

FIND THE LOCAL FIT FOR YOUR GLOBAL BRAND CAMPAIGN

With shrinking marketing budgets and the need to consolidate, can affiliates continue to ‘reinvent the wheel’ and develop local brand campaigns?

In this article, W Communication Agency presents *7 rules* for successful local implementation of a centrally driven global pharma brand campaign.

BY SUNIL RAMKALI, CEO & ACCOUNT DIRECTOR AT W



How often do global brand teams hear the cry from affiliates
— “My market is different”, “Those key messages won’t work here”
and “Do you really understand my market?”

With shrinking marketing budgets and the need to consolidate,
can affiliates continue to ‘re-invent the wheel’ and develop local brand
campaigns when global marketing has invested significant time and
recourses in creating a centrally developed brand campaign?



For many global marketers it can feel that much of their time is spent trying to convince their affiliate/local counterparts to implement global brand campaigns. In such a situation, the first question we must ask ourselves is: why is the local marketing team not as convinced as the global team of the brand campaign's value?

Global marketers must see their local counterparts as a key customer, listen to their needs and offer solutions to address them. If not, a lack of buy-in will result in decreased engagement and collaboration. Understanding the global/local relationship and being able to adapt your working style will significantly improve the local implementation of global brand campaigns. Does your organisation use a 'parent-to-child' or 'parent-to-parent' model when collaborating with local marketing? For organisations using the 'parent-to-child' model, the relation is more prescriptive — affiliates have little

room for questioning or challenging the brand campaign they have received from HQ. Whereas, the 'parent-to-parent' model allows for increased dialogue between global and affiliate marketing.

To sum up: one size does not fit all. It is critical that the global marketing team understands its relationship with local affiliates and is able to adapt its approach if consistent local implementation is the goal. Adoption of the 'parent-to-parent' working model with local affiliates is likely to lead to increased success. However, getting to this point may not always be easy and will require global marketing teams to adapt their working styles, listen to local needs and, most importantly, create a sense of camaraderie and team spirit with their affiliate counterparts. So how can we achieve this and what are the rules for engagement? Firstly, understand your customer's needs.

THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY – INCREASING HOMOGENEITY ACROSS MARKETS

If you are to successfully adopt the ‘parent-to-parent’ model within your organisation, you must firstly be able to understand the opportunities and challenges facing local marketers in their quest to increase brand adoption. Are you aware of their national regulatory process, local requirements for achieving pricing and reimbursement and local customer prescribing dynamics? Of course the global marketer cannot be an expert on all markets, but you may be surprised how similar markets are, and will become over time. This increasing trend towards homogeneity will help global marketing teams to better use their decreasing resources more efficiently and deliver communication solutions that are likely to work across multiple markets. As the pharmaceutical landscape evolves, the drivers for the adoption of new and

existing therapies across markets will become increasingly similar. One clear and increasing trend towards homogeneity is the way healthcare systems across Europe determine the value of new therapies for reimbursement. The need for reimbursement decision makers and budget holders to manage increasing healthcare costs is a real and unavoidable situation for the pharmaceutical industry. Manufacturers that can address this need and convince decision makers of the incremental clinical benefits of their product(s) versus standard treatments will increase their chances of reimbursement success. The vast majority of new brands are approved via the Mutual Recognition Procedure (MRP) at the European Medicines Agency (EMA). The MRP by definition results in therapies having a standard European Summary of Product Characteristics (SMPC). As the SMPC is often the core reference document for promotional claims or key messages, thus a common SMPC across markets will result in similar key

messages across markets. This will also apply to competitor brands, enabling manufacturers to consider implementing similar counteraction communication strategies across different markets. As markets become increasingly homogenous, this will allow global marketing teams to deliver brand campaigns that are implementable across multiple markets while still addressing local differences and needs.

