

Modern Marketing Strategy Development for Community Pharmacy Business

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Abstract

Retail pharmacy is a highly competitive industry and modern consumer behaviors have changed. This research aimed to develop the modern marketing strategy for retail pharmacy by using modified Delphi's technique. A panel of experts included 13 qualified individuals who possess relevant expertise or experience in the field of retail pharmacy, pharmacist's influencer, or marketing specialist. A semi-structured questionnaire was initially used, and a questionnaire developed from the first round of interview findings was subsequently applied. The six domains of modern marketing strategy were proposed, including personalized marketing, digital marketing and the application of technology, service quality, added value of pharmacist's activities, marketing mix, and environmental issues. PROMPTS-DATE is an acronym representing this strategy that could be applied to suit the current pharmacy situation.

Keywords: 1) Pharmacy business 2) Community pharmacy 3) Marketing strategy development 4) Modern marketing factors

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Introduction

Pharmacy is a very competitive business. It was reported that the number of licenses for modern pharmacy establishments in 2017 was 17,842 stores, which increased to 18,081 stores in 2019 (Medicines regulation division, 2019). Consumers are interested more in service quality, emphasize on the value received rather than the quantity purchased, want to be treated differently with an emphasis on individuality, prefer fast and responsive service, rely on sense rather than reason to buy, as well as pay more attention to society and environment (Jitsoonthornchaikul, 2018, pp.245-253). In addition, nowadays retail businesses have begun to adjust their sales and payment platforms to be in line with digital era and more use of online financial transactions of Thai people (Srisuk, 2017, pp.91-99; Techsauce team, 2019). In this regard, pharmacies are increasingly being served via social media platforms resulting in more positive attitude of their customers about the benefits and the need of more usage. This is because customers use social media to inquire about medication use for themselves and their relatives most commonly via LINE application (Thomyamongkon and Sitthiworanan, 2017, pp.45-48). In addition, due to the Coronavirus 2019 outbreak, pharmacies have adapted to accommodate the payment through the applications of government campaigns such as Half-half campaign, and a long-distance pharmacy service or telepharmacy provided by pharmacies (Thavornwattanayong, 2020, pp.101-107). This encourages businesses to adopt technology to help them run the business (Srisuk, 2017,

p.99). Digital marketing strategies are therefore proposed. These include access (reach), communication with consumers (act), trading (convert), and engagement with consumers (engage) (Chaffey, 2018, pp.3-8). Therefore, the new marketing factors, namely, use of technology with the concept of digital marketing, enhancing the value of services that show social responsibility such as adopting a national policy in which pharmacy service activities are set up to organize activities in their own stores to increase service value (Desselle, 2019, pp.8-10), or use of environmental issues as a tool for marketing planning (Nisaisuk and Donkwa, 2018, pp.61-64), thereby resulting in promoting the image of the store to meet the needs of consumers. As a result, pharmacies have to adjust and develop marketing strategies to meet the needs of consumers as much as possible (Kasikorn research center, 2015, p.9).

Most recent research on marketing factors affecting pharmacies focuses on factors related to marketing mix and service quality. The results of the study revealed that price, product quality, distribution channels, personnel, marketing promotion, and service quality affect the service usage behavior, loyalty, and customer satisfaction in pharmacy services (Mathuros, 2014, pp.35-39; Puengjitt and Kumlangphat, 2015, pp.54-60; Pithayanukul and Chara-um, 2017, pp.140-144; Praditbongkotch and Vannavanit, 2017, pp.59-64; Saejew, 2017, pp.60-83). There are several strategies to create competitive advantages of pharmacies, including joining a group to increase bargaining power with suppliers for product cost reduction, making a difference by presenting a good

image of the store and pharmacist profession, providing products that are different from other stores, having service mind, reducing the price to gain satisfaction of consumers, and being a supporter for consumer protection in the community (Intharapong, et al., 2016, pp.73-78).

However, the previous studies of the researcher and team indicated that the new marketing factors included: use of technology based on the concept of digital marketing, the environmental conservation using green marketing concept, and the events held in the pharmacy that add values to the service, which can be the factors that consumers pay high attention as a part of decision for choosing a pharmacy service (Wattanathum, 2021, pp.1-152). As a result, this research aims to develop modern marketing strategies based on new marketing factors in response to the change of consumer behavior by analyzing and collecting opinions from people who are active and relevant to the pharmacy business.

Literature Review

According to the statistics of pharmacy licenses in Thailand from 2011 to 2021, the number of modern pharmacies that require the presence of pharmacists at all times (type Khor.Yor.1) has increased dramatically from 11,603 stores to 16,319 stores in 2020 (Medicine regulation division, 2021). In 2019, the pharmacies of Khor. Yor. 1 were divided into 10,568 stand-alone stores or 76%, and 3,338 chain stores or 24% of the total stores (Thavornwattanayong, 2020, pp.101-107).

As consumer behavior changes rapidly

and the use of digital media plays a huge role in nowadays consumption, pharmacies need to connect their healthcare business with social technology. It is found that the use of Facebook or other social media platforms can increase marketing effectiveness. The number of Facebook followers are positively correlated with sales growth. In the United States, more than 70 percent of hospitals use social networks, with 97% of them using Facebook. For example, Mayo clinic revealed the use of social media that could increase the number of hospital appointments by 39 percent from 2015 to 2016. It was estimated that there were more than 4,500 stand-alone pharmacies that were interested in using Facebook as a communication channel between health system agencies and patients. The content of the presentation can be any image or media to promote health information or food products or any other that are allowed to present on social media (Westerfield and Cain, 2019, pp.30-33).

According to a survey of health services through social media by community pharmacists in Bangkok, it was found that most of the consumer received the service via LINE application. Most of them started using social media for only 1-2 years. The pharmacists working in drugstores for less than 10 years used social media more than those who worked for more than 10 years ($p=0.034$). Consumers' attitudes towards the use of social media by community pharmacists on the benefit and the suggestion on increase of use indicated the average scores of 4.4 and 4.3 respectively. The majority of consumers use social media



to inquire about medication use, followed by asking about the treatment of themselves and relatives (Thomyamongkon and Sitthiworanan, 2017, pp.45-48). This is consistent with a study of strategic guidance for competitive advantage in the drugstore business in Thailand which recommends using the service area that customers will encounter when entering a pharmacy to create a service that meets their expectations, management of customer relations by using information technology through the membership system to analyze individual information. In the age of information, the information systems are essential technologies that facilitate easier communication. Managing a variety of distribution channels will provide consumers with quick access to medicines (Intharapong, et al., 2016, pp.80-86).

Consumers pay more attention to social responsibility (Jitsoonthornchaikul, 2018, pp.246-253). Therefore, showing a good image of company or pharmacy to society can be a positive effect on business. In terms of adding value through organizing events in the pharmacy, in the United States, for example, there are agencies that pay for more events of pharmacies in the following activities.

1. Continuous medication monitoring (CoMM) is a system that has a database of patients to refer the information between hospitals and pharmacies in the treatment of chronic diseases, medication history, and necessary information in order to record and track medication use of patients with chronic diseases.

2. Medication therapy management

(MTM) consists of a review of patient medication use, make a medication plan that is appropriate for the disease and the patient, medication record, address any problems found or pass them on, and record patient appointments to monitor symptoms.

3. Appointment-base models (ABM) combine CoMM and MTM with patient appointments for medication refills. At the same time, they review medication use and look for problems associated with medication use (Desselle, 2019, pp.8-10).

This is consistent to the study of strategic guidance for competitive advantage in the drugstore business in Thailand which conducts a qualitative study to determine the pharmacy marketing strategy from nine marketing experts and people who are recognized in the pharmaceutical profession. They suggested that community pharmacists must involve in the health service system in order for the pharmacy business to grow and gain an advantage (Intharapong, et al., 2016, p.82).

In addition, consumers are more concerned about environmental protection. (Jitsoonthornchaikul, 2018, pp.246-251). Therefore, the image should be presented by using environmental issues as a tool to demonstrate corporate social responsibility for the benefit of marketing planning (Nisaisuk and Donkwa, 2018, pp.61-64).

New marketing factors are therefore developed from the changing consumer behavior in the use of more technology, social and environmental responsibility, and caring for the business image through in-store activities.

The past studies of market factors emphasized on the study of marketing mix and service quality in pharmacies. For example, the study of purchasing behaviors of drugs from pharmacies of 400 consumers in Bangkok indicated the price, distribution channel, marketing promotion, personnel, and processes all had a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) effect on drug purchasing behavior of consumers in terms of product selection behavior, brand selection seller selection, choosing a time to buy, and choosing the amount of purchase (Puengjitt and Kumlangphat, 2015, pp.54-60). Meanwhile, a study of attitudes and behaviors in using pharmacy services of 1,255 Thai consumers nationwide in terms of the marketing mix found that that consumers pay attention to the marketing mix concept ranking from highest to lowest as follows: location of convenient transportation that situated close to consumers' premises (76%), followed by personnel with knowledge and ability to give good advice (66%), reasonable prices (63%) and new products are circulating all the time (52%), respectively (Pithayanukul and Chara-um, 2017, pp.140-144). As for the effect of factors related to the marketing mix on the pharmacies with chain stores, it was found that the distribution channel had the greatest effect on the satisfaction of using the services of chain store-pharmacies. This was followed by the effect of price and personnel, while the promotion aspect has the least effect. The consumers suggested that they are pleased to buy though the price is higher than that of conventional pharmacies, when it comes to providing health education services through

various public relation media, and recording of treatment history and health information (Saejew, 2017, pp.60-83).

In terms of relationship between service quality and service use of consumers, Chokbumrungsuk et al., examined the quality of service and customer loyalty in the pharmacy business of a 408 population in Bangkok and found that pharmacy operators placed a high level of emphasis on service quality at the correlation coefficient of 0.72 ($p < 0.05$), measured in terms of service concreteness, credibility, responding to customer needs, assuring customers, understanding and recognizing the needs of customers (Chokbumrungsuk, Anuwong and Poomtong, 2009, pp. 26-29). It was consistent with Saejew's study which found that the customers are satisfied even though the price of the product is higher than other pharmacies but with a quality service, friendly pharmacists or staff, and service mind (Saejew, 2017, pp.60-83).

A survey of the influence of satisfaction on purchase intention towards chain store-pharmacies of 400 consumers in Bangkok revealed that satisfaction with service quality and convenience in receiving service influenced the purchase intent of chain store-pharmacies with the correlation coefficients of 0.602 and 0.663 ($p = 0.01$) (Chatthanasirivech, Kingroungpet and Adisornprasert, 2008, pp.369-371). This could imply that pharmacies need to pay attention to service quality and marketing mix, In terms of location must be developed to be convenient for receiving services in order to gain satisfaction. When comparing among the overall marketing mix of 4 aspects,



including product, price, marketing promotion, and distribution channels with service quality, according to the study of the relationship among factors of satisfaction in the marketing mix, atmosphere in the store, and the quality of service of pharmacies towards the loyalty of customers of 385 pharmacies in Bangkok, it was found that the sample group focused on the marketing mix factors in terms of product, price, marketing promotion, and overall distribution channels less than satisfactory service quality in terms of reliability, interaction, problem solving, physical characteristics, and overall store policy at the mean scores of 3.73 and 4.29 respectively. This study showed that consumers were more concerned with service quality issues than the overall marketing mix (Praditbongkotch and Vannavanit, 2017, pp.59-64).

From the above study, it can be seen that consumers need the pharmacies that provide convenient services with appropriate opening and closing times. In terms of personnel, consumers need pharmacists who have the ability to give advice with good service quality, solving service problems, interpersonal skills, credibility, reliability, understanding and recognizing the needs of the customers and responding to them, as well as physical characteristics, store policy, and paying more attention to the quality of service.

The past studies have presented three strategies to create competitive advantages of pharmacies: 1) pricing strategy by forming a group to increase bargaining power to reduce product costs; 2) making difference strategy in terms of products, location, and create

outstanding professional for a brand identity, and 3) specific target strategy by having service mind, good attitude towards pharmaceutical profession, and can be a dependency on consumer protection for people in the community (Intharapong, et al., 2016, pp.73-79). It can be seen that the strategies have evolved from the original marketing factors, such as marketing mix and service quality, but due to changing consumer behavior, consumers are increasingly using technology and focusing more on business image. Pharmacies should therefore be adapted to respond to consumer behavior. In addition to the previous study of the researcher and the team, which was a survey of consumers about the importance of new marketing factors for the intention of choosing a pharmacy service, it was found that the new marketing factors both technology, environmental protection, and value-added activities in the pharmacy indicated the importance level of intention of choosing pharmacy services at a high level. Communication with consumers about environmental protection activities and the referral of patients from pharmacy to hospital was related to the intention of receiving pharmacy services of consumers (Wattanathum, 2021, pp.70-73). Therefore, this research aims to develop a modern marketing strategy based on new market factors by involving the people who play a role and are related to the pharmacy business to respond to the changing consumer behavior.

