

“FROM DR. MEDICUS RATIONALIS TO BRAND RESONANCE: A FRAMEWORK FOR EMOTIONAL BRANDING IN PHARMACEUTICAL MARKETING ”

Research Paper

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“Abstract”

In pharmaceutical marketing, data has long been the core essence of brand communication. The industry’s default assumption, what this paper terms “Dr. Medicus Rationalis”, presumes that healthcare professionals are purely rational decision-makers influenced primarily by clinical evidence. The assumption that prescribing decisions are solely rational, based on factual information, is challenged by contemporary research.

This research aspires to have significant implications for pharmaceutical companies by highlighting the significant impact that emotions can have on physicians' prescribing choices and offer practical recommendations to pharmaceutical companies on how to adapt their marketing strategies in a way that can resonate more effectively at an emotional level with the healthcare providers. The framework consists of 30 practical applications and was developed through a mixed multi-method doctoral research approach. The findings suggest that incorporating emotional elements into pharmaceutical marketing, presents considerable opportunities to reinforce brand differentiation.

Keywords: Emotional branding, Pharmaceutical marketing, Brand Resonance, Prescriber decision-making.

1 Introduction

Over the past couple of decades, the pharmaceutical industry faces significant challenges, such as increasing competition, pricing pressures, rising research and development (R&D) costs, the expiration of patents of important blockbuster drugs, modest productivity in new molecules that move to later stages of clinical trials, and a rising similarity among many newly introduced medications (Khanna, 2012; Fricker, 2016; www.deloitte.com, 2022). In addition, new regulatory reforms in key markets (EU pharmaceutical legislation reform and Inflation Reduction Act in US) are reshaping the industry landscape (“Reform of the EU Pharmaceutical Legislation” 2025; Phrma.org, 2025). The sustainability of the industry's traditional business model is challenged, urgently requiring solutions to maintain revenue and profitability (Paul et al., 2010).

Marketing strategies employed by pharmaceutical companies remain largely conservative (Manchanda, Phil, and Honkat, 2013). Brand communications continue to be dominated by rational appeals, built on the assumption that physicians make prescribing decisions based solely on product characteristics such as clinical efficacy, safety, etc. and guidelines (Gönül et al. 2001), (Moss, 2001).

This rationalist paradigm, which this paper refers to as the “Dr. Medicus Rationalis” model, reflects a longstanding belief that healthcare professionals are immune to emotional influence in decision-making. The influence of emotional elements and cognitive biases on behaviour has been demonstrated by pioneers such as Tversky and Kahneman (Kahneman, Lovallo, & Sibony, 2011). Furthermore, Nabhan and Feinberg (2017) suggest that biases play a factor in the decisions made by

healthcare professionals and patients, and that these decisions are not always entirely logical. Their treatment decisions are greatly influenced by a variety of emotional elements and therefore in an era where establishing emotional connections is increasingly recognised as a critical element for differentiating and ultimately achieving success, the traditional focus on rational communication of data, primarily targeted at physicians, is outdated (Bednarik, 2005).

Emotional branding remains underutilized in pharmaceutical marketing. Internal barriers, including risk aversion, regulatory constraints, and entrenched marketing mindsets, continue to undermine the adoption of emotionally resonant brand strategies. This paper seeks to address this gap by presenting a practical framework for the application of emotional branding in pharmaceutical marketing.

2 Literature Review

The pharmaceutical industry faces significant challenges, driven by intensifying competition, price and regulatory constraints, increasing R&D expenditures, the expiration of patents for major blockbuster pharmaceuticals, and a modest productivity of new drugs (Khanna, 2012; Fricker, 2016). The expiration of patents on several blockbuster drugs and the prevalence of therapies with only marginal differences from existing options further exacerbate this problem (Paul et al., 2010; Aronson and Green, 2020, McKinsey Company, 2013).

Scholars such as Moss and Schuiling (2004) have called for a shift for a transition from a business model traditionally focused mainly on R&D to brand-centric methods and patent-oriented strategies that use emotional connections as a way to build a strong competitive advantage. The distinction between a product and a brand is a critical element. As Alam et al. (2023) note, a product is what is manufactured, but on the other hand a brand consists of the way consumers perceive, emotionally connect with, and remain loyal to a certain brand. Gibson (2006) challenges the traditional approach and emphasizes the substantial impact of emotions on financial decision-making. This aligns with insights from behavioral economics, which challenge the assumption that decision-making is purely rational. Kahneman, Lovallo, and Sibony (2011) have demonstrated that individuals, display consistent behaviors that are impacted by cognitive biases and emotional factors and Nabhan and Feinberg (2017) suggest that the existing research in behavioral economics in healthcare reveals that healthcare providers, do not always make completely rational decisions.

