



# A Study of the Role of Brand Campaigns, Contests and Journal Advertisements as a Promotional Strategy in Pharmaceutical Brand Promotion

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**Abstract:** *As a promotional strategy many companies conduct marketing campaign directed at the target doctors. The objectives of using brand campaigns as a promotional tool is to help the medical representative to spend more time for interaction with the concerned doctors thereby he can effectively utilize the time in communicating the USPs of the brand thereby better brand recall.*

*The campaigns are designed with the sole objective of involving the doctors to participate in them. The expectation from these campaigns and contests is to develop favourable opinion about the brand promoted thereby helping in better brand recall.*

*These campaigns are designed innovatively so as to make the doctor feel interested in participating in it and thereby facilitate the process of developing favourable opinion about the brand leading to brand recall. Apart from campaigns companies spent lots of their budget in advertising their brands in medical journal like Lancet, JAMA etc or drug information digests such as CIMS and MIMS. One of the major reasons of giving these advertisements in these journals of repute is to help doctors in providing medical information along with information related to brands marketed by companies, its composition and other relevant drug related information. The present study tries to get insight into the role brand campaigns and journal advertisements, its usefulness to doctors and whether they help the company for effective brand recall thereby prescription generation.*

**Keywords:** *Campaigns, brand recall, medical advertisements, Lancet, CIMS, MIMS Parents.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

As a promotional strategy many companies conduct campaign and contest directed at the target doctors. The objectives of using brand campaigns as a promotional tool is to help the medical representative to spend more time for interaction with the concerned doctors. He can effectively utilize the time spent during campaign to communicate the USPs of the brand. This will in turn help the doctor better brand recall and facilitate the prescription process.

The campaigns and contests are designed with the sole objective of involving the doctors to participate in them. Some campaigns and contests conducted by companies are scratch and win, Identify the winning cricket team in the world cup etc. The Medical representatives brief and generate interest of the doctors regarding the contests during their visits and make the doctors participate in these campaigns. The expectation from these campaigns and contests is to develop favourable opinion about the brand promoted thereby helping in better brand recall.

These campaigns are designed innovatively so as to make the doctor feel interested in participating in it and thereby facilitate the process of developing favourable opinion about the brand leading to brand recall. Some companies apart from the fun campaigns and contests conduct. Apart from the fun campaigns and contests many companies conduct Public relation campaigns. These campaigns are designed to raise awareness of certain conditions in addition to the range of treatment options and are commonly referred as disease awareness campaigns. These campaigns include press releases, brochure educating patients and caregivers about disease and its treatment.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike FMCG or OTC Marketing, due to legislations, pharmaceutical companies promoting ethical formulation cannot advertise their products in print media like news paper or media like television as done in the FMCG and OTC sector.

In that respect pharmaceutical companies have restriction in promoting their brands using these media's however the companies do advertise their brands in journals of repute like Lancet, JAMA etc or drug information digests like CIMS, MIMS, Drug index etc. The target audience for pharmaceutical advertising is the physician and not the patient. Hence The role of pharmaceutical advertising is to convince the physician that the product will help them help their patients.<sup>2</sup> Doctors apart from evaluating the



advertisement of ethical drugs also place companies on sliding scale. Since many companies market similar drugs and formulations, physicians tend to evaluate the companies through advertisements.<sup>3</sup>

Doctors do read or subscribe these journals to update their knowledge and also frequently refer the drug information index to know about various molecules, brands, dosage packaging etc for their ready reference to prescribe to their patient.

Advertising in these journals thus becomes an important promotional tool for many companies. Advertisements are intended to increase or maintain market share for targeted products. Pharmaceutical companies value print advertisements because they increase sales effectively. In a survey of 125 pharmaceutical marketers, journal advertising tied with detailing (pharmaceutical sales representative visits to doctors) as the most effective promotional and educational vehicle for “announcing a new product/new indication<sup>4</sup>

Some companies print their own tabloids which provide the doctors on the latest happenings in the medical field. They effectively use these tabloids to promote their brands by advertising in them. Since this is an age of information many doctors subscribe or get free copies of these journals.

