

## **Analytics: A Secret Weapon in Successful Pre-Launch Planning**

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The launch period for a new branded pharmaceutical is a critical time for pharma companies. In today's challenging environment, in fact, brand launch can be the key to long-term success, or the start of a disappointing return. But negotiating a successful brand launch is a difficult task, one in which brand marketers can easily become overwhelmed.

Launch success is integral to a brand's overall success, and to the company's continuing viability. What makes for a successful launch? Activities like early marketing planning, looking ahead to regulatory issues, and plotting lifecycle management from the point of inception. But what also make a successful launch are the attitudes and working behaviors that prime a company to think creatively, plan effectively and engender success.

With so much to think about, and so many tasks that can seem insurmountable, pharmaceutical marketers may feel overwhelmed. But with a secret weapon at their disposal, the entire pre-launch planning can go smoothly and successfully.

### *The Secret Weapon: Analytics*

No matter how much you plan ahead, new drug development is inherently risky in today's environment. Increasingly, pharma managers and marketers need a way to assess the potential for a new product, and the likelihood of success upon launch. The best way to plan is with the support of comprehensive market evaluation, modeling, forecasting, and simulations that help marketing decision making before and during launch. Analytics models can provide the insight on what drives your target consumers, and help predict actual launch results.

Throughout the multiple phases of pre-launch planning, sophisticated analytics can help you answer key questions, supporting your process and removing the dangerous uncertainty that can doom your product. Taken together, analytics throughout pre-launch can help companies:

- Quantify the potential impact from each marketing activity before launch with specific allocations
- Evaluate which messages will have the most impact on actual prescribing
- Reveal how, when and where to spend your budget for the best results
- Forecast brand performance at launch based on the current situation
- Provide a 'What If' forecast showing the impact of any specific marketing changes

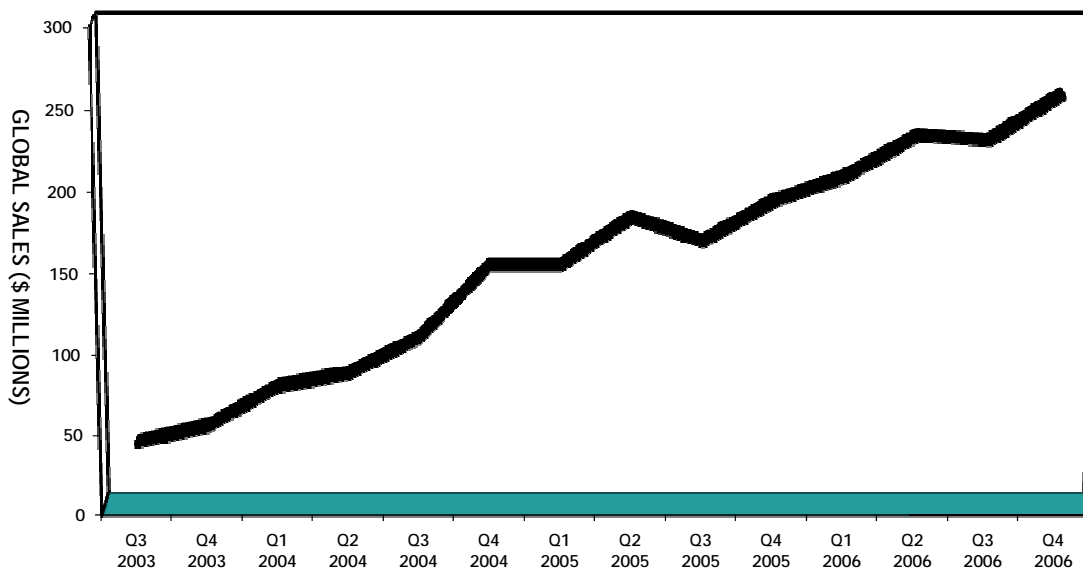
Through every phase of pre-launch, analytics can provide the powerful predictions and planning aids that result in optimal launch:

- Analytics in Early Pre-launch Planning can help you answer questions about key market drivers, competitor strengths and weaknesses, positioning and price points, and optimal resource allocations.
- Regulatory Planning can help you answer questions about the effect of clinical trial data, market share with clinical trial results, and regulatory approval.
- Late Stage Pre-launch Planning can help you answer questions about key messages to drive brand growth, effective positioning, potential impact from marketing activities, global launch timing, and market share predictions.

### *Analytics in Action*

For a demonstration of the power of analytics in pre-launch planning, consider the case study of Reyataz (atazanavir). Reyataz is a direct-acting antiviral initially indicated for the treatment of HIV. Reyataz conducted analytics at three time periods pre-launch to understand optimal clinical trial data, optimal positioning and brand potential, market drivers, messages, and ideal budget allocation, in order to be prepared for a rapid launch and rapid uptake. Reyataz was approved initially through priority review on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2003 in the United States. The brand then received a centralized EU approval eight and half months later. Reyataz had market exclusivity through to 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2007 in the United States.

In Reyataz' first full year on the market (Q3 2003 to Q2 2004), the drug reached sales of \$248 Million. Reyataz' initial market growth was motivated by it being an equivalent therapy to the therapeutic class leader - efavirenz - and the tried and trusted older brand, nelfinavir. The global sales generated for Reyataz was \$931 Million in 2006 (year-on-year increase of 33.8%!). Another new HIV therapy - Viread - was initially launched in October 2001. This brand suffered from disappointing sales because it had no head-to-head trial data. In Q4 2005, despite being launched seven quarters later, Reyataz' quarterly sales exceeded Viread's. The results speak for themselves in the sales figures seen in the figure shown.



SOURCE: Company financial reports

In another case of analytics aiding pre-launch planning, AstraZeneca decided on a one-year pre-launch strategy for their new product, Nexium (for the treatment of acid reflux disease). This included an examination of the core messages having most impact for the category and the promotional activities having most impact on physicians' behavior when prescribing.

The brand team conducted analytics in two time periods prior to launch (one at 12 months and one at six months prior to launch) and thereafter at six monthly intervals. In conducting these analytics in two time periods pre-launch, the brand team was able to understand the vulnerabilities in its competitors and position itself in the best possible way. The team also understood the core brand market share potential based on its own clinical trial results which were input into the system. It was then able to focus on positioning messages with potential to give most marked increase in market share and plan its marketing effort to match the areas recommended by the analytics for maximum growth

As a result, the brand had a 3.3% market share at launch and a strong growth pattern as shown in the Figures.

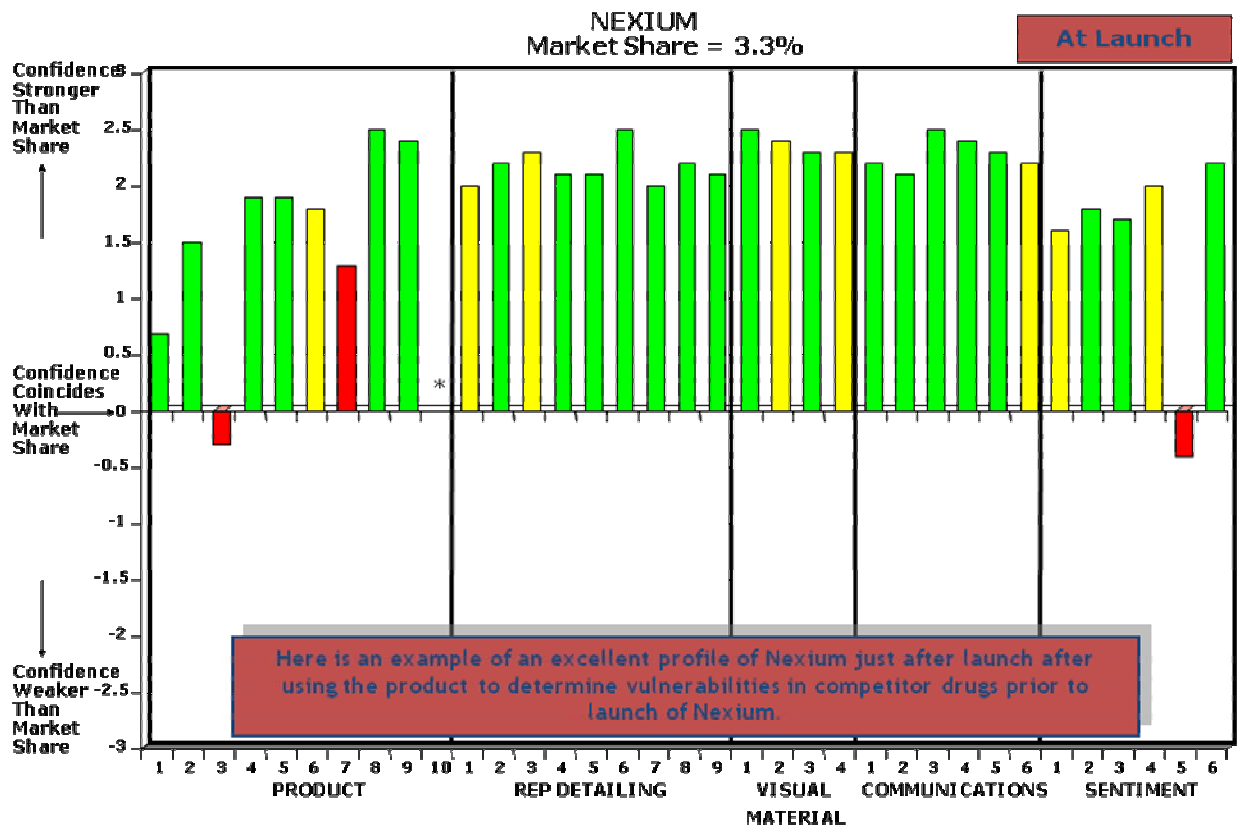


Figure 2: Nexium market position at launch

Between launch and six months the activity was tweaked to incorporate the findings from the analytics at launch (in the picture above) and adjustments were made to the marketing effort to areas analytics recommended would provide maximum growth. AstraZeneca trained reps to do detail with the emphasis shown in analytics and the budget was allocated according to the budget mix recommended by the system. The picture of the brand at six months post-launch can be seen in the graph below.

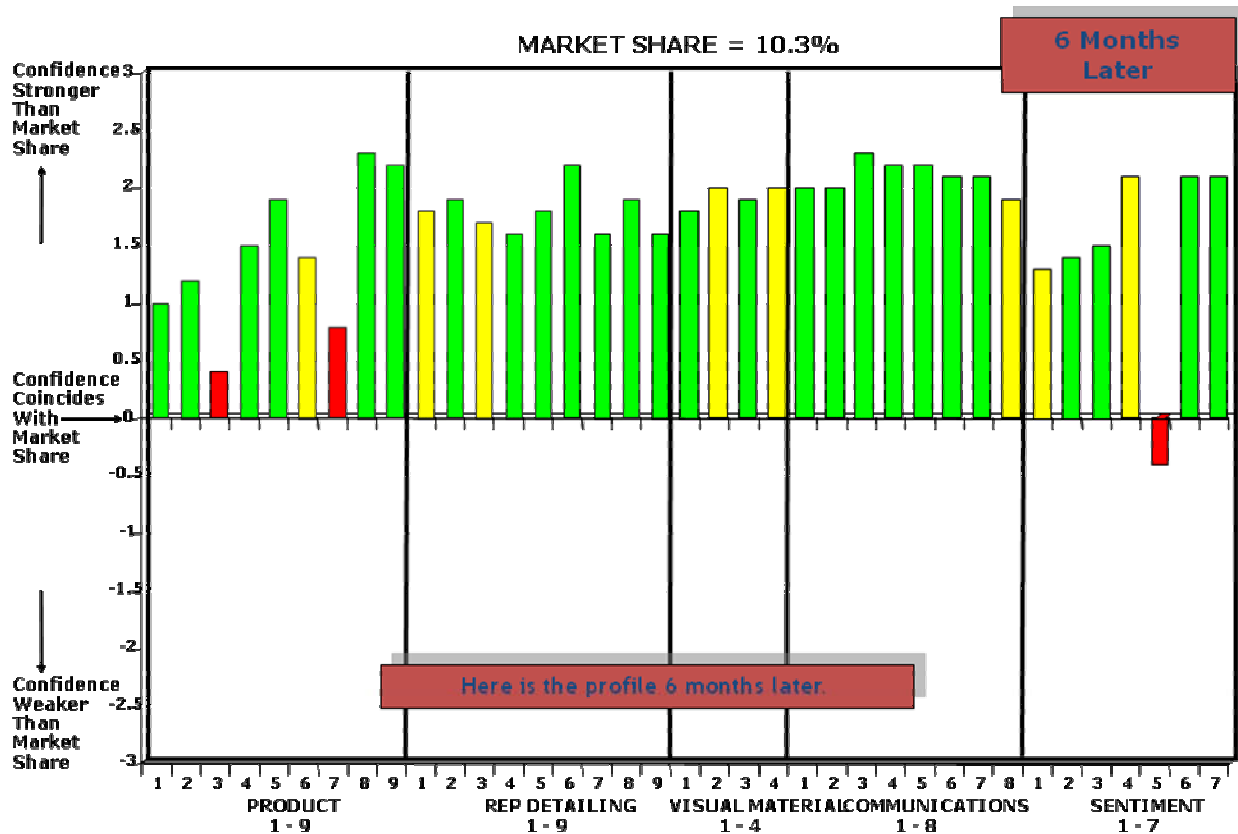


Figure 3: Nexium market position six months post launch

Market share had grown to 10.3% and it was still on track for rapid growth and yet AstraZeneca continued to use the analytics system to grow the brand further.

Market share came in at 3.3% within one month post launch and had more than tripled very quickly to 10.3% by month six by following the system's recommendations. It was redone every six months to ensure new market environment and validated perception factors against the competitors were constantly taken into account for continuous refinement and growth in market share. The brand continues to be a market leader in this category and the team has consistently used the analytics since pre-launch in that market.

## *Conclusion*

The environment for Big Pharma today is tough. But while the pressure for launching new products is higher than it has ever been, new strategies and tactics are available to plan effectively and plot for profit.

Most important to remember for pre-launch planning is the secret weapon savvy marketers rely on. Sophisticated analytics can help companies answer key questions throughout each stage of pre-launch planning, ensuring the best strategies and most-informed tactics. Analytics can help from beginning to end of the planning process, and even provide a foundation for management throughout a product's life.

What the future holds for pharma companies is uncertain. But company leaders ready to proactively plan for success, to continue to innovate, and to rely on the significant power of marketing to boost product launches, sales and profits, will help pharma survive and thrive.

For more information or help in pre-launch analytics, please contact the author, Dr Andree Bates, at Eularis: [www.eularis.com](http://www.eularis.com)