The Customer-Based-Brand-Equity (CBBE) model, introduced by Keller (2001), provides a systematic framework to analyze brand equity, hence the overall perception that customers might have towards a specific brand. Keller's research discusses the way in which consumers' perceptions and emotions regarding a brand impact its intrinsic value and ultimately the overall success in the market. His work, along with that of Kotler and Keller (2006), emphasizes the critical role of emotional bonds in building lasting brand equity. Keller (2009), Akgün, Koçoğlu, and İmamoğlu (2013), and Latif (2014) highlight the role of emotional connection in fostering brand loyalty. Latif's AASAL model, incorporates functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits, highlighting the complexity of the strategy required to effectively connect with the target audience.

The neurological foundations of consumer behavior and the moral ramifications of emotionally driven pharmaceutical marketing are examined by Alsharif, Md Salleh, and Baharun (2021). According to Vecchiato et al. (2013), marketing strategies should consider the unconscious, suggesting the need to embrace more creative approaches that take into account the complexity of the human mind.

Quevedo and Gopalakrishna (2021) challenge the belief that brand selection depends entirely on rationality, instead arguing that it is predominantly influenced by intuition, feelings, emotions and rationality as well. Li, Ashkanasy, and Ahlstrom (2013) further contribute to the ongoing discussion on decision-making research by highlighting the significance of emotions in creating feelings associated with possible losses and expressing deep desires and motivations. Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer (1999) argue that emotions play a crucial role as indicators, mediators, and moderators of how customers react and take decisions. In the pharmaceutical context, this is echoed by studies showing

how patient expectations, doctor-patient interactions, and psychological factors all contribute to prescribing behavior (Bradley, 1992; Kozlowski et al., 2017).

Hansen, Carpentier, and Modicom (2011) distinguish between product-level and brand-level communication strategies, suggesting that effective pharmaceutical branding must address both functional and emotional needs. Research conducted by Bednarik (2005) among Czech psychiatrists indicated that emotional content has the potential to differentiate pharmaceutical brands beyond clinical data. Ferrer et al. (2014) propose the use of emotion science in health-related decision-making, in line with the wider acknowledgment of the influence of emotions on decision-making in general. Anker et al. (2011) and Memişoğlu (2018) argue that emotional branding must be approached with responsibility especially in health communication.

The literature provides clear justification for emotional branding as a necessary strategic lever in modern pharmaceutical marketing. However, despite widespread recognition of emotions' role in shaping decision-making, there is a lack of structured, actionable frameworks to guide marketers, in applying these insights. This paper addresses that gap by presenting a research-informed practical framework designed to successfully integrate emotional branding into pharmaceutical marketing.

3 Research Questions

The study aimed to challenge traditional marketing models in pharma, by proposing a framework that will enable pharma companies to integrate emotional branding into their marketing strategies.

To achieve this, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Incorporating Emotional Elements into Marketing Strategies

How do pharmaceutical companies currently integrate emotional components into their marketing strategies, and what are the obstacles they encounter?

This question explores the current state of emotional branding approaches, the organizational and regulatory challenges, and the balance required between scientific accuracy and emotional appeal.

2. Establishing a unique brand identity by evoking strong emotional connections

How pharmaceutical companies can effectively differentiate their brands by establishing genuine emotional connections with their target audience?

This question investigates how emotional branding techniques can build trust, loyalty, and alignment between brand values and prescriber motivations.

4 Methods

This study follows a mixed-methods approach, incorporating qualitative questionnaire, focus groups and case studies research methodologies, grounded in experts' insights. The objective of this research is to provide pharmaceutical companies a structured and practical framework in implementing new, more effective ways of differentiating their brands, by utilizing emotional components in their marketing strategies, especially when it is difficult to do that by only based on clinical differences.

4.1 Research design

A multi-method qualitative approach was employed to ensure a rich, triangulated understanding of the subject. The research design combined:

1. A structured questionnaire shared with senior pharmaceutical marketing professionals.
2. Two focus group discussions involving pharmaceutical marketers.
3. Analysis of relevant case studies of successfully applied emotional branding in the pharmaceutical sector.

4.2 Participants

The population of this research consists of senior marketing professionals with a significant experience in the pharmaceutical market. Around 90 senior pharmaceutical marketing experts have been invited to participate at the qualitative survey, collecting 35 completed questionnaires. These professionals have an extensive level of expertise in marketing, particularly in companies with strong portfolio of prescribed brands. Participants were selected based on their seniority, international exposure, and involvement in strategic brand planning.

