

BY ROBIN ROBINSON



Mastering Multichannel MARKETING

KEY TO SUCCESS: Match up channel properties and consistent content with consumer preferences.



Getting inside the heads of the target audiences, determining what distinguishes and drives their behavior, can help clarify which channels will work best.



KELLY ANDREWS
MicroMass



JON KAY
TNS Healthcare

The key to successful multichannel marketing is to be wherever the consumer is when he or she is ready to receive your message. Easy, right? Not a chance, especially when the consumer is a busy physician or a patient with access to all media at all times. Our experts have identified some best practices that include three easy-to-remember principles: know channel properties, be consistent with content, and study consumer preferences. These strategies can help guide today's marketers to thoughtfully choose the media channels that will be the most effective means for serving up consistent, consumer-centric messages.

The Challenges Within the Channels

The big question surrounding multichannel marketing is not which channel is best, but rather, how to use them all effectively, our experts say.

The first and biggest challenge is determining the properties of each channel and understanding the relationship the target audience has with a particular channel as a way to match the channel and message to the audience, says Lisa Henderson, senior VP of client services at Epsilon.

"One channel is not any more difficult to manage than any other," she says. "Integration of multiple channels, however, is far more challenging and is absolutely required to create a dialogue that builds off of previous interactions and picks up where the last interaction left off."

Stan Woodland, CEO and president of Communications Media Inc. (CMI), agrees that no channel is more challenging to manage than any other; what is challenging is executing an integrated program featuring multiple channels simultaneously.

"If multiple agencies, publishers, and vendors are

Increasingly, brands must manage audiences who are hearing both "intended" messages from the brand team and "unintended" messages from traditional and social media.

also folded into the mix, the complexities increase exponentially,” he says. “Integrated programs require adequate lead time and proper planning. With enough lead time and the right amount of strategic thought and planning, a fruitful multichannel program can be produced with a minimum number of pain points.”

Paul LeVine, VP, analytic services, at InfoMedics, agrees that an integrated delivery of messages across multiple channels is the central challenge.

“In our history of designing, implementing, and measuring patient feedback programs, the most successful outcomes have stemmed from a clear, carefully considered strategy at the onset and an intelligent, integrated message delivered across a multitude of channels — online, phone/IVR, direct mail, in-office business reply cards, and so on,” he says.

Most of InfoMedic’s surveys are conducted using IVR (interactive voice response), which presents its own set of challenges, Mr. LeVine says. Since engagement time management is critical to obtaining quality results, the patient experience must be designed to make it a fulfilling experience.

Of all the channels, the Internet is the most challenging, most of our experts agree.

“I believe that the Internet is the most difficult to manage,” says Ken Ribotsky, founding president of Core-Create. “It is such a dynamic, fluid vehicle.”

Mr. Ribotsky says many marketers are under-leveraging the Internet and not realizing its fullest potential.

“Marketers may be hesitant because of the many aspects of communications and marketing connected with the Internet; it takes real know-how and experience to optimize opportunities,” he adds.



The biggest challenge with multichannel marketing is determining the properties of each channel and understanding the relationship the target audience has with that channel.

 LISA HENDERSON
Epsilon



Consistency in content, along with innovation and comprehensive planning, are keys to brand recognition.

 PAUL LEVINE
InfoMedics

Creating bidirectional communications can be a big challenge that pays big dividends.

 BRIAN DALEIDEN
SupplyScope

Dave Ormesher, CEO of Closerlook, drills down even further by saying social media is the most challenging channel to manage simply because it runs at crosscurrents to conventional agency wisdom and practice.

“The lack of metrics available to evaluate social media relationships creates a conundrum for agencies and the industry,” he says. “Fundamentally, social media is about listening and being vulnerable. It’s about creating relationships, and every good relationship must be fed and nurtured.”

For those companies that include aspects of social networking as part of their marketing mix, the management of this channel can be extremely challenging because of the loss of content control, says Nick Colucci, president and CEO, Publicis Healthcare Communications Group.

“Blogs, Twitter, and other social marketing channels leave the pharma industry open to false and/or misleading information that can generate wrong perceptions, misunderstandings, and possible misuse of products,” he says. “Managing this channel in a regulated marketplace is posing a significant hurdle for many companies.”

Another obstacle is getting both the agency and the full client team, including general counsel, to agree to engage the audience on social networks such as Facebook, MySpace, or a blog, Mr. Ormesher says.