These journals serve the companies as an important media to promote their brands and facilitate the top of the mind process. Since the advertisement budget is increasing soaring for many companies because of its effectiveness the challenge is to validate its effectiveness in generating top of the mind awareness and thereby prescription generation.

It will be worthwhile knowing whether do really subscribe or read medical journals, do the advertisements in the journals really facilitate the process of business generation.

The present study tries to get insight into the role brand campaigns, contests and journal advertisements, its usefulness to doctors and whether they help the Company for effective brand recall thereby prescription generation

## **II. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH**

- To understand whether doctors participate in brand campaigns and contests conducted by companies.
- To understand whether doctors find the campaigns and contest useful and do they help in brand recall.
- To find out whether doctors read journal advertisements.
- To study whether advertisements help doctors in brand recall.

## **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research undertaken was carried out primarily at three stages, namely:

1. Secondary data collection: Newspaper, Magazines, Websites
2. Questionnaire design
3. Primary data collection:  
Structured questionnaire administered on one to one basis and a live interview.

## **IV. SAMPLING DESIGN**

Random sampling was carried out.

## **V. SAMPLE SIZE**

The sample consists of 100 doctors from Mumbai city & suburbs

## **VI. ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Collected data was edited for avoiding unwanted error & was arranged in order and sequence. The data obtained .The statistical software such as SPSS was used wherever necessary. Suitable statistical methods were used was then coded and classified for further process by preparing tables, graphs, charts and pie – diagrams. for testing hypotheses & analyzing the data. Please refer the charts in annexure for detail data analysis.

**VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

- The study is limited to Mumbai city & suburbs only
- The sample size does not give a clear representation of the total universe.

**VIII. MAJOR RESULTS**

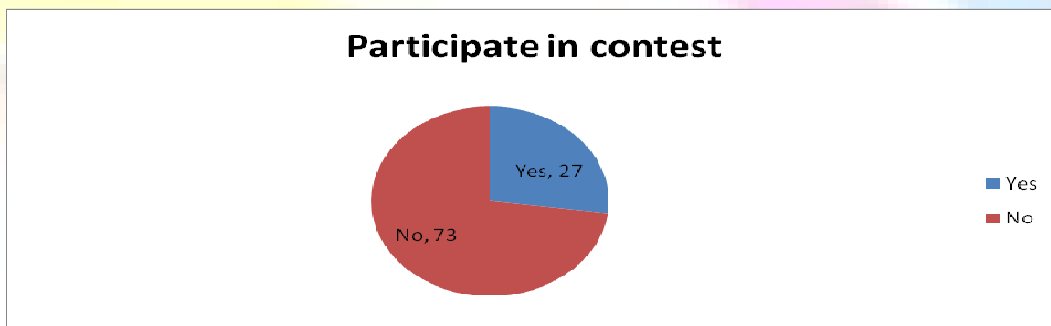
1. 73% of doctors stated that they don't participate in brand campaigns conducted by companies while 27 % of doctors said that they do participate in campaigns and contests conducted by companies.
2. 47 % doctors opined that campaigns and contests conducted by companies are useful and help in brand recall while 53% of doctors opined that they don't find them useful and they don't felicitate brand recall.
3. 71 % doctors stated that they do read journal advertisements while 29% of doctors stated that they do not read journal advertisements.
4. 88% doctors stated that advertisements help brand recall while 12% of doctors opined that advertisements in medical journals don't help in brand recall.

**IX. IMPLICATIONS**

From the above study it seems that advertising brands in medical journal is a good promotional strategy compared to campaigns and contests as it facilitates brand recall and prescription generation thereby increased sales of the brands.

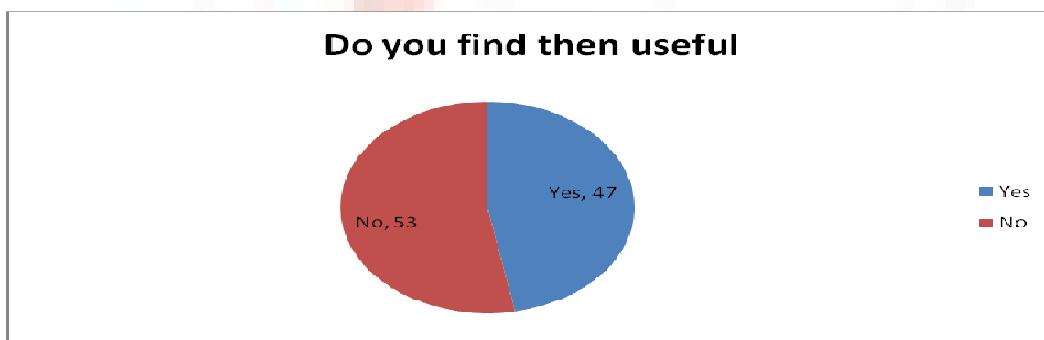
**X. ANNEXURE**

Do You participate in contest n brand campaigns conducted by company							
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent		Frequency	
Valid	Yes	27	27	27	Yes	27	
	No	73	73	73	No	73	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>			

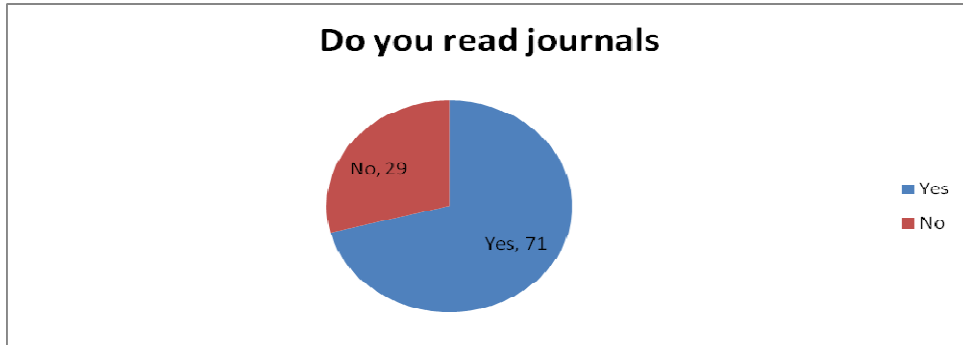


Do you find campaigns and contests useful in brand recall.

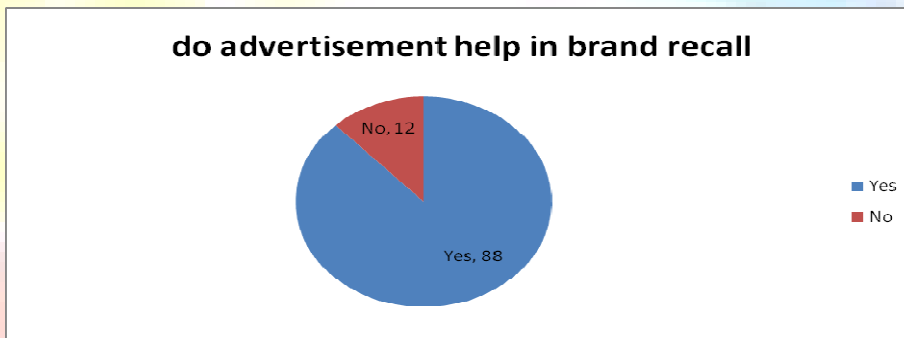
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent		Frequency
Valid	Yes	47	47	47	Yes	47
	No	53	53	53	No	53
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>		



Do you read journals advertisement						
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent		
Valid	Yes	71	71	71		<b>Frequency</b>
	No	29	29	29	Yes	71
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	No	29



Do advertisements help you in brand recall?						
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent		Frequency
Valid	Yes	88	88	88	Yes	88
	No	12	12	12	No	12
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>		



#### REFERENCES

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2. Pharmaceutical Marketing in India , Subba Rao Chaganti, Excel books private ltd. p 237
3. Ref PLoS Med. Jun 2006; 3(6): e130