Methods

This research is a qualitative research using the Modified Delphi's technique to gather

experts' opinions and figure out the consistency on the issues that should be applied to develop new marketing strategies. Before starting the interview with experts, the researcher presented data from a consumer survey on new market factors that influence the intention of choosing pharmacy services to the experts as supporting information (Wattanathum, 2021, pp.1-152). The research method was divided into three steps as follows:

Step 1: An in-depth interview with experts to explore issues and opinions to develop a marketing strategy by interviewing 13 experts (Meesil, 2016, p.1262) as follows:

1. Representatives of each pharmacy business:

1.1 Two managers of university pharmacies

1.2 Three owners of stand-alone pharmacy with more than 5 year experiences

1.3 Two managers of chain-store pharmacies

2. Influencers on the profession of pharmacist

2.1 A representative from the Community Pharmacy Association

2.2 A pharmacist owning a Fanpage of more than 20,000 followers

3. Marketing Specialists

3.1 A head of marketing department of pharmaceutical company

3.2 A chief executive officer of health product company

3.3 An executive of Pharmacy Development of chain-store pharmacy

3.4 A marketing specialist 1 person

Step 2: Figure out the consistency of expert opinions using the Modified Delphi's technique for two times using a questionnaire developed from the interview results in step 1, using the consensus criteria of 13 experts: the interquartile range no more than 1.5 and the absolute value of the difference between the mode and the median of no more than 1, indicating that the experts agree—that question will be stopped.

Step 3: Create a new marketing strategy based on the activities that experts agree on and the ideas from Steps 1 and 2 to develop into a modern marketing strategy.

This research is accredited in human research ethics by Naresuan University with No. P10095/63.

Research Tools and Validation

A semi-structured interview form used in the interview at step 1 was validated with content validity assessments by three experts, including a research methodology expert, a language expert, and a marketing planning expert in order to calculate the index of item objective congruence (IOC). If the average expert opinion score is greater than or equal to 0.50, the content of the question is considered valid.

The content of the interviews was transcribed and then validated with a triangulation technique and thematic analysis by indexing them as sub-themes together with interpretations. When a duplicate issue was found, it was raised as the main issue and presented as an overall opinion through content analysis on the duplicate issue. This resulted in a close-ended questionnaire of conformity



assessment with 0 to 5 Likert's scale for using in step 2.

Results

Step 1: According to the in-depth interviews with 13 experts, the six factors that can be used to create a marketing strategy are as follows:

1. Environmental protection

Experts disagreed with each other. The nine experts agreed that employing the environmental protection issues to determine the marketing strategies in pharmacies doesn't result in long-term loyalty to the pharmacy and it can be a waste of investment. However, four other experts suggested the activities if the environmental protection is required to be used in pharmacies, such as asking about the need for plastic bags.

2. Personalized marketing

Experts suggested that the pharmacies should respond the needs of their customers individually, both in the submission of proposals or communication with customers, together with remembering the details of the customers in every step and be able to properly greet them.

3. Value-added activities

Value-adding activities in the store such as blood pressure measurement, glucose monitor with finger pricks or other activities that are essentially required by the pharmacist at the pharmacy were suggested by nine experts with no need to join working with government agencies, while the other still sees the need to cooperate with the government. However, there were proposals for joining the private sector to increase sales value, such as

joining with private insurers who bring pharmacies as health care units that can reimburse health insurance.

4. Service quality

Experts said that pharmacies should provide quick and convenient services, having reliability for both walk in and online services. The staff in the store must have the ability to communicate effectively and create emotional driving force of customers for making a sale with good knowledge of disease and medicine. All personnel in the store must follow the same regulation of work.

5. Marketing Mix

Experts suggested that pharmacies should differentiate their products and services as consumers are increasingly interested in disease prevention and health care. Pharmacies need to have more products in this group, including dietary supplements, skin care products, cosmeceuticals, and services other than pharmaceuticals, such as facial rejuvenation with facial massage or facial treatment. These include natural products that help treating disease called Nutraceutical and the application of traditional Chinese medicine. Nowadays it may not be necessary to compete on pricing if pharmacies can add value to their services by providing value-added pharmacy services, or provide a house-brand product. In terms of location, an easy access to the store must be considered both walk in and online. In addition, there should be a focus on efficient inventory management, for example, the products of COVID-19 group are required to be available for sale in order to make a profit during the aforementioned pandemic. If the pharmacy is limited in inventory, pharmacists need to fix

by using sales skills to apply the substitutes of unavailable one instead of rejecting customers. However, having the right amount of inventory can also reduce the cost of the store.

