Brand resistance - vaccine naming

Overview

Amongst human healthcare products, vaccines occupy a uniquely special place thanks to their critically essential nature, the seasonality of some of the diseases they treat, their biological composition and their somewhat commodity-like status.

The recent coronavirus outbreak has shed light on the scale of both the financial value of the vaccines market (\$35 billion) as well as its growth patterns (sixfold increase over last two decades). The vaccines areas is dominated by four big players (GSK, Sanofi, Merck & Co. and Pfizer) that account for 85% of the market.

The "long life" of vaccines which can treat a wide variety of conditions such as flu, pertussis, shingles and polio, means

that they are reliably consistent drivers of revenue for their manufacturers. Merck's vaccines business, as a single industry example, has showed annual revenue growth of 9% since 2010.

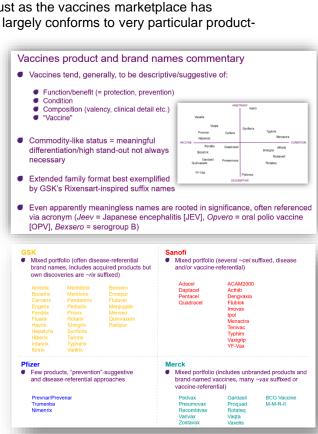
Clearly vaccines represent a keystone of both global healthcare provision, accounting for the prevention of more than two million deaths annually, as well as highly lucrative profit generation in the sector (the worldwide market expected to reach \$62.2 billion by 2027). Just as the vaccines marketplace has characteristics specific to itself, so too the naming of vaccines largely conforms to very particular product-reflective parameters.

Vaccine names - functional imperative

Since all vaccines fundamentally do the same thing, offering either prevention of, or protection from, disease, the scope for incorporating meaningfully differentiated outcome communication within vaccine names is naturally finite.

When selecting, or administering, vaccine products functionality is key – names typically need to communicate either benefit, condition reference, composition (clinical detail such as valency) or indeed "vaccine" (to distinguish from other healthcare product categories). Overlap of same or similar word-parts is common. Naming strategies include both 'family' (common suffix, such a GSK's ~rix vaccines) and 'standalone' (unrelated) or mixed approaches.

Actual target audiences for vaccines are usually not patients, nor even prescribers/administers, but mass-treating/bulk-buying organisations such as national health bodies, immunization providers, as well as state and federal governments. Decision-makers in such groups respond better to product-distinguishing descriptor-like names rather than arbitrary or emotionally evocative brands.



Select vaccine product and brand names

Flublok

Flumist

Fluvirin

Focetria

Heplisav-B Hexaxim

Imovax

Ixiaro

Jeev

Flucelvax

ACAM2000

BCG Vaccine

Acthib

Adacel

Afluria

Agriflu

Celtura

Diftet

Dukoral

Eupenta

purplefire

Typhim Vaqta

Varivax

Verorab

Vivotif YF-Vax Zostavax

Other

Merck

Pfizer

Sanofi

Vaxchora

Poliovax

Prevenar Prevnar

Proquad Quadracel

Rabavert

Rotasil

Serinflu

TDVAX

Tice

Recombiva

Menomune (Menquadfi)

M-M-R II

M-M-Vax Nasovac

Opvero

Panvax

Pedvay

Poliorix

Pentabio

Looking forward

Functionality and disease reference will no doubt characterize much of the future naming for newly-developed vaccine products but there may also be room for a break from the norm in terms of impactful differentiation and long-lasting stand-out value in a commodity marketplace.

To contact Purple Fire Branding, specialists in brand naming, research and design, please telephone +44 (0)20 8166 1853 or visit www.purplefirebranding.com

