

Amped ATU

How Data Fusion Can Turn Awareness, Trial, and Usage Studies Into a Powerful Tactical and Strategic Tool

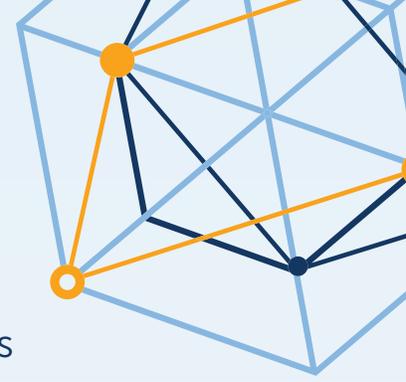
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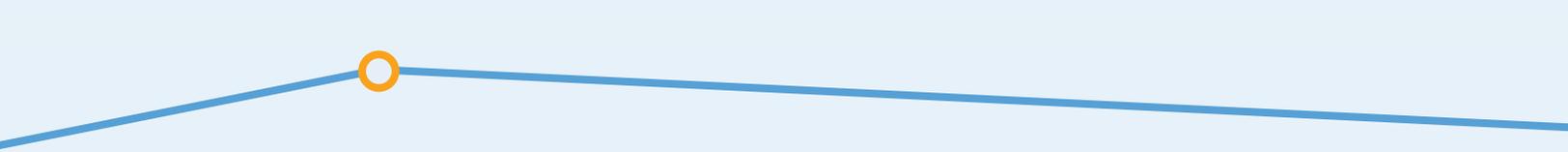
Physician perceptions and uptake against expectations are critical elements to monitor during the launch of a pharmaceutical or biotechnology product. Customized awareness, trial, and usage (ATU) studies are used to track physician and healthcare providers' brand awareness, patient types and product usage, pricing and access experience, attribute ratings and rankings, and intended future prescribing.

Traditionally, marketers of pharmaceutical and biotechnology products have taken a turnkey approach to ATU studies, designing them simply to track and report on key variables and producing nothing more than descriptive data. In short, ATU studies are typically viewed as commodity products, afforded little strategic value. In a world of data fusion and integrated service solutions, however, ATU studies have the potential to be a foundational element for effective strategy and execution.

ATU studies can be turned into a powerful tactical and strategic tool by making them part of an integrated market research platform that includes a review of competitive promotional strategy, message recall and tracking, longitudinal patient data and prescription analysis, and benchmarking against normative data.

The competitive promotional strategy review examines detailing, messaging, samples, events, e-promotion, DTC advertising, and journal promotion. Message recall and tracking provides an understanding of how a company's target physicians and other healthcare providers recall and respond to key message themes of both its brand and competitors over time. A longitudinal patient data analysis focuses on prescription activity (new/total) and patient types (new, switch, continuing) in addition to early views of compliance/persistency, out-of-pocket costs,





abandonment rates, and patient demographics. Finally, normative data provides an index of the performance of a brand against a competitive set, making the ATU data both descriptive and prescriptive in nature.

Actualizing ATU

As valuable as an ATU study can be, unless it is capturing and measuring the right data, it could potentially be useless. If the ATU study does not capture the right information, measure it correctly, and put it into context, it will not provide insight into how to act on the information.

The solution is to ground the ATU study by leveraging qualitative and quantitative resources as well as primary and syndicated audit data to identify the gaps in understanding and how the ATU study can be refined to lead to descriptive insight and, ultimately, action. These additional data assets can be used to make sure the ATU study is measuring the correct market elements in the context of the competitive choice alternatives to determine how well the brand is performing both from an attitudinal perspective and a real behavioral perspective.

It is necessary to develop a 360-degree view of the care continuum in order to understand not only how healthcare providers are engaging with brands in the space, but also the impact that engagement has on consumers. The analysis then must examine what payers are thinking about the drug, where it fits within the formulary, how it is being paid for, and what push back is being made against the drug by a generic equivalent or other competitors in the marketplace.

Once the data has been collected, it can be benchmarked against normative data sets and updated audit data. Within days after the close of the first month of launch, longitudinal patient data can provide the new patient starts for the product, continuing patients, third product switching patients, and the refill rate. This information will help to identify specific recommendations for moving forward to enhance the overall health of the brand.

ATU in Action

As a tactical and a strategic tool, ATU studies can be used in a number of different contexts. For example, the ATU study could be used to fine tune a brand launch strategy or a global commercial plan. Then that same information can be fed into an ad agency to help develop messaging or refine a campaign that can be tailored to a target population. The information can also be used by a sales organization to help representatives more effectively engage with the physicians and other healthcare providers they are calling on.



Brand launch and commercial strategy

The first imperative for a successful brand launch is to gain a robust understanding of the market landscape. The brand team needs to identify how patients are currently being treated, the unmet needs in the therapeutic category, the competitive landscape, and the payer environment. This will require a diagnostic tool to identify the current lay of the land as well as measure and monitor performance over time.

Understanding of the market situation is also the first step in creating a global commercial plan. The organization needs to deepen its understanding of the existing information by either refreshing previously conducted work, or, alternatively, conducting more rigorous quantitative work to validate and quantify assumptions that were previously sufficient.

ATU studies can do three things: identify the current situation; identify where improvement might be needed; and help refine or revise launch strategy or positioning strategy for the brand. The ATU study is analogous to recording vital signs in a physical health examination. Without first looking at pulse rate and cholesterol and blood pressure levels, a physician cannot begin to diagnose or prescribe correctly. Similarly, without an ATU study, it is impossible to truly know what is going on in the marketplace and to define the variables that have the greatest impact on shaping the brand's success.

Advertising refinement and sales force optimization

ATU studies can be used to evaluate the messaging in an advertising campaign to determine whether it is having an impact and whether it is resonating with physicians and consumers. If the study results find that a part of the message is not being recalled but it rates as having impact, then the messaging can be refined to make it more memorable.

Sales teams can leverage ATU study data to determine whether the message they are delivering is having an impact on the physicians they are calling on and to identify opportunities for improvement. The analysis can also be broken down by geography to determine whether there are high- and low-performing geographies and what the differences between them may be. The sales team can then consider deploying new strategies based on the results.

Taking it a step further, the ATU study data could even be leveraged to measure return on investment on the sales force and to make decisions around compensation.

Conclusion

Is an ATU a commodity, or is it something insightful that can make or break a brand's performance? The answer comes down to whether or not the ATU can be successfully combined with a broader, more comprehensive analysis of the competitive landscape.

Tactically, it's about being able to get in and out of the field quickly and being able to identify and track the appropriate variables. The strategic side involves taking that information and couching it in a context of competitive offerings and real consumer behaviors in the marketplace, and then benchmarking that data against other brands to see how well they are indexing.

ATU studies have the potential to play a critically important part in getting a product launch right. Through data fusion, it is possible to link key data assets that unite to tell a more comprehensive story that helps companies make the most of their market research dollar. The result is an ATU study that goes from fundamentally benchmarking the market to driving rapid uptake of a product and creating success in the marketplace.

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