5 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through a qualitative questionnaire and 2 focus group discussions. The survey included both open-ended questions and predefined answers to collect comprehensive insights on how emotional elements are integrated into pharmaceutical marketing tactics, the challenges faced, and the ethical concerns involved. There were two focus groups with four senior pharmaceutical marketing experts each. The goal of having these focus group discussions was to dig deeper and more in detail into the topics included in the qualitative survey. To give specific examples of successful emotional branding implemented in the past in the pharmaceutical industry, two case studies have been analyzed. Information for the case studies were gathered using documents analysis, hence searching through online articles, studies, reports and marketing materials.

The qualitative data collected through questionnaires, focus groups, and case studies analysis were subjected to thematic analysis. This approach enabled the identification of recurring patterns and insights relevant to the incorporation of emotional branding in pharmaceutical marketing strategies. The methodological structure was designed to ensure that the resulting framework would be not only theoretically grounded but also relevant and implementable for professionals operating in pharmaceutical marketing.

6 Results

In the following section an analysis of the responses obtained is presented, grouped to key themes and discussed in relation to the research objectives and questions.

Key Theme 1: Current Trends in Pharmaceutical Marketing

There is a trend towards a more patient-focused and emotionally resonant marketing, instead of product-centric, which reflects an emerging need to connect with HCPs on a more emotional level. However, scientific and data-focused communication still remains dominant.

Key Theme 2: Challenges in Incorporating Emotional Elements

30% of responders indicated that the integration of emotional elements in pharmaceutical marketing is significantly restricted by regulatory requirements. Several participants at the qualitative questionnaire observed that regulations limit significantly the use of emotional appeals and impose a strict focus on scientific evidence, resulting in a more data-driven, "rational" marketing approach.

Key Theme 3: Successful Emotional Campaigns

Participants in several cases referred to the integration of digital solutions as an essential element of modern pharmaceutical marketing. Digital tools are increasingly leveraged to deliver scientific and emotional messaging.

Key Theme 4: Differentiation through Emotional Resonance

Several responses highlighted the growing significance that emotional aspects have in pharmaceutical marketing and an increasing effort to incorporate these into the marketing strategies. Statements such as "emotion will be key in deciding treatments when products are similar" and "the relevance of emotive branding for Gen-Z HCPs" suggest that emotional branding can be a powerful source of

differentiation, particularly since new generations of healthcare professionals may be more receptive to these approaches.

Key Theme 5: Emotional Triggers that Resonate with HCPs

One of the most critical emotional triggers identified by the responders is the trust established between a brand, HCPs and their patients. Transparent and honest communication promotes credibility and reliability. Expressing empathy and hope, hence understanding the challenges faced by patients and HCPs and addressing their concerns, is an important factor that can positively affect their perceptions of pharmaceutical brands.

Key Theme 6: Organizational Strategies for Emotional Strategies

This theme aligns with the need to implement significant organizational strategies which will aim to support the effective implementation of emotional strategies. Fostering a corporate culture that values emotional resonance has been highlighted as a critical element of success of emotional branding.

Key Theme 7: Measuring the Impact of Emotional Branding

Last, still though of extreme importance is the need to evaluate the impact of emotional branding. The following sub-themes emerged.

- Engagement Rates: Measuring stakeholder engagement with the brand's content, including reactions, comments, and time spent on digital platforms.
- Brand Sentiment Analysis: Analyzing how customers feel about the brand using data from social media and other digital platforms.
- Brand Recall - Recognition: Evaluating stakeholders' ability to remember/recognize a brand over time.
- Conversion Rates: Analyzing the impact of emotional branding in shaping decision-making and facilitating treatment adoption.
- Customer Feedback: Employing customer satisfaction metrics and brand impression surveys to obtain insights directly from customers on the emotional impact of marketing initiatives.
- Behavioral Change: Tracking changes in HCPs' behaviors and decision-making as a result of emotional branding efforts.

Key Theme 8: Resistance to Change and Organizational Mindset

Despite the huge progress made in other industries, emotional branding in pharma is still poorly implemented.

Key Theme 9: Balancing Emotional Content and Scientific Data

Participants highlighted how challenging is to incorporate emotional elements linked to functional characteristics, to maintain scientific accuracy, an essential component of pharmaceutical marketing. Emotional branding can be particularly effective only when it aligns with narratives that resonate with HCPs.

Key Theme 10: Cultural and Regional Considerations

Cultural differences can have a significant impact on the reception of emotional branding strategies. Participants noted that while emotional branding has gained traction globally, some regions, remain more reserved in their acceptance of such approaches due to regulatory constraints and cultural norms.

Key Theme 11: Measurement of Impact

Measuring the success of emotional branding campaigns and most importantly its impact in prescribing behaviors, emerged as a significant challenge.