AVOID THE 'US AND THEM' FACTOR

Increased understanding of the local competitive landscape will go a long way in developing the global/local relationship. However, this is not enough if we are to achieve consistent implementation of brand campaigns across key markets. Global marketers must also involve their local counterparts early in the brand campaign development process. Following a few simple rules could help global marketers achieve consistent implementation of brand campaigns across markets.

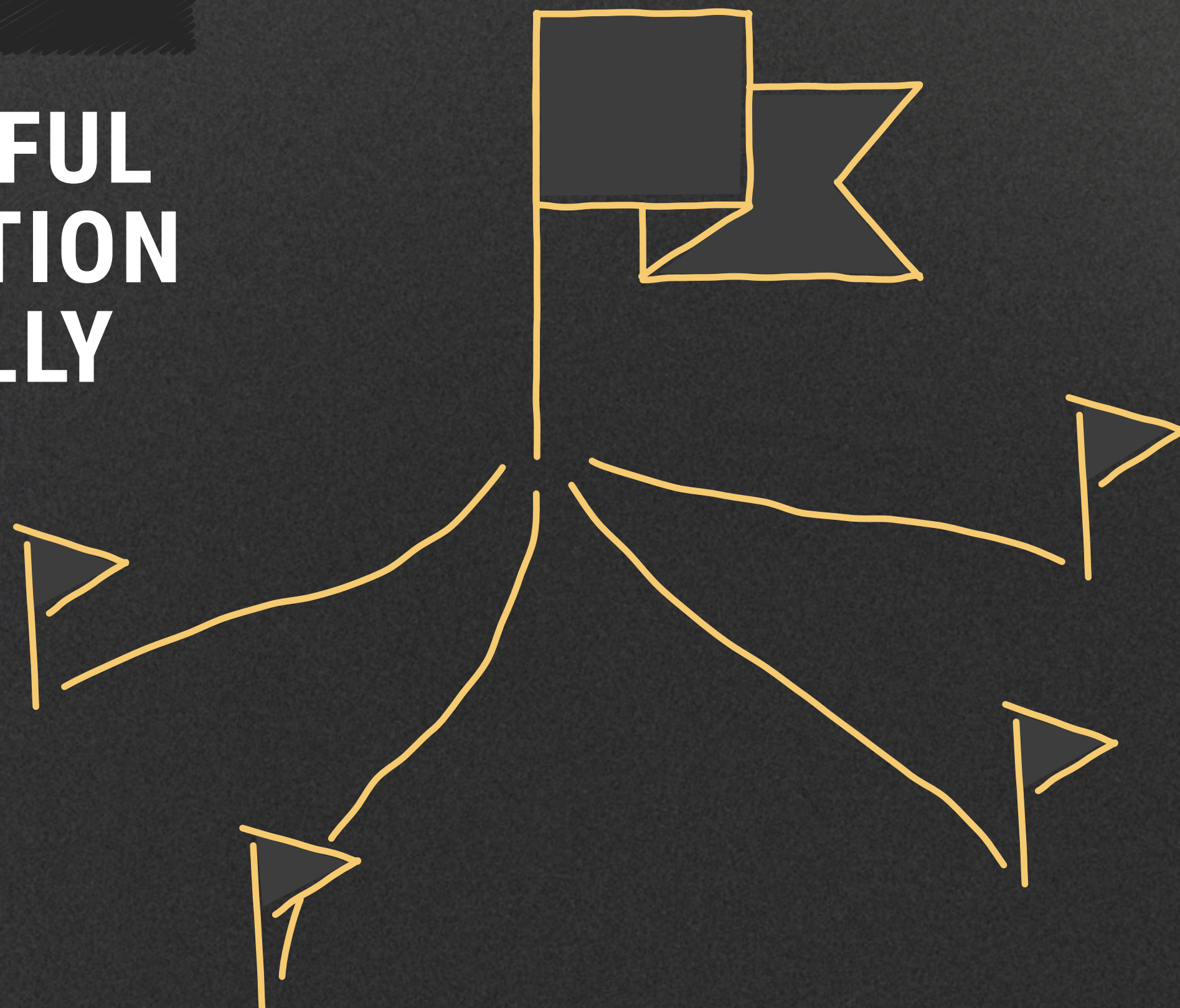
EUROPEAN STANDARDS FOR VALUE DEMONSTRATION

