

Integrated Approach to Build Patient Adherence: Helping Pharmaceutical Companies to Enhance Growth

Executive Summary

Pharmaceutical companies have traditionally considered various approaches to influence doctors or healthcare professionals. They have hardly invested anything to reach out to their actual consumers or patients. There are many reasons for that. It becomes extremely difficult for Pharmaceutical companies to make one-to-one personalized guidance to make great impact on patient's adherence to a particular drug regimen and to a particular brand. Hence choosing the right medium to communicate with patients about their health, drug therapies, and overall condition management is a real challenge.

“Patients often need additional support beyond effective medication, and physicians have limited time to provide comprehensive care. This dynamic is critical in case of a chronic medical condition that affects about one in six patients who remains under-treated,”

Sally Beatty of Pfizer communications

Source: www.mmm-online.com

Recent survey (source: www.hawaii247.com) conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of Merck found that,

- 35% of those who are unemployed did not buy or refill medicines they were prescribed, cut their dosage in half, or took expired medicine as a way to save money
- 25% of them not at all aware of patient support programs

This paper talks about an approach integrating Pharmaceutical Company and the healthcare professionals for proactively reaching out to patient with timely health information — in a way that's accessible, easy to use.

Objectives

An integrated patient support program needs to,

- Reach out to patients with their health plans, through a medium that almost everyone is comfortable using — the phone
- Optimize content for a variety of literacy levels
- Maintain blog or social networking site enabling patient to interact with patient community
- Communicate effectively in a language (other than English) comfortable for patient
- Gather feedback on an individual level to make sure that each interaction is providing the most helpful and specific next steps
- Involve physicians to provide one-to-one personalized help to patients as and when needed

These involve interactions among multiple stakeholders - patients, sales representatives, healthcare professionals and call center agents

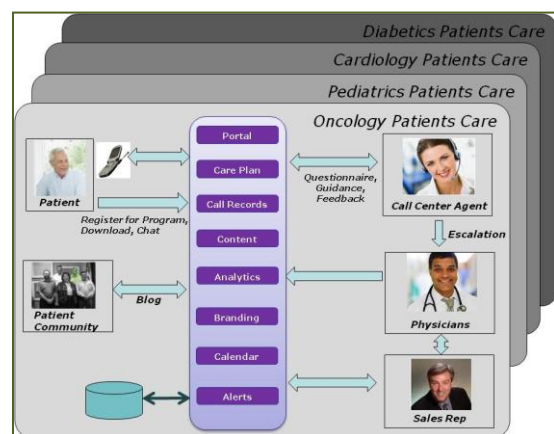


Figure 1: Integrated Patient Support Program

Current Situation

Pharmaceutical companies currently maintain portal that contains information about various diseases (like diabetes, osteoporosis, and lipid (cholesterol) abnormalities etc.) and required medications to cure them. Some Pharmaceutical companies also maintain information about desired lifestyle modifications needed along with medication program. These are not proactive approaches for patient care.

Integration Approach

In a recent proposal to APAC unit one of the top Pharmaceutical company, we proposed an integrated approach to manage its patients across different therapy areas. This approach included multiple stakeholders who are internal and external to the Pharmaceutical Company.

This application in conjunction with personal support from physicians via a contact centre provides communication, support material and educational tools needed for patients to improve their health and achieve a better quality of life. The proposed application is a contact centre application integrated with a web based portal for users (Patients, physicians) and with other 3rd party applications for CTI&IVR, Scan, Fax, Email notifications and SMS alert.

Portal

The portal is available to the patients who take medications. Sales Representatives sends invitation to respective Physicians based on Medication program and territory. On invitation Physicians enrolls themselves in the portal first disease states and required medications.

The portal is on a common technology platform used by all countries, but also has the flexibility to allow customization and localization by each country and then the patients are selected as candidates by respective physicians. The portal contains information for multiple

When enrolling into care program, the patients can choose their Primary Language – which will be a choice of two or more languages offered for their Country. This Primary Language selection will determine the language of the content on their Portal, as well as the spoken language used by the Call Center Agent. The application will place a Cookie on the user's computer for subsequent visits.

Website content is provided according to Stakeholder parameters – Role, Medication(s), Country and Language. Hence the patients and physicians will be provided specific content for each therapeutic area

For example -

- All Patients will see information about general health and wellbeing
- Diabetes patients will see information about blood glucose monitoring
- Patients on diabetic medication ABC will see ABC specific information
- Patients on diabetic medication XYZ will see XYZ specific information

These contents can be

- Exercise information
- Food and dietary information

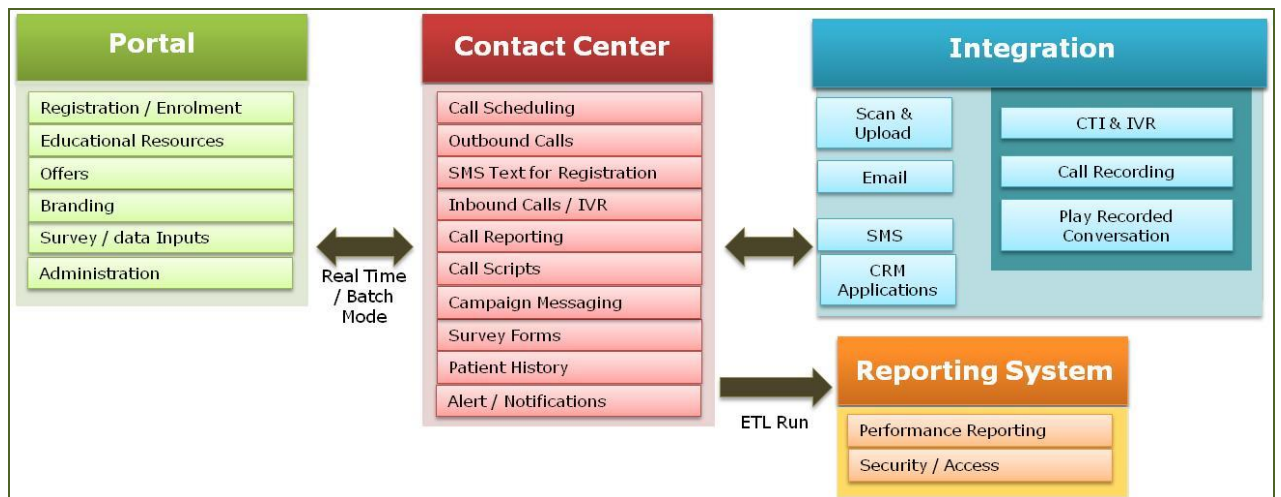


Figure 2: Functional Architecture

- Disease state information
- Product specific information
- Health reports (surveys and data collected by the Call Center)
- Online tools / calculators (Flash content / streaming media)
- Links to other websites
- Flash content / streaming media / video files or downloadable PDF or MS word or any other type for files.

Though call centre agent can carry out several detailed surveys through Contact Centre application, patients also have the capability to fill in some of the surveys themselves on the portal. Administrators can perform country localization, language settings, modify website contents, add new / modify educational resources, include branding logos for medication programs, security access and various other activities. A frequency based batch program will transfer data to and from Contact Centre application. However, few data elements like key information on registration or enrollment details can be sync up on real time basis.

Contact Center

The contact centre application will have functionalities like Dialing integration, Call recording, Outbound calls/predictive dialing, SMS, dynamic call scripts and reporting, reporting details like patient history and performance reports etc. Following are key highlights,

- Call Recording –Record interactions between the patient and the contact centre agent. The interaction will be saved in media file format, so that it can be replayed, downloaded and retrieved whenever needed.
- Outbound Calls / Predictive Dialing – It is used to place an outbound call, and will be integrated with the application to be used for Screen Pops. Apart from manual dialing, it will also include automatic call scheduling along with automatically times call back.
- Outbound Calls for Registration SMS texts –A 3rd party SMS gateway to be integrated with contact centre application, for both sending SMS to stakeholders, and receiving SMS from Stakeholders. Once all details are updated in the SMS system, CRM system to schedule the calls.
- Inbound Calls / IVR – IVR system will determine the caller's country, therapy and language; it will then identify the caller and retrieve patient contact history including his automatic number identification (ANI). Once identified, it will have defined routing strategies for routing calls to agent based on different parameters like input parameters, ANI, Skills and other pre defined business rules

- Call Scheduling – It is used for managing all call scheduling for outbound calls. First Call is scheduled for a new patient immediately upon enrolling once his records are fed in to the system. Subsequent calls will be placed as selected by Agents. The date / time of the next Call would be automatically populated according to a predefined interval of calls. The Call Centre Agent can also modify the Call Level (type) during the call.
- Dynamic Call / Survey scripts:
 - Call scripts are in local languages uploaded by the country admin to a specific drug's, specific call's survey question and will be accessible to the call centre agent while he is on the call and filling up the survey
 - On-screen call Scripts (closely aligned with survey/input forms)
 - On-screen survey / data input forms relevant to specific.
 - Survey will be different for each survey, some questions may be common, so it should be use friendly and repetitive steps for the admin should be minimum
 - Below is a sample hierarchy:

L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Country 1	Therapy 1	Drug 1	Survey 1	Questions
			Survey 2	Questions
			Survey 3	Questions
		Drug 2	Survey 1	Questions
			Survey 2	Questions
			Survey 3	Questions
	Therapy 2	Drug 3	Survey 1	Questions
			Survey 2	Questions
			Survey 3	Questions
		Drug 4	Survey 1	Questions
			Survey 2	Questions
			Survey 3	Questions

Reporting System

Daily traffic reports for inbound and outbound activity, record Call Outcomes, Call Duration etc. These reports will be used to measure Agent productivity, Hold and talk time for each agent and for the contact centre as well as Call Abandonment Rates. Detailed historical reports can also be generated. There will be a daily ETL run to fetch data from contact centre application.

Integration

Integration Component	Description
SMS	<p>A 3rd party SMS gateway to be integrated with contact centre application, for both sending SMS to stakeholders, and receiving SMS from Stakeholders.</p> <p>Users can send SMS to a pre-defined number. Server will have profile setting corresponding parameters for this pre-defined number.</p>
Email	As part of the Call Centre process, communication message centre needs to be integrated with Contact Centre application for sending Email notification to patients and physicians
CTI & IVR	The integrated 3rd party application will have a CTI toolbar enabled for call centre agent. He/she can use the CTI Toolbar to perform various telephonic operations such as call transfers, call conferencing & log in/out. This integration also aids in screen pop.
Scan & Upload	This will enable the stakeholders of mailing centre to scan and upload consent forms into contact centre application. Cognizant proposes to use a 3rd party system for this.
CRM Applications	The contact center application will interface in frequency based program with internal CRM systems for physicians, territory information.

Case Study: Approach taken by Pfizer, UK

(Source: - <http://www.news.pharma-mkting.com/>)

Pfizer's Viagra was under heavy competitive pressure from GSK's Levitra and Lilly's Cialis. Pfizer found 55% men stopped treatment within 12 months and many cases within first 6 months after first prescription. With each company waging extensive campaign to switch consumers, Pfizer found success in extending length of therapy by working directly with the patients already on the product.

InformED is Pfizer's multi-channel consumer outreach program, which communicates with patients through:

- Call centers
- Direct mail
- Web programs (www.informED.org.uk)

This program helped Pfizer, UK to improve patient compliance rate for Viagra, from 55% to 70%.

Challenges

- To date many Pharmaceutical companies have been involved mainly in point solutions. These prove difficult to scale and have mainly been pilots
- Dedicated active content needs creating – currently little of the content created is dedicated to an interactive channel being designed for print media or static website.
- Demographics –80% of people living with a medical condition are over 50 yrs of age, assimilation of technology can be an issue

Conclusion

With the advent of social networking, more number of patients is going online. They are visiting websites with discussion forums, blogs to learn from real life experiences, validate their feelings opinions and experiences. Some patients do blogging because they are isolated in their life. When they look at Pharmaceutical companies' site for patient care program they find millions of information. They often miss out the information specific their need.

An integrated patient support program will include call center agents reaching out to patients and speaking on their own terms – acknowledging patient's attitude, behaviors around their health and understanding their concerns and directing to proper physicians as and when required. These practice imbued with technology can eventually ensure patient loyalty and help Pharmaceutical companies to meet business objectives,

- Reducing costs
- Increasing adherence
- Managing chronic conditions
- Driving retention
- Promoting wellness
- Maximizing call center resources

These will not only provide growth in revenues for Pharmaceutical companies, but also reduce cost by utilizing call center resources and provide greater insight on their patients' population.

About the Authors

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About Cognizant

Cognizant (NASDAQ: CTSI) is a leading provider of information technology, consulting and business process outsourcing services. Cognizant's single-minded passion is to dedicate our global technology and innovation know-how, our industry expertise and worldwide resources to working together with clients to make their businesses stronger. With over 50 global delivery centers and approximately 100,200 employees as of November 30, 2010, we combine a unique global delivery model infused with a distinct culture of customer satisfaction. A member of the NASDAQ-100 Index and S&P 500 Index, Cognizant is a Forbes Global 2000 company and a member of the Fortune 1000 and is ranked among the top information technology companies in Business Week's Hot Growth and Top 50 Performers listings.

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