Theme Title	
1	Current Trends in Pharmaceutical Marketing
2	Challenges in Incorporating Emotional Elements

3	Successful Emotional Campaigns
4	Differentiation through Emotional Resonance
5	Emotional Triggers that Resonate with HCPs
6	Organizational Strategies for Emotional Branding
7	Measuring the Impact of Emotional Branding
8	Resistance to Change and Organizational Mindset
9	Balancing Emotional Content and Scientific Data
10	Cultural and Regional Considerations
11	Measurement of Impact

Table 1. Key Themes Identified in the Research on Emotional Branding in Pharmaceutical Marketing. This table summarizes the 11 central themes identified through qualitative research with senior marketing professionals. These themes provide the structural foundation for the analysis of emotional branding practices in pharmaceutical marketing.

Case Studies Analysis: Two well-known brands, Viagra and Cialis, have created and led the competitive market known as the erectile dysfunction (ED) (FDA.gov, 1998). The analysis of their branding strategies offers insightful information on how pharmaceutical companies can successfully leverage emotional connections in shaping consumer behavior and prescriber decisions.

Pfizer's emotional branding approach had a significant impact to both patients' behavior and prescribers' decision making who managed to overcome the stigma associated with ED. By redefining ED as a legitimate health condition rather than a taboo topic, Pfizer facilitated open discussions between physicians and their patients. The support of public, well known and respected personalities, facilitated the “normalization” of ED talks between patients and their treating physicians, alleviating the discomfort (Caplan, 2023). This way Pfizer established trust with healthcare providers by presenting Viagra as a way to restore patients' confidence and masculinity, framing the medicine as part of a treatment plan that improved patient's overall quality of life. Physicians were not providing a treatment just for the medical condition of ED; with Viagra they were primarily enhancing their patients' emotional and psychological well-being, and this was a significant motivator for the prescribers in their decision-making process of what medicine to prescribe (Lexchin, 2006)

Cialis, entering the ED market 5 years later dominated by Viagra (FDA.gov, 2018), adopted a different strategy, by highlighting its lifestyle advantages, especially spontaneity and extended duration of effect. These characteristics emotionally resonated with both patients and prescribers looking for a more natural and flexible alternative. Cialis's marketing presented the medicine as a way to enhance patient relationships and intimacy, so increasing the likelihood of prescribers recommending it (“The ‘Weekend Pill’ Every Man Should Know about | National Center on Disability and Journalism” 2022).

After the launch of Cialis, Pfizer revised its strategy to highlight the relational advantages of treating ED. By broadening its marketing reach to include women and emphasize how ED treatments can improve relationships, Viagra extended its customer base from individual male patients to couples. This shift allowed Viagra to maintain its market leadership despite the new entrants in the market, by showing its ability to foster emotional connections in intimate relationships, thereby attracting prescribers who were increasingly prioritizing and valuing patients' overall well-being (www.thebrainyinsights.com, 2024).

In conclusion, the findings from the qualitative questionnaire, focus groups, and case studies collectively highlighted the importance of having in place a strategy based on stakeholders' trust, patient-centricity, organizational transformation, and cultural sensitivity. A key outcome was the identification of a disconnect between the theoretical model of physician rationality, conceptualized as

“Dr. Medicus Rationalis”, and the actual emotional, contextual, and interpersonal factors that influence prescribing behavior. This disconnect formed the foundation for the development of a strategic framework designed to support the integration of emotional branding into pharmaceutical marketing. The insights obtained, provide an excellent platform for developing a practical framework on how to successfully implement emotional branding in pharma, that will be presented in detail in the following chapter.

7 Discussion

This study challenges a prevailing misconception in pharmaceutical marketing: that healthcare professionals are guided exclusively by data, evidence, and logic. The idealized image of the emotionally neutral, purely rational prescriber, here conceptualized as “Dr. Medicus Rationalis”, has shaped industry’s marketing strategies for decades. The findings of this research, supported by both literature and senior marketing leaders’ insights, reveal a much more nuanced reality. Physicians operate and take decisions under emotion, biases and cognitive overload. While data informs decisions, it does not necessarily drive preference.

The study proposes a practical framework that will hopefully be of help and guidance for the pharmaceutical companies in adopting and implementing these strategies as effective as possible and in an ethically sound way.

Personalization & Emotional Storytelling	Data, Insights & Measurement	Organizational Culture & Capability	Ethics & Societal Impact
Understanding Patient and Physician Challenges	Leveraging Digital Tools	Global Strategy, Local Relevance	Empathy & Scientific Accuracy
Tailored Communication as a Catalyst	Behavioral Economics in Customization	Embedding Branding across functions	Emphasizing Societal Impact
How Patient Advocates Shape Campaigns	Fully Leveraging Data	Senior Leadership’s Role	Micro-influencers & Patient Advocates
Patient Testimonials	Power of Analytics	Piloting Emotional Branding	Corporate Social Responsibility
Personalized Marketing for trust	Data-driven Storytelling	Fostering Creativity & Accuracy	Ethical Marketing & Credibility
Ultra-personalized communication	Translating Product data into benefits	Building Skills & Mindset	
Tech for personalized experiences	Leveraging Diverse Voices	Learning from Other Industries	
Visual Storytelling	KPIs for Emotional Resonance	Evolving Sales Techniques	
Humanizing Pharma through stories			

Table 2: Strategic Recommendations for Emotional Branding in Pharmaceutical Marketing. This table categorizes 30 practical suggestions gathered from senior marketing professionals during the research. Each item represents a practical recommendation for implementing emotional branding across four thematic domains: (1) Personalization & Emotional Storytelling, (2) Data, Insights & Measurement, (3) Organizational Culture & Capability, and (4) Ethics & Societal Impact.

1. Understanding Patient and Physician Challenges: The Key to Emotionally Resonant Pharma Marketing

At the heart of every successful pharmaceutical marketing strategy lies a deep, detailed understanding of the challenges faced by both patients and physicians. This is a critical component that implies not only identifying clinical unmet needs but also performing a detailed exploration of the emotional, psychological, or logistical challenges faced by patients and physicians. Without this detailed knowledge, the value and benefits associated with a pharmaceutical brand cannot be effectively conveyed, much less evoke an emotional response from prescribing physicians or patients. By understanding these challenges, pharmaceutical marketers can create solutions that genuinely enhance physicians' practice, and shape marketing strategies that highlight how a specific treatment aligns with physicians' goals of improving patient outcomes.

2. Tailored Communication: Catalyst for Brand Resonance in Pharma Marketing

The next critical step is tailoring communication according to patients' and physicians' unique needs and preferences. Tailored communication strategies recognize that individual patients and physicians' needs, motivations, and decision-making thinking processes are highly distinctive and aligning with these is essential for an effective pharmaceutical marketing.

3. Leveraging Digital Tools

One of the most powerful ways to create emotional resonance in pharmaceutical marketing is through the use of digital tools to simulate the patient experience. Simulations enable participants to actively connect with and experience a scenario, resulting in a more strong, emotional impact compared to traditional, static communication methods. By providing HCPs a realistic representation of a patient's journey, pharmaceutical companies can evoke empathy and emotional connection with a brand, much more effectively than traditional methods such as written materials or presentations.

4. How Patient Advocates Shape Emotionally Resonant Pharma Campaigns

Another way to build a strong brand emotional resonance is by integrating patient advocates' voices into pharmaceutical marketing. Patient advocates, by sharing their personal experiences, provide a human element to discussions that in other cases, when presented by clinicians only, can appear technical and detached. For physicians, hearing these things directly from patient advocates provides a fresh perspective on the realities of their patients, which helps them to better understand the impact of a disease and how a treatment can alleviate this. This approach humanizes the brand and positions it as genuinely empathetic, and patient centered.

5. Integrating Empathy and Scientific Accuracy

Patient-centric marketing that integrates scientific accuracy with empathetic storytelling are essential for creating emotional resonance with physicians and positively influencing their treatment decisions. Campaigns that emphasize the human impact of a treatment, while in line and based on solid scientific facts, strike the balance required to resonate on both rational and emotional levels. Patient-centric campaigns build trust and a deeper connection to the brand, positioning it as both scientifically sound and genuinely invested in improving patient outcomes.

6. Emphasizing Societal Impact to Drive Brand Resonance

Another important element that needs to be consider, aiming to strengthen pharmaceutical campaigns' emotional resonance, is emphasizing the broader societal benefits that a treatment can have. By improving clinical outcomes, effective therapies can enable patients to actively contribute to their families, workplaces, and societies in general. Effectively managing a chronic condition might allow a parent to spend quality time with their children or help a professional return to their career with renewed energy and confidence. These narratives highlight the ripple effect of improved health outcomes, demonstrating that a treatment's benefits extend far beyond the individual patient. By framing the brand as a catalyst for individual as well as societal well-being, companies can foster deeper emotional connections.

7. Strengthening Emotional Connections Through Patient Testimonials

Incorporating patient testimonials into marketing strategies is another way to effectively humanize a specific treatment's benefits and strengthen the emotional connection between prescribers and the brand. In contrast to narratives that are created around a generic patient, testimonials offer an authentic, personal perspective on the transformative effects that a specific treatment can have. These real-life stories can add credibility to marketing campaigns by linking scientific data to human experiences. For prescribers, hearing these stories directly from patients fosters empathy and a deeper understanding of the emotional and functional improvements that a treatment delivers.

8. Building Trust and Emotional Connections Through Personalized Marketing

In pharmaceutical marketing, it is critical to move beyond treating prescribers as generic consumers who act in predictable, stereotype-driven ways. Physicians' behaviors are influenced by a complex interplay of emotions, values, and biases. Pharmaceutical companies often treat physicians as a homogeneous customers group, relying heavily assuming that all are driven by the same needs, concerns, and motivations having in mind a profile close to that of the "Dr. Medicus Rationalis". Physicians have different priorities, motivations, therapeutic approaches and emotional triggers that affect their prescribing decisions. By tailoring engagement to these specific pain points and motivations, brands can build trust and foster emotional connections that go beyond product features.

9. Applying Behavioral Economics to Customize Pharma Marketing

One practical application of behavioral economics is leveraging framing to customize messaging for different types of prescribers. For example, during product detailing or campaign design, marketing teams can develop multiple versions of core messages tailoring the wording, the tone of voice and highlighting specific aspects of a treatment that might be more important than other to specific physician personas. By implementing these tailored, psychologically informed strategies, companies can elevate their marketing efforts creating stronger connections with prescribers that ultimately drive brand preference and advocacy.

10. Using Ultra personalized Communication to Deepen Prescriber Engagement

Ultra personalization takes tailored communication a step further by creating content that directly address individual physicians. This approach acknowledges the physician's unique role, preferences, and challenges, reinforcing the idea that the brand values them as individuals rather than treating them as part of a broad audience. Such ultra personalized efforts can strengthen trust, engagement, and emotional resonance, further differentiating the brand in a crowded marketplace.

11. Global Strategy, Local Relevance

For global pharmaceutical brands, a deep understanding of societal, religious, and cultural nuances and preferences is essential for adapting marketing tactics and messages to different contexts, while maintaining brand integrity. By tailoring campaigns to reflect cultural nuances, companies not only enhance emotional resonance but also protect their reputation and credibility in diverse markets. Adapting campaigns to regional differences must preserve consistency with the overarching global strategy and messaging. This balance ensures that the brand preserves its identity and credibility globally, preventing fragmented perceptions while effectively addressing local nuances and deliver campaigns that are both impactful and authentic across multiple markets.

12. Embedding Branding Across All Business Functions

Branding is a collective effort and, in that sense, building emotional resonance with prescribers should not be seen as a responsibility only of the marketing department. To be successful in its implementation, it must be embedded into the corporate culture, across all functions supporting the business. A unified, company-wide commitment to emotional resonance strengthens brand consistency, credibility, and ultimately the impact that this has in the market.

13. The Role of Senior Leadership in Driving Brand Resonance

The endorsement and support of senior leadership are critical for embedding emotional resonance into a company's culture. Senior leaders must understand the value that emotional resonance brings to brand differentiation, championing its integration across functions. Their alignment and endorsement, ensures resources, guidance, and support where needed while preventing potential hurdles that could

arise from misalignment. However, internal alignment on emotional resonance should start at the grassroots levels before seeking endorsement from upper management. A bottom-up approach guarantees that the teams tasked with developing and executing emotional tactics are aligned, and they show full commitment to the concept. When executives see determination and alignment at “lower” levels, they are more inclined to value emotional resonance and support future efforts.

14. Piloting Emotional Branding to Drive Organizational Buy-In

Piloting emotional branding initiatives by launching small-scale projects and initiatives, can be an effective way to demonstrate the impact that emotional resonance can have, test strategies, build expertise, cultivate strong internal advocacy and overcome the initial concerns that might exist.

15. Fostering Creativity While Preserving Scientific Accuracy

Establishing an internal environment that fosters creativity is crucial for incorporating emotional branding into marketing strategies while preserving scientific accuracy. Emotional resonance and scientific accuracy should not be seen as conflicting concepts; with the right culture in place, they can, and they actually should coexist. Encouraging teams to explore new approaches while maintaining their commitment to accuracy ensures that campaigns are reliable as well as impactful.

16. Fully Leveraging Data to Inform Emotionally Resonant Marketing

While understanding customer needs, motivations, interests, concerns and all factors that are shaping behaviors is essential, the industry often fails to fully leverage the data available to it. Large datasets, such as real-world evidence (RWE), patient-reported outcomes, customer insights, and clinical trial results, offer huge potential for developing targeted marketing strategies. Leveraging these rich sources of data enables marketers to identify specific opportunities to provide value to their customers, creating marketing strategies aligned with the needs of patients and physicians.

17. Redefining Pharma Marketing: Building the Skills and Mindset

Marketing professionals’ role in the pharmaceutical industry must evolve and adapt to the rapidly changing environment. There is an urgent need to embrace a broader and significantly different set of skills and capabilities. They must act first as catalysts of cross-functional collaboration, capable of crafting and executing strategies that focus on customer needs and experiences rather than product characteristics. Marketers must develop expertise in new for them areas such as behavioral economics, digital marketing, data analytics, artificial intelligence applications, emotional branding and other, along with a strong knowledge of rules and regulations regarding medicines promotion, enabling them to create marketing strategies that can resonate deeply with prescribers while maintaining scientific integrity and are ethically sound.