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) is working closely with health technology assessment (HTA) bodies. Regional and national HTA bodies provide recommendations

on medicines and other health technologies that can be financed or reimbursed by the healthcare system in a particular European Union (EU) Member State or region (source: <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/partners-networks/health-technology-assessment-bodies>).

7 RULES

FOR SUCCESSFUL
IMPLEMENTATION
OF A CENTRALLY
DEVELOPED
BRAND
CAMPAIGN



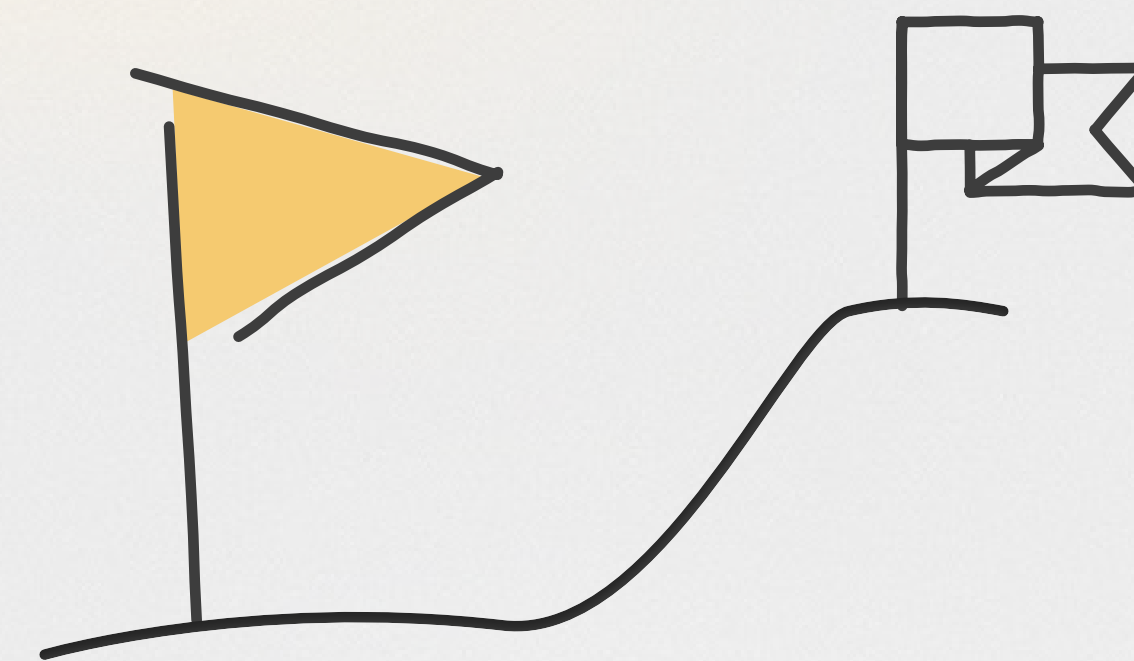
1. BUY-IN TO THE BRAND STRATEGY IS VITAL
2. CHOOSE THE RIGHT TERMINOLOGY
3. SET UP A CORE TEAM OF BRAND ADVOCATES
4. AGREE ON THE BRAND CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE(S)
5. MANDATORY OR OPTIONAL – FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE
6. INVOLVE AFFILIATES DURING THE TESTING PROCESS
7. MATERIALS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE BRAND CAMPAIGN



RULE 1

BUY-IN TO THE BRAND STRATEGY IS VITAL

A common mistake is to update or develop a new brand campaign without first revisiting the overall brand strategy, e.g. vision, mission and positioning statement (who, what and why). Global marketers need to make sure they don't put the 'cart before the horse'. Consider a brand strategy review process with your affiliates before developing a brand campaign. This may take the form of a joint global/affiliate marketing workshop or a questionnaire to assess the understanding of the brand strategy: Is the strategy still



relevant? Have we identified the key strategic issues for driving sales growth? Does our strategy address the changing local competitive landscape? Affiliate understanding of the brand strategy is critical, or you risk being defeated before your start. Once the brand strategy is endorsed, consider internal marketing activities to anchor it completely. Any strategic leakage within your organization will be amplified at the prescriber, patient and payer level, resulting in 'off strategy' messaging and a fragmented brand.



RULE 2

CHOOSE THE RIGHT TERMINOLOGY

A brand campaign is not owned by the global marketing team, even if you are the ones who drive the project. A brand campaign should be owned by the whole organisation and must be clearly understood by all internal stakeholders whose day-to-day work will be influenced by the brand campaign, e.g. the publication team responsible for reinforcing brand communications through peer-reviewed publications.

Terms like 'International' or 'Global' should be avoided to prevent the perception that the brand campaign is owned by the global team. Consider terms like <brand name> Brand Campaign or Sales Campaign.





RULE 3

SET UP A CORE TEAM OF BRAND ADVOCATES

Before creating the brand campaign you should consider creating a forum where the global marketing team can listen to the needs of the affiliates and vice versa. When establishing your brand campaign core team, ensure you involve the markets that will drive the majority of brand sales and/or will have a significant influence on other markets. Failure to have these markets on board will limit the commercial success of your brand, due to low adherence to the final brand campaign.

Never underestimate the amount of customer insight and knowledge within the local sales teams. Make it the responsibility of the affiliate marketing members in the core

team to liaise with their sales counterparts to collect key customer insights. The core team can use these insights to develop the draft sales story flow and key selling messages. Make sure you share the draft sales story flow with all other affiliates for comments prior to testing. This approach will help to engage those affiliates who haven't been part of the core process. It may also highlight any 'show stoppers' that may have been overlooked by the core team before finalising sales materials for testing.

The core team is responsible for final 'sign off' of the brand campaign prior to marketing research. Achieving this level of engagement and 'buy-in' with affiliate marketing members of the core team will enable the global team to use them as spokespersons when launching the brand campaign to all affiliates. Don't underestimate the power of peer-to-peer communications amongst affiliates.

RULE 4

AGREE ON THE BRAND CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE(S)

At an early stage in the brand campaign development process reach agreement with the brand campaign core team/affiliates on the project objectives and how success will be measured. Consider adopting the SMART objective setting approach, i.e. ensure your objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-based.

It is critical at this early stage of the brand campaign development process that all stakeholders understand the objectives and their role in ensuring the objectives are delivered.

Again, use the right vocabulary when defining your objectives — use words like ‘us’, ‘we’ and ‘our’, to communicate joint accountability and responsibility.

1. What do **we** want this brand campaign to accomplish?
2. How will the brand campaign help **us** achieve this?
3. With whom do **we** want to accomplish this?
4. How can **we** measure a successful brand campaign and by when?
5. Will **our** objective lead to the desired results?
6. When should **we** complete the objective?





RULE 5

MANDATORY OR OPTIONAL – FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE

The brand campaign core team should also decide which elements of the brand campaign are mandatory and which are adaptable. This will ensure a complete agreement between global and affiliate marketing on what can and cannot be changed during its implementation.

There are two approaches for developing a brand campaign: In the ‘standardization approach’, the key selling messages remain unaltered across markets, as these are driven by the brand positioning statement, i.e. who, what and why. However, if specific local market research supports an alternative approach, adaptation should be considered. In the

‘adaptation’ approach key selling messages may be altered and supplementary key selling messages implemented to address market specific needs. However, any changes must not compromise the who (target physician or patient), what (the brand) and why (reason to use) within the brand positioning statement. Branding components must remain unaltered, regardless of which approach is adopted, e.g. brand visual identity, logotype, fonts and colors.

In our experience, a hybrid of the two approaches will increase the likelihood of consistent implementation of a brand campaign.





1. STANDARDIZATION — develop the same brand campaign for multiple markets

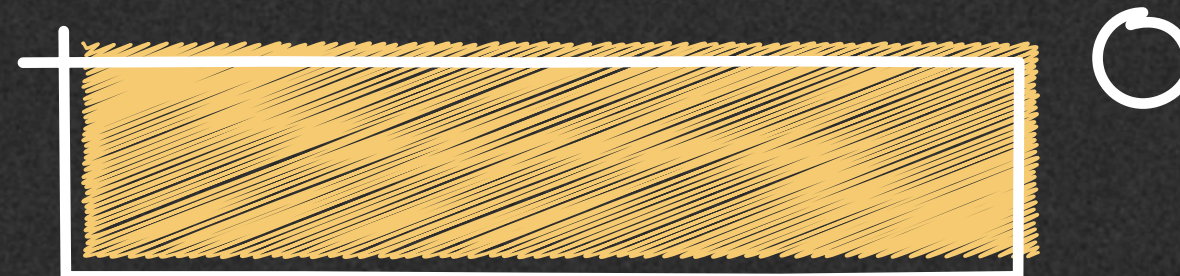
WHY? Across markets customers share the same common values, beliefs, and needs

OUTCOME: consistent brand communication and branding, and avoids the need for additional activities/spend at a local level

2. ADAPTATION — modify the brand campaign to reflect local market characteristics or customer needs

WHY? Customers are not the same, their needs vary from market to market

OUTCOME: improved fit between the brand and local customer needs



RULE 6

INVOLVE AFFILIATES DURING THE TESTING PROCESS

Testing is a key part of the brand campaign development process and will help the global and local brand teams identify if the brand sales story flow and key selling messages will resonate with potential prescribers. Even if the testing process has been thorough, the results may be challenged by affiliates if they have not been involved in the testing process. Therefore, it is important to involve affiliates at this stage of the development process.

The local sales and marketing teams should be involved in markets where the testing will take place:



Even if the testing process has been thorough, the results may be challenged by affiliates if they have not been involved.





1. They should review the physician screening criteria to ensure the demographics and the profile of recruited physicians match those of target physicians in their market
2. When briefing the market research moderators on the sales materials and the brand, involve the core team and local affiliate(s)
3. The affiliate should review the discussion guide/interview questionnaire and sales materials to be used in the testing to check translation, vocabulary, tone of voice etc prior to testing
4. Ask the affiliate marketing team to attend the market research and watch the interview process – share insights after the interviews
5. Use affiliate sales representatives to communicate the new sales materials – it is important the sales representative does not know the customer(s) involved in the testing process
6. Consider developing country-specific reports to highlight country-specific issues/opportunities (if budget allows)

RULE 7

MATERIALS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE BRAND CAMPAIGN

In order to minimise strategic leakage the global brand team should develop a package of sales implementation materials to be used by affiliate marketing when briefing the sales teams. Such an approach will help to maximise resources, as it avoids the duplication of locally developed sales training/support materials.

As a bare minimum to support the core sales or detail aid/presentation, the global brand team should develop a sales aid/presentation implementation guide, which should include:



Whether it be your working style or organisational approach, such changes will only help to develop your relationship with your affiliates.





- A summary of the brand campaign development process
- Key customer insights from the testing process
- Guidance on which elements of the brand campaign process are standard and adaptable — sales story flow and key selling messages, data visuals, branding, etc.
- Evidence to support the inclusion of each key selling message within the sales story flow:
 - Why is it important?
 - How should the key selling message be communicated?
 - Potential objections to the key selling message and response from the sales representative

Other support materials that will help ensure consistent implementation of the brand campaign might include:

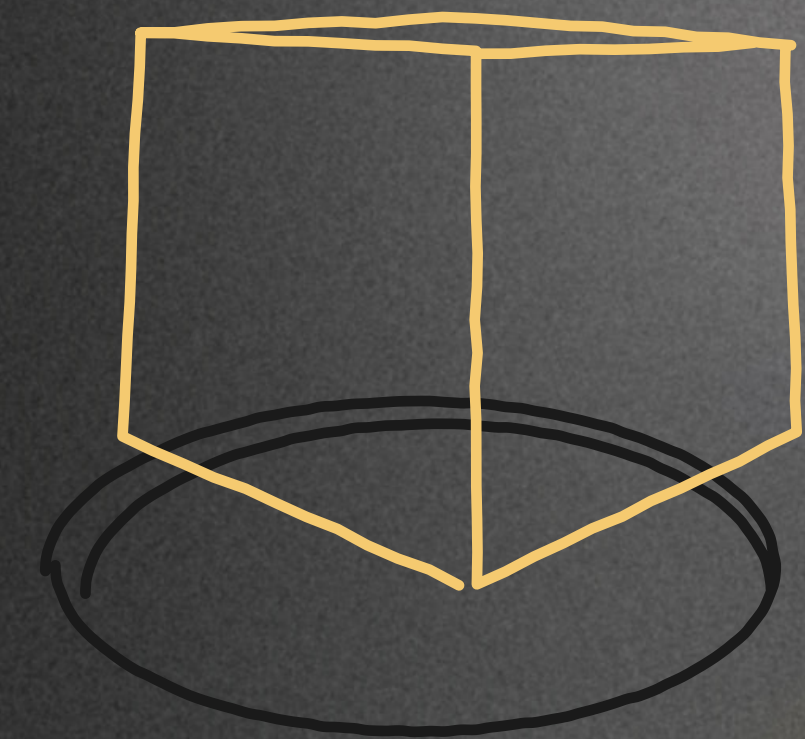


1. Sales aid script — a script to help the sales representative find the appropriate wording to communicate the brand sales story flow and key selling messages.
2. Objection handling guide/Q&A — potential objections to brand adoption and to the key selling messages will have been raised during the testing process. These should be noted and answers developed to overcome these objections.
3. Brand adoption ladder/pathway — provides specific guidance on how to move a prescriber from being unaware to a first line prescriber of the brand.

A SQUARE PEG IN A ROUND HOLE IS ACHIEVABLE!

These simple steps may sound obvious, but with declining marketing budgets and an increasing workload for global marketers, these steps can sometimes be overlooked.

Following these simple rules will help global marketers fit the square peg in the round hole or at least ‘shave the edges’. It may require you to adapt your working style or even your organisational approach when working with affiliates. Whichever it is, such changes will only help to develop your relationship with your local marketing counterparts and ensure the cries of “My market is different”, “Those key messages won’t work here” and “Do you really understand my market?” will soon fade away.



THE AUTHOR

As the pharmaceutical industry continues to evolve, navigating the complexities of today's market can be challenging. That's where *Sunil Ramkali*, CEO & Account Director, Life Science at W, comes in.

With over 35 years of experience in global and local sales, marketing, and market access/pricing, Sunil brings a wealth of knowledge to his clients. His insights have been published in numerous articles, including *PharmaVoice*, and he lectures at Lund University on "Commercial considerations in early drug development".

If you're seeking guidance in the pharmaceutical industry, Sunil's expertise can help you achieve success.

sunil@wcommunicationagency.com



THE AGENCY

W creates strong brands and business opportunities for international B2B corporations and companies. We make complex products and processes within Life Science, Technology and Industry understandable, inspiring and attractive.

Our mantra is *Turning complexity into clarity*.