6. Online marketing and technology applications

Although experts disagreed on the necessity of telemedicine services or telepharmacy, with 11 people agreeing to provide telepharmacy and two who still disagree, but pharmacists need to prepare for technology, including creating a communication channel on the platform that consumers use. If credibility can be built on social media, it may increase the competitive opportunity to sell certain products that can be done online. Three experts said it may not be necessary to sell

online. An online can be just use as a tool to help consumers know and trust the pharmacy. In addition, six experts also proposed the use of technology to develop a membership system that can store consumer data for the benefit of maintaining and communicating with more specific consumers.

According to the six factors that can be used to create a marketing strategy, they can be subdivided into 30 items for each questionnaire in the form of Likert's scale. The subsections of each issue are shown in Table No. 1.

Step 2: The results of employing the first Delphi technique in the same group of 13 experts showed that most of the opinions were consistent as shown in Table No. 1.

Table No. 1 Results of the first text analysis regarding the opinions of experts on the creation of a new marketing strategy for the pharmacy business

No.	Factors that can be used to create a marketing strategy	Average	Mean	Mode	IQR	Consistency
Environment						
1	Environmental factors may not affect the choice of pharmacy service.	2.6	3	3	1.5	consistent
2	To respond to environmental protection campaign, customers may always be asked for plastic bag usage or not, or choose alternative products such as eco-friendly bags, paper bags, or get a reward of being a donator instead.	3.8	4	3	2	inconsistent
3	Choosing an alternative product instead of plastic bag or donation idea can be an unnecessary investment.	2.7	3	4	2	inconsistent
Personalized marketing						
1	Running a pharmacy business needs to understand and respond to the individual need of customers.	4.9	5	5	0	consistent
2	Pharmacists need to categorize their customers in order to communicate properly and meet specific needs.	4.8	5	5	0	consistent



No.	Factors that can be used to create a marketing strategy	Average	Mean	Mode	IQR	Consistency
3	Personalized marketing can implement the principles of recognize, recommend, relevance, and remember	4.6	5	5	0.5	consistent
Value-added activity						
1	Blood pressure measurement or glucose monitor with finger pricks to screen for disease or to monitor treatment including quitting smoking or others should be provided by pharmacists. But it's not necessary to participate or submit the information to government projects.	3.9	5	5	2	inconsistent
2	Pharmacies may use a blood pressure monitor, glucose monitor with finger pricks to screen for disease or to monitor treatment including quitting smoking to create a good image of the store, increase sales opportunities, and to create customer's database.	4.8	5	5	0	consistent
3	Pharmacies need to cooperate with private sectors or the government for the benefit of increasing sales value.	3.9	4	4	2	inconsistent
Service quality						
1	Pharmacies need to respond to customers quickly and conveniently, both offline and online.	4.7	5	5	1	consistent
2	Pharmacies need to build credibility in order to build trust with customers.	4.9	5	5	0	consistent
3	Personnel must have communication skills for explaining and driving the emotional aspects of the customers.	4.6	5	5	0.5	consistent
4	Personnel always need to develop their knowledge. And it is necessary to have the ability to bring out the differences of each product for consumers to choose.	5.0	5	5	0	consistent
5	Pharmacists and store personnel must follow the same regulation for service and act or communicate in the same way.	5.0	5	5	0	consistent
Marketing mix						
1	Pharmacies must be different in the types of products and services in order to meet the ever-changing needs of customers.	4.2	5	5	1.5	consistent

No.	Factors that can be used to create a marketing strategy	Average	Mean	Mode	IQR	Consistency
2	Pricing may be mid-priced compared to neighboring areas by using other strategies to replace the price.	4.7	5	5	1	consistent
3	Adding value through pharmacy services and service cost-effectiveness can solve the price sensitive problems.	4.5	5	5	1	consistent
4	Pharmacies need to ensure value of their products for customers or have house-brand products that can solve price sensitive problems.	4.1	4	4	1	consistent
5	Inventory must be managed efficiently in a timely manner and in appropriate quantities for sales.	4.7	5	5	1	consistent
6	Physical appearance of the pharmacy must be new and reliable.	4.7	5	5	1	consistent
7	Access to pharmacies must be convenient for customers.	4.7	5	5	0.5	consistent
Technology application						
1	There should be online channels to contact the store through the platform that customers are already using.	4.9	5	5	0	consistent
2	Telepharmacy or remote contact with pharmacies may not be necessary.	2.2	2	3	1.5	consistent
3	Pharmacies must use online media to create a role for the public to realize the importance of obtaining medicine advice from pharmacists.	4.8	5	5	0	consistent
4	Build a membership using content marketing in Hero-Hub-Help format.	4.1	4	5	1.5	consistent
5	Membership system should be used to collect treatment information and trading items for the store's data warehouse.	4.1	5	5	2	inconsistent
6	Pharmacies need to support every payment trends.	5.0	5	5	0	consistent
7	Pharmacies may compete on e-commerce if they can compete on price or create a media that customers trust ask for services and products.	4.1	5	5	1	consistent
8	Telepharmacy can increase sales opportunities.	4.7	5	5	1	consistent
9	Pharmacists may form a group in online media.	4.5	5	5	1	consistent