18. Unlocking the Power of Analytics

The true value of data lies in the ability to analyze these and extract meaningful insights that inform decision-making and strategy. By equipping teams with the skills needed to translate data into actionable insights, companies can enhance their understanding of customers’ behaviors, motivations, and needs, ultimately driving more targeted and effective emotional branding strategies.

19. Data-Driven Storytelling

Data-driven storytelling is a powerful way to develop and deliver messages that can evoke emotional responses while maintaining scientific accuracy. Pharmaceutical companies can develop real-life compelling narratives by utilizing data like, patient-reported outcomes, treatment success stories, and data showcasing the unmet need and its implications in patients’ lives.

20. Translating Product Data into Meaningful Benefits

To move beyond a communication limited only on data, it is essential to translate functional characteristics of a medicine into clear, meaningful benefits for prescribers, patients, and other stakeholders. Presenting raw data, numbers or product features without linking them to tangible outcomes and benefits is the perfect recipe to fail for emotional resonance.

21. Evolving Sales Techniques

Sales techniques must evolve from traditional product-centric approaches to strategies that prioritize understanding customers emotions, needs, and motivations and align with the principles of emotional branding. By adopting strategies that prioritize empathy, storytelling, and value-based engagement, sales professionals can reinforce brand resonance, ensuring a consistent and impactful customer experience.

22. What Pharma can learn from other industries

The pharmaceutical industry has much to benefit from benchmarking against other industries like FMCG and technology. These sectors in the last decades, have excelled in engaging their audiences on a deeper level through storytelling, experiential marketing, and customer-centric innovation. By analyzing their best practices and adapting strategies to the particular context of pharmaceuticals, companies can move beyond traditional approaches and adopt more innovative, emotionally resonant tactics.

23. Using Technology to Build Personalized, Emotionally Resonant Experiences

Technological advancements have revolutionized how pharmaceutical companies engage and interact with customers, putting in place strategies that provide personalized experiences. Customers today expect the ability to engage with the industry at the time is more convenient for them and by selecting through multiple channels, the most preferred one. By leveraging digital tools, companies can develop customer journeys that are personalized, ensuring that prescribers, can get the information they need, when and how they prefer. Artificial intelligence (AI) is already here and will play an increasingly significant role in enabling this change. Advanced algorithms can help accurately analyze customer data to predict preferences, behaviors, identify engagement patterns, and provide the most relevant content for each customer. Integrating AI into omnichannel strategies enables pharmaceutical companies to provide truly personalized experiences, fostering stronger emotional connections with their customers and reinforcing the effectiveness of their engagement efforts.

24. Using Visual Storytelling to Strengthen Emotional Connections

Visual storytelling capturing patient stories by using videos and images, is a powerful tool for fostering strong emotional resonance with customers. Visuals evoke empathy and connection in ways that text alone cannot, allowing prescribers to see and feel the benefits of a treatment. Pharmaceutical companies can leverage the emotional impact that visuals can have to build deeper engagement and stronger connections with their audience.

25. Humanizing Pharma Through Stories

Humanizing pharmaceutical brands by showcasing the people behind the medicines, such as researchers, employees, patients, and their relatives, and highlighting their efforts, can create a powerful emotional connection with prescribers.

26. Micro-Influencers and Patient Advocates for Emotional Brand Advocacy

Brand advocacy in the today's healthcare landscape goes beyond just the traditional focus on Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), to include "micro-influencers", physicians with smaller yet highly engaged networks and patient advocates. While top academic experts have significant influence, the so called "micro-influencers", frequently establish closer, more personal connections with their peers or communities, enabling them to build trust and address concerns in a more empathetic way. Patient advocates also can bring unique perspectives that can emotionally resonate with broader audiences beyond just patients. By embracing a more inclusive view of influence, pharmaceutical companies can engage new audiences, and build stronger connections.

27. Leveraging Diverse Voices to Strengthen Brand Resonance

Pharmaceutical companies must recognize and engage all stakeholders even those who do not directly have the authority to prescribe. Caregivers such as family members, friends, nurses, dieticians, psychologists, and others can potentially play a critical role in treatment decision-making, often serving as the bridge between patients and physicians and can significantly influence prescribers' decisions. By acknowledging and supporting caregivers, brands can foster trust and deepen emotional resonance across the entire care ecosystem.

28. Leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility

To establish long-term relationships and foster emotional resonance, pharmaceutical companies must also demonstrate their commitment to societal well-being through impactful Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. By aligning CSR efforts with emotional values that resonate with customers, such as compassion, equity, and care, companies can build trust and strengthen their overall reputation.

29. Defining KPIs for Emotional Resonance

To evaluate the effectiveness of emotional branding strategies, pharmaceutical companies must establish a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) defined to measure emotional resonance. These KPIs offer important insights related to customer perceptions, satisfaction, and loyalty, allowing companies to refine their strategy and continuously strengthen their brands' emotional impact.

30. Ethical Marketing as a Catalyst for Credibility and Emotional Connection

Only by fully understanding the rules and the regulations related to the promotional tactics of medicines, cross-functional teams can craft innovative and impactful strategies that respect these principles, fostering credibility and emotional resonance across all audiences.

8 Limitations and Future Research

While this study offers a practical framework for incorporating emotional branding into pharmaceutical marketing strategy, it is not without limitations.

1. Findings are based on qualitative data, which involve subjective interpretations. While participants provided deep, experience-based perspectives across multiple geographies and therapeutic areas, the findings may not be fully generalizable.
2. This research focuses on trends observed in the pharmaceutical industry and how this drives emotional marketing strategies. Considering how fast the industry is evolving, the long-term applicability of these findings may be influenced by future changes in market dynamics or customer preferences.
3. Although the study highlights the importance of digital tools and AI in emotional branding, the rapidly evolving nature of the latter may render some findings or recommendations less relevant in the near future or might not cover the full potential of artificial intelligence.
4. The proposed set of KPIs for evaluating emotional engagement may face challenges in real-world implementation, particularly in accurately quantifying intangible aspects like emotional resonance and trust. Further validation of these metrics is required to ensure their reliability and practical utility.
5. This research concentrates primarily on the pharmaceutical market, which operates within a particular regulatory framework. The proposed approach in this study is specific to this environment, and the conclusions may not be applicable to other industries.
6. The research advocates for emotional resonance and although highlights the importance of ensuring that this is done following highly ethical standards, it does not explore in detail the challenges of navigating ethical and compliance concerns.

Building on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are suggested for future studies.

1. Future research should investigate whether and how emotional branding strategies might differ across different therapeutic areas. Understanding these nuances can reinforce emotional branding strategies tailored to specific therapeutic settings.
2. Investigate more in detail the impact of cultural differences on emotional resonance applied by pharmaceutical companies. Comparative studies across regions could provide important

- insights into the need of localizing emotional branding approaches and how to engage diverse audiences.
3. Further research is needed to evaluate the long-term impact of emotional resonance on prescribing practices, patient behaviors and outcomes, and brand equity over extended periods.
 4. Given the rapid advancement of technology, future studies could investigate how technologies like AI, machine learning, and virtual or augmented reality further enhance emotional resonance.
 5. While this research focuses on prescribers, future studies could explore emotional branding's impact on other key stakeholders whose role has been reinforced in the recent years, such as payers, regulators, pharmacists or hospital administrators.
 6. Further research should explore the ethical boundaries of emotional branding, especially within a highly regulated market such as pharmaceuticals. This research could explore ways to achieve the right balance between emotional engagement and transparency, ensuring that marketing neither mislead nor overpromise but also doesn't undervalue a brand, while still deeply resonating with customers.
 7. Finally, an additional suggestion would be regarding additional research to validate the effectiveness of the recommended KPIs for measuring the impact of emotional resonance.

9 Conclusion

In a pharmaceutical landscape defined by increased competition and rising stakeholder expectations, traditional marketing approaches are no longer sufficient to drive brand differentiation. The findings of this study reveal a pressing need for pharmaceutical companies to re-evaluate how they engage healthcare professionals, not just by informing, but by resonating and inspiring action. While scientific evidence remains the cornerstone of pharmaceutical brands communication, this must now coexist with trust, relevance, and emotional connection.

The concept of “Dr. Medicus Rationalis”, the idealized physician who makes purely logical, data-driven decisions, remains a myth. By incorporating emotional resonance into customer engagement initiatives, companies can move beyond the transactional focus of traditional marketing and create meaningful, lasting connections with healthcare professionals, patients, and other stakeholders.

The present research introduces a practical framework stressing the significance of truly understanding customer needs. Emotional branding is not a creative luxury or marketing trend, but a strategic necessity in the pharma industry. As competition intensifies and prescribers face growing demands on their time and attention, the brands that succeed will not only be the most scientifically credible, but the most emotionally meaningful. By improving engagement and decision-making among healthcare professionals, patients themselves stand to benefit, through more thoughtful treatment choices, and improved patient outcomes.

The future of pharmaceutical marketing lies in recognizing that rationality and emotion are not opposing forces but complementary drivers of decision-making. The opportunity now is for brands to act on that insight.

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