succeed in generating "more effective interactions, deeper loyalty and lasting brand preference."



The POC is not just a doctor's office anymore, but it can be a pharmacy, church, community health centers or other places that deliver health care.





Providing education is a great driver of purchase power. Through the right targeted marketing, these patients will be provided the tools to ask the right questions that will lead them to your OTC brand.

Educational Content

The POC is not only a place for health diagnosis and treatment. It also plays a key role in patient education and consultation. ¹⁶ In this unique environment, patients and HCPs come into contact, and patients may be more receptive to information about their conditions and medication. Health and wellness is top of mind, and they are searching for information.

OTC brands should understand this and prioritize teaching within their marketing. Through educational content, a brand can establish itself as a trusted partner for reliable guidance and information.¹⁷ This includes providing the right information, at the right time. By bringing up topics to their targeted audience, the patients can then speak with their HCPs and participate in productive and informed conversations that center on their main concerns.¹⁸

A 2022 Conductor study notes that, "when comparing different brands, participants were 83.6% more likely to make a purchase that provided educational content over companies that did not." Providing education is a great driver of purchase power. Through the right targeted marketing, these patients will be provided the tools to ask the right questions that will lead them to your OTC brand.



By holding a patients' hand through the complex narratives and data-driven perspectives, a company fosters trust in its products, establishing itself as a preferred brand for a consumer's future over-the-counter medication needs.

Patient education gives consumers a sense of empowerment, as they make their way through their healthcare journey. By holding a patient's hand through the complex narratives and data-driven perspectives, a company fosters trust in its products establishing itself as a preferred brand for a consumer's future over-the-counter medication needs.

In addition, the POC provides the perfect place for next steps after engaging with an OTC brand's marketing. While having the right creative assets, and strategies in place is extremely effective in educating consumers and influencing their decisions, it is just as important to provide the next steps – which should be a marketing campaign's call to action.

In POC marketing, the goal is always to get the patient in conversation with their HCP. Text that encourages consumers to "consult a doctor" or "ask these questions" are essential to a good POC marketing campaign. ²⁰ When developing creative assets, it is crucial to keep in mind the specific stages of the patient's health care journey, and what is relevant for the specific reader's timeline. This guidance can help the OTC brand solidify its place as a patient's partner through their health care journey.

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80%

agreed that using images that show "nontraditional" families, workplaces and individuals reflect modern society and help a positive brand reputation.





Providing Comfort through Community: Representation and Storytelling

To align with the concept of patient-centered marketing, a brand must identify and understand its target audience. For audiences of OTC brands, it is easy to feel isolated and alone when venturing through the confusion of one's health and wellness. The health risk of loneliness increases even more so for immigrant, and LGBT populations.²¹ OTC brands can reduce these risks by incorporating representative content.

An OTC brand should emphasize displaying "real people" in its targeted marketing campaigns. These initiatives can be as simple as considering the demographic of the conditions and OTC brand effects. Some populations are more susceptible to an ailment, leading the brand to market toward that audience. By considering a products' cultural and societal implications, an OTC brand can also tap into consumers' needs. Seeing someone who shares your appearance or experience who may be suffering from similar situations can provide comfort and even serve as a source of inspiration.²²

According to an Adweek study of 1,500 marketers, 80% agreed that using images that show "nontraditional" families, workplaces and individuals reflect modern society and help generate a positive brand reputation.²³ By being more inclusive with their creative assets and content, pharmaceutical companies can ensure that readers, rather than the ailment, are at the center of the campaign.



OTC brands can be a continuous partner in a patient's journey, cultivating trust and loyalty at the POC and beyond.



Through print and video at the POC, different voices can be displayed on digital visuals, magazine covers and cover wraps. By displaying underrepresented populations, an OTC brand illustrates a more realistic depiction of an ailment, allowing for more diverse stories to be heard. Representation, particularly in an industry with a history of health inequality and lack of resources for minority and underserved populations, plays an essential role in the visibility for marginalized groups.

Embedding language, images and messaging can help connect a pharmaceutical brand to its intended audience. By providing representation for diverse conditions and diverse people, the brand creates a safe space for patients to connect and feel seen. Forbes explains that consumers want to see diversity in their marketing, and are more likely to trust brands that represent diversity in their advertising materials.²⁴ Consumers want to engage with real content, and use brands that understand their diverse audience.

In conclusion, OTC brands can succeed by utilizing three best practices at the POC. Embrace personalized and patient-centered approaches, become a trusted education source and cater to diverse consumers' needs. By doing so, OTC brands can establish and maintain strong relationships with their consumers. With these strategies, OTC brands can be a continuous partner in a patient's journey, cultivating trust and loyalty at the POC and beyond.





CHAPTER 3:

How Ease and Simplicity Are at the Heart of the Production Process

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The OTC wave is coming and those who move first will most effectively establish a strong presence while the current competition is still minimal.



The Ease of Marketing OTC Brands at the Point-of-Care

Though over-the-counter (OTC) marketing at the point-of-care (POC) is not a new concept, the idea of fully utilizing its potential remains unexplored for many brands. This unknown represents an opportunity for OTC brands to differentiate themselves from the competition. Previous OTC brands that have placed their marketing at the POC have a history of success with their campaigns. They have paved the way and provided a template on how to best reach targeted audiences for their products. Coupling this opportunity with the ease of execution makes marketing OTC at the POC an attractive option.

Brands should act swiftly on OTC POC marketing since we are at an inflection point. The OTC wave is coming and those who move first will most effectively establish a strong presence while the current competition is still minimal. By capitalizing on this opportunity, your brand marketing can stand out and lead the way in these untouched markets.

The purpose of this article is to fully communicate just how simple the process is to start and execute campaigns at the POC.



Introduction and Overview

The methodology at Targeted Media Health makes it straightforward for an OTC brand to market at the POC. We offer a multitude of opportunities for your brand to market at the POC including our condition guides, custom cover wraps, healthcare provider (HCP) marketing and digital solutions. When your brand works with us, it is direct, simple and without third-party disturbances or unnecessary actions.

For OTC brands to market at the POC, the first step is to identify the target audience. One unique trait of a POC space is that there are a multitude of locations from broad (e.g., primary care) to specific (e.g., dermatology). Understanding the needs and health journey of a brand's consumers allows a brand to more effectively engage these targets. By focusing on the health and wellness spaces that best match consumer needs, OTC brands can achieve success in their overall business strategy.

Brands market in doctors' offices and hospitals to reach physicians, nurses and patients alike. This reaches healthcare-minded consumers right at the source – where they are in the most relevant state of mind to think about their health and wellness. These brands can go even further by marketing only at select dermatologist offices or pediatrician hospitals. This way, a brand can further narrow its scope and ensure its messages reach the most relevant audiences.



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While POC settings are generally where an HCP and patient interact, at its core, the POC is anywhere a consumer feels safe and comfortable enough to ask for advice and make important health and wellness decisions.

What is often overlooked is how POC marketing can expand beyond the doctors' offices and allow brands to find consumers in less orthodox POC settings. This is even more important for OTC brands, where their product can be relevant in a multitude of environments. This can include community centers, municipal buildings and places of worship. While POC settings are generally where an HCP and patient interact, at its core, the POC is anywhere a consumer feels safe and comfortable enough to ask for advice and make important health and wellness decisions. It is crucial for your OTC brand to understand the POC and take full advantage of the different opportunities.

Various communities engage with health information in different ways and locations. By understanding these POC settings, your brand can truly reach and support the most groups of people in a POC mindset. In these spaces, different groups may feel the most comfortable and receptive to health care and wellness messaging. Through the utilization of these diverse areas, your brand can engage with different demographics, expand product awareness and pivot business strategies in more unique and innovative ways.



Execution Phase

Once your brand identifies the target audience and POC location(s), it can then go forward with using the POC as a marketing channel. When implementing marketing strategies at the POC, your brand is not required to provide extensive resources. Most of the heavy lifting can be done by our own titles. Your brand simply needs an IO and specified targeted locations. By working with Targeted Media Health, you can take advantage of our expertise to fine-tune and optimize your provided information.

With our condition guides and cover wraps, we allow for flexibility on what the creative might look like. Your brand can provide a preliminary ad and we'll ensure that it matches the specs we use for our magazines, or we can create the ad ourselves. Targeted Media Health works with The Foundry, Dotdash Meredith's award-winning custom content studio. Our partnership with The Foundry allows for flexible and customized solutions for your specific needs and requirements.

Many OTC brands may not already have a POC marketing creative on hand for a multitude of reasons. Especially if a brand is new to POC, they may not know what is typical and how to proceed. Your brand can rest easy if you decide to utilize our creative solutions. During our partnership, we work to consider your brand's target audience and message and provide helpful guidance and insights for marketing at the POC. Our marketing takes into account a mass of preferences – tailoring the ad to reflect specific images, wording or anything absolutely necessary that your brand feels needs to be represented. Your brand has complete influence over its representation and can relay its voice and identity at the POC.

Once your brand runs at the POC space, it truly owns it for the duration of the campaign. A brand has exclusivity in our condition guides. Our editorial and surrounding advertisements will not compete with your product or service, and instead provide content that will only elevate your brand. As a bonus, with OTC brands, everything that is used for print at these POC locations can also be used for the digital version of the condition guide. There are no additional fees or extra steps; we digitize the guides themselves. Your brand can enjoy the 360 marketing experience, reaching targeted audiences at the POC and beyond.



how OTC
marketing at the
POC works is
essential to get the
most out of these
marketing settings.
While the process
is easy and simple,
the results of such
strategies provide
a great payout.



Results and Analysis

The entire process of getting your brand to market at the POC is entirely seamless and catered to your specifications and preferences. While this is evident throughout the duration of a campaign, it also continues to yield ongoing benefits beyond your campaign's run.

With each program, Targeted Media Health offers customizable qualitative surveys and feedback forms. This research can help you gather more specific information for your product and future strategies. Your brand can edit the surveys to include any questions you'd like to gain more insight into. Our qualitative research provides stories and direct feedback from the core source. This can help a brand understand its campaigns better and mold its ideas and strategies to handle a renewal or future strategies in all aspects of its business plan.

For example, if the OTC brand is a new product, the client may want to see how the brand ranks among competitors. Through these questions, the client can gain a better look inside its consumers' heads. Coming directly from physicians who are experiencing the product and marketing first hand, brands can learn more about their consumers and how they are responding and engaging to the ads. This can produce valuable demographic information or evidence for new innovations.

Understanding how OTC marketing at the POC works is essential to get the most out of these marketing settings. While the process itself is easy and simple, the results of such strategies provide a great payout. Targeted Media Health provides a simple and easy way to fully utilize the untapped potential that is the POC. Through condition guides, customized cover wraps and a multitude of other digital and print solutions, Targeted Media Health supports and elevates your brand to market at the POC. From before a campaign even runs to when you reap the benefits of a program, Targeted Media Health remains a steadfast and trustworthy partner. While OTC marketing at the POC is already quick and easy, when your brand works with Targeted Media Health, it can make the most of the space, by gaining the trust of targeted consumers.

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Who We Are

Targeted Media Health, a fully-owned division of Dotdash Meredith, has been the leading provider of cover wraps, condition guides and other point-of-care messaging solutions using Dotdash Meredith brands for over 25 years. Our team has 200+ combined years providing point-of-care marketing solutions.

For more information please visit targetedmediahealth.com