According to Table No. 1, there were five inconsistencies among experts' opinion from the questionnaire at this step. Therefore, they will be used in the second one. At this stage, the researcher attached the statistical values of mode, median, and showed a graph of the distribution of the individual data and the position of that expert.

In the second Delphies, the 12 experts responded to the questionnaire and one expert was not comfortable answering the questionnaire. At this step, it was noted from the first round that all five questions had inconsistent levels of opinion, but in the second round of responses there were consistent in all items. It showed that some of the experts with different opinions have changed their mind according to the group consensus without reaffirming the original idea. Thus, the variable passed all the criteria in this step.

Step 3: According to various factors of the above experts, they can be analyzed to create a new marketing strategy called "PROMPTS-DATE". Details are as follows.

P: Personalize

Pharmacists need to understand and respond to individual customer's need based on the 4R principle: recognize—be able to recognize clients and call or greet them properly; recommend—suggest what they expect the client prefer; relevance—make an offer that is suitable only for the customer; and remember—be able to remember the purchase details and preferences of the customer.

R: Reassemble

Pharmacies must form a group together for the benefit of exchanging information in

terms of treatment, exchange costs to increase the opportunity to reduce product costs, or increase the ability to supply products. Pharmacies may cooperate with private agencies to increase their profits.

O: Omni-channel

Pharmacies need to be available either offline or online, giving equal importance to covering every step of the customer journey and creating online promotions that are tailored to the offline store. Various analyzes must consider the results both offline and online.

M: Membership

Creating membership in the modern era and communicating with customers in the online era must be useful to customers and different from other stores. It should be content marketing, which is to create an image that reminds customer to think of the store as the first (hero) to create customer groups by capturing customer interest (hub) and using an online platform to respond questions immediately or channels that can easily solve customer problems (help). In addition, creating a membership system can also store information to facilitate the next transaction with members or use it to track treatment history to optimize treatment.

P: Proficiency

Pharmacy personnel must have expertise and follow the same regulation with communication expertise in which the personnel must have communication skills, story-telling and emotional drive of customers, or selecting information for communicating with specific customers and have knowledge of different

products. Pharmacists need to extract characteristics that are different in each product. And it is always necessary to develop knowledge of diseases and new products in the market. This is because customers nowadays often have information before going to the pharmacy.

T: Trust

Pharmacies need to build credibility to build trust with customers. The care to create a distinctive quality of service may be used to gain trust, expertise reliability and credibility both offline and online, which the store can use to compete with price factor in e-commerce platform or influencer in social media.

S: Speed and conveniences

Pharmacies need to respond quickly to customers and being convenient in terms of responsiveness in the offline and online even the speed of searching on demand products. This convenience includes easy access to the offline store. It also includes accessing online channels through various platforms that consumers use regularly, such as Line, Facebook Google map, linking to store's Facebook or making customers known through activities with various agencies. This also includes more payment methods that support all channels according to the trend or management of warehouses to ensure products are available for sale at all times.

D: Differentiate

As there is no difference in quality of pharmaceutical products in each store due to the same suppliers and each pharmaceutical company has certified production standards, it must be differentiated in other ways to replace pharmaceutical products, including having products that are only available at that partic-

ular store to make product differentiation.

A: Add-valued services

Enhancing the value of pharmacy activities to create value for service can replace factors of price sensitivity such as pressure measurement and glucose monitor with finger pricks to screen for disease or to monitor treatment including quitting smoking or others, which may or may not be done in conjunction with government agencies. In addition, these activities can differentiate the store from other stores that don't have these activities. This can change perceptions of pharmacy roles beyond general trading and can convert patients while receiving this service to customers in the store using communication skills or decorating the store to be able to sell products related to chronic diseases, increasing contact time with patients to increase the opportunities of selling more products,

T: Technology

Pharmacies must always be prepared for technology, such as being prepared to provide telepharmacy, if they can compete on price or can create a medium to convince customers and purchase from a store through e-commerce. Pharmacies need to create media to be credible and beneficial to customers if receiving advice through pharmacists in online channels such as Facebook fanpage, etc. or setting promotions for customers to be interested in returning to receive more offline service. In this case, pharmacist fee may be considered to charge for service convenience.

E: Environmental concern

Protecting the environment may not be the main strategy in the pharmacy business. But if you want to respond to the concept of



environmental conservation, you may ask for customers' needs for requiring plastic bags or not every time or choose alternative products such as eco-friendly bags, paper bags, or becoming a donator automatically when plastic bags are not required.

Conclusion and Discussion

The new developed marketing strategy called PROMPTS-DATE, derived from the main concepts of six factors involved as follows:

1) The application of personalized marketing. Stores need to remember customers in detail to select products, propose personalized offers. This is in line with the current market trend of personalized marketing, which requires applying the use of technology to help create 4R principle, including recognize, recommend, relevance, and remember (Muangtum, 2020, pp.164-166). There was a study on the application of marketing principles using personalized advertising on Facebook, which could reduce the distrust of the ads, increased positive attitude towards ads, and increased the ad trust at a significant level of 0.05 (Tran, 2017, pp.234-238). Personalized promotion via B2B website can raised 15% of new members and can be make the sales generated by this strategy were up to \$1.1 million (Kirkpatrick, 2015).

2) Online marketing and technology applications. It needs to be developed to allow for different management in the issues mentioned above and to have a different membership system in order to manage customer relationships that are different from other stores, such as applying the content strategy of hero-hub-help to create a membership system. This

is because a survey of customers in pharmacies in Portugal found that having a membership system that creates a perceived value for money with a system that is convenient and easy to receive benefits. This includes having benefits that satisfy customers, such as redeeming points with rewards that consumers want that can increase pharmacy loyalty in terms of attitude, word of mouth, and price sensitivity at $p < 0.01$ (Nobre and Rodrigues, 2018, pp. 456-462). Pharmacies must be prepared with innovation and technology at all times. Especially due to the 2019 coronavirus epidemic, pharmacies must use remote technology to provide health and medicine consultations to their customers. Because there is currently an announcement of the Pharmacy Council No. 56-2563 regarding the setting of standards and procedures for long-distance pharmaceutical services. This law will facilitate telepharmacy services and care (Thavornwattanayong, 2020, p.104). In addition, forming a group among pharmacists can collectively buy cheaper products due to increased purchase amount. As proposed cost reduction strategies in the study of strategic guidance for competitive advantage in the drugstore business in Thailand that has introduced voluntary grouping at the level of friends, entrepreneurs, to community pharmacy association levels or local pharmacies for low-cost exchanges to contract bundling through investments, in order to create a unique identity in the community or franchise system (Intharapong, et al., 2016, p.74).

3) Personnel must ensure good service quality in terms of knowledge and communication through driving customer emotions

and storytelling skills which is consistent with Chanvichai and Poorat stating that storytelling strategies are important to brands and products, for example, adding value through storytelling to create a perceived value to products in the Khao Kho community (Chanvichai and Poorat, 2020, pp.31-37). In terms of emotion-driven communication, there was a survey revealed that communication with highly emotionally driven reviews on Amazon can drive more product views than communication with low-emotional driven reviews and increase sales (Ren and Nickerson, 2014). Increasing service value by building credibility in online media in terms of advertising or using brand messages and influencers to create reliability affects the purchase decision process more than a 5-20% price discount (Mashhadani, 2019, pp.65-73). An overview of the purchase decision process indicates that customers are assessed from price and quality factors to create perceived value as a relative value in order to make a purchasing decision (Alston and Blizzard, 2012, p.340). As a result, a high-service strategy, such as consulting, medication tracking can solve the problem of price interest. However, pharmacies require good quality of service in associated with fair pricing (Zgarrick, et al., 2016, pp.34-36).

4) Value-added activities in the pharmacy including disease screening, referral and follow-up of chronic disease patients that can be done in the store, can be a value that a pharmacist can basically do in order to benefit patient care, in which pharmacists can manage their patients' medicine problems. According to a study by Lertsinudom and colleagues, it

was found that pharmacists provided medication refilling and reviewing chronic disease medication lists in Khon Kaen Province. As many as 73 drug use problems were identified, all of which were managed by community pharmacists and referred to physicians. It was found that customers had a high level of satisfaction with the activity (Lertsinudom, et al., 2018, pp.386-390), which could create a positive image, increase in-store merchandising opportunities by pushing more patients to the offline store as the value-adding activities in pharmacies can create engagement between the store and the customer (Desselle, et al., 2019, pp.3-4). It may or may not participate in related projects of government agencies or associations. However, during the coronavirus disease 2019 epidemic, pharmacies should join as a Pracharat Blue Flag Store to support low-income people who can use the money in the state welfare card campaign to buy or use the service in a pharmacy including joining the medicine pickup program at the pharmacy to reduce congestion in hospitals and to receive compensation from the government (Thavornwattanayong and , 2020, pp.101-107).

5) Marketing mix is still necessary for pharmacy businesses, including products, prices, locations and promotions, but strategies may need to be adjusted to suit today's customers. For example, products must be different from other stores, both the products sold in the store and services including efficient inventory management in order to have products that are available for sale according to the current trends, which will increase sales opportunities and reduce the cost of pharmacy



(Pornbunjerdkul, 2020, pp.14-21). Prices may not necessarily be the lowest price. This may use the middle price by bringing the quality of service to the customer to be worthwhile to fix the price sensitivity factor. In terms of location and promotion, it is necessary to develop access to online drug sales so that customers can easily reach and contact them by using social media such as LINE application, as it is the channel that the customers has used the most to inquire about medication and the health of themselves and relatives through the service provided by community pharmacists (Thomyamongkon and Sitthi-woranan, 2017, pp.45-46). This is consistent with current customer behavior based on the 5A principles; making the customer aware of the identity of the product (aware), attracting the customer to know the product (appeal), providing information for decision making (ask), facilitating the purchase when the customer makes a purchase decision (act), and making customers recommendation (advocates) (Kotler, 2021, pp.109-126) through the online as proposed by Kotler.

6) Environmental protection. Although the policy to sell or use environmentally friendly products in pharmacies may not be the main strategy to show consumers, pharmacies can do this activity to create a good image that meets customer trends. This is in line with Nisaisuk and Donkwa which surveyed the Thai population in Bangkok and Nakhon Ratchasima. They found that marketing communication for the environment, branding to create awareness of environmental conservation, and building customers to have a positive attitude

towards environmentally friendly products, all of them had a significant effect on the relationship with customers' purchasing behavior of environmentally friendly products at $p < 0.05$ (Nisaisuk and Donkwa, 2018, pp.61-64).

The limitation of this research is that there was an expert who was not convenient to answer the questionnaire in Round 2. However, this expert gave the same opinion with others in Round 1, but there was a difference in the aspect of membership system building. However, the experts commented as follows: 1) Making a membership system is a record of sales. It should not be combined with screening data as it is a separate activity with different purposes. Recording a history to track treatment will have a very positive effect on the pharmacy. But it may not be necessary to connect to the store membership system. The record of purchase history for sales analysis according to the data protection law can only do non-drug products. But pharmacies may use this information to extend the promotion or activities to create engagement that can be extended. 2) Recording patient history. There are only a few patients. If the pharmacy is connected to the online system of the government program, it will be able to access information without the need to make a pharmacy membership system.

The modern marketing strategy for the pharmacy business was developed through brainstorming, pharmacy business experience, and the experience of seeing the marketing from other successful businesses of experts. Therefore, the application of new marketing strategies developed in whole or in part in

various types of pharmacy businesses should be researched in order to further assess the effectiveness of such strategies.

“PROMPTS-DATE” is a new marketing strategy, which is an approach that can be applied to suit the current pharmacy situation, such as creating a membership system that can record drug dispensing history with a patient recognition system, such as attaching a camera to allow personnel to recognize members in order to provide more personalized services, develop more online trading channels such as Facebook or LINE, develop knowledge and communication abilities of personnel at the store, express the interest in the environment through asking about the need for using plastic bags, increase health products or services in the store from the original, especially

during the coronavirus 2019 epidemic, pharmacies should reach low-income people through joining the Pracharat Blue Flag Store campaign, join the pharmacy drug pickup program to reduce congestion in hospitals for government compensation, and use of telecommunication technology in health consultation and medicine. Pharmacies may choose to implement all strategies or certain strategies according to the context of each pharmacy to meet customer needs and create a business advantage as well.

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