“Building a social media team that understands the communications platforms, one that has the voice and the permission to engage in an authentic way, and one that has a succession plan in place for when the team members move on, is even more challenging,” he adds.

Kelly Andrews, director of strategic planning at MicroMass Communications, agrees that the consumer control of online content, as well as rapidly evolving technology, does make it one of the more challenging channels to use effectively.



Many marketers are under-leveraging the Internet and not realizing its full potential.

KEN RIBOTSKY
Core-Crete 

“Marketers have to be finely tuned and responsive to consumer behavior at all times and truly engage in two-way communications, essentially co-creating content,” she says. “Online is also challenging because technology is constantly advancing and giving us new tools that require a high degree of expertise to master at a rapid pace.”

Another challenge, she says, is that much of Internet-based media are still considered to be a new frontier and lack the clear regulations established for traditional channels.

“The more we strive to be open and innovative, the more we risk venturing into unregulated, gray territory,” Ms. Andrews says.

While others focus on the newer challenges of reaching consumers online, Brian Daleiden, director of marketing at SupplyScape, addresses the issues related to the tried-and-true print media, particularly in this fast-paced world of instantaneous information that is available at the consumer’s fingertips.

“The global pharmaceutical market is so



Marketing directed to both physicians and patients must capitalize on the hallmarks of CRM.

 NICK COLUCCI
Publicis Healthcare Communications

a contributed article or another vehicle. A hard-hitting and topical article is often the one most focused on a specific burning issue. Yet, this very focus can be a problem if by the time the piece is public, the print article is out of sync with the current issues at hand.”

Allocating Investment Throughout the Channels

There are several ways to determine how to best allocate budgets and resources among the many channels, our experts say. Understanding the different media and consumer behavior while participating in those channels are crucial to making good decisions.

Decisions about which channels to use should be driven by return on investment, Ms. Henderson says.

“To make the process easier, Epsilon uses an investment framework that begins with the establishment of marketing goals,” she says. “Once the marketing goal has been established, we determine how each segment within the target audience will contribute to achieving the goal. For example, if the goal is 10,000 new patient starts, then we need to determine which segments might generate these new starts. Understanding the relationship each segment has with a channel makes it possible to determine how many new starts will be generated by channel and segment. The final step in the process is to project the ROI for each channel by projecting the value of each new start and the cost to acquire it.”

Taking into consideration the fragmentation of media and the ad-hoc role various tactics actually play, the best strategy for allocating resources is to analyze the various communica-



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 STAN WOODLAND
CMI

dynamic, from a solution provider perspective, that it makes it hard to integrate print into the mix,” he says. “While there are general themes that companies would like to implement over the next several quarters, there are usually hot-button issues that ebb and flow on a shorter timeframe. Given the typical lead times required for print, it can be hard to know where to place the bet when it comes to messaging in

Social media is the most challenging channel, simply because it runs at crosscurrents to conventional agency practices.

DAVE ORMESHER
Closerlook 



tion channels from the perspective of what job each performs in the life of the customer and in the product decision-making process, Mr. Ormesher says.

He says designating a “channel preference” is too simplistic, however, and preference may actually change depending on the role or job the consumer needs the media to play at any given time. By understanding exactly how a customer uses the various channels, the planner can think about sequencing and channel hand-offs.

“For example, instead of thinking simply in terms of a TV buy with a call to action to a call center or Website, think in terms of an ‘awareness creation package’ that uses the channels that a target segment uses when in a scanning mode,” Mr. Ormesher says.

The properties of each channel must be understood and leveraged to create the desired consumer/healthcare professional behavior, Ms. Henderson says.

“For example, TV can be used to deliver one key message while making an emotional connection with the audience,” she says. “The online channel is perfectly suited to providing detailed information, ongoing education, and a personalized experience and dialogue. Finally, a call center staffed with nurses provides an empathetic channel that can be used to provide disease-management support.”

In other words, not all communication channels are effective at reaching, engaging, or delivering brand messages to specific constituents, Mr. LeVine says.

“For example, if a brand is primarily aimed at a younger segment of the population, it would make most sense to focus communications investments on mobile channels,” he adds. “IVR or direct mail will not achieve the same results, and they would not be a wise choice for reaching a younger audience.”

Patients who are engaged and motivated correctly will carry the brand message to their physicians directly, which creates another outlet, and one that requires special attention: the

patient-physician channel. Physicians may want the information from patient surveys to help guide them in patient care, but these data need to be presented in a way that addresses their needs.

According to Mr. LeVine, real-world treatment feedback gathered from patients and delivered to their physicians has proven to be the most effective communications channel to reach physicians.

“Demonstrable increases in new prescriptions and all prescriptions are a direct consequence of both patients and physicians seeing value in the process,” Mr. LeVine says. “But to maximize the marketing investment, it’s important to take into consideration the targeted patient population, their health status, and the therapeutic area, as well as the physician segments and the product’s life-cycle stage.”

Situational issues always drive communications strategy, Mr. Ribotsky says. Objectives — both short-term and long-term — should be set to address the given situation.

“Determining which channels help achieve those objectives will establish the amount of energy and investment they deserve,” he says.

Another way to address the challenge of identifying the right channel for the right message with the biggest ROI is to focus on the consumer, Ms. Andrews says.

“Getting inside the heads of the target audiences, determining what distinguishes and drives their behavior, what messages resonate with them, where and when they are most receptive to receiving different types of information, and who has the greatest impact in conveying that information can help clarify which channels will work best,” Ms. Andrews says. “This method identifies which communication channels will be most effective, how resources should be allocated among the channels, and how content should be framed so the channels successfully support one integrated marketing campaign.”

Behavioral science also can be applied to determine the best way of allocating budget

resources against marketing channels. By developing audience segmentations that include a predictor of the current and future financial value of each segment to a particular brand or category and then combining the results with behavioral insights into what makes each segment unique, marketers can more effectively prioritize their audiences, identify which channels will be most effective at engaging each segment, and allocate their resources accordingly, Ms. Andrews says.

Mr. Woodland says true understanding of a target yields an efficient and effective multi-channel communications program.

“Three factors should be considered before devoting energy and budget to any program,” he explains. “First, the media consumption behaviors of the target must be understood. Second, marketers need to understand and project engagement metrics by channel. Finally, they need to understand what optimal synergies will be produced by a mixed — and fully integrated — marketing program.”

Because diverse channels provide different levels of engagement above and beyond the ever-important and well-understood metrics of reach and frequency, marketers must also understand how each channel can engage a target audience, Mr. Woodland says.

“Engagement metrics typically measure any action that reflects an experience or interaction with a brand, product, group, or message,” he adds. “Whether that means interacting with an ad, requesting a sample, or even encouraging the audience to talk about an ad or product experience, all aspects of engagement should be measured from an integrated perspective. Some types of engagement may be more beneficial than others; as a result, the mix of vehicles employed should be optimized based on the value of engagement each provides. The benefits of synergy can be recognized when a result is greater than the sum of the parts that produced the result; this is definitely true for multi-channel programs. By examining the synergies that individual program tactics create

when combined, the value of their overall integrated effort can be better understood and the channels better optimized.”

According to Jonathan Kay, global practice head, brand and communications, at TNS Healthcare, new channels require new and innovative metrics to determine success.

“Endpoints matter,” he says. “Pharmaceutical companies invest in determining optimal endpoints for a clinical trial. Likewise, they must invest in measuring the impact of new media. There is a broad array of possible endpoints between the audience seeing or hearing

the message and the physician prescribing the drug. Campaigns may even have interim measures of success; for example a patient looking online for more information or asking about a physician.”

Today’s diverse audience, content, and channel options call for creative strategies, Mr. Kay contends. And the success of those strategies hinges in part on selecting the right metrics to define the value the marketing mix is delivering.

“The upside could be especially big for small to mid-size companies,” he says.

Experts on this topic

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“Cuts in field forces are reducing the advantages large companies had. At the same time, social media offer new, affordable options for building brand awareness and equity, and innovations in Internet advertising provide cost-effective alternatives to television placement.”

Consistent Content Broadens Brand Recognition

To maximize effective delivery and resonance with all types of patients and physicians, brand messages must be consistent across all channels, which represent a wide demographic spectrum, including patients who have been newly prescribed, are on chronic or acute treatments, or struggle with various barriers to treatment adherence.

“Consistency in content, along with innovation, big thinking, comprehensive planning, and crisp execution, are the keys to brand recognition,” Mr. LeVine says.

Being consistent is vitally important, but Ms. Andrews cautions that marketers shouldn’t confuse this with being the same in all channels. The goal is to use each channel as a way of telling a part of the whole story in a way that builds on and enriches the parts of the story heard through other channels, thereby creating a continuum of experience with the brand that builds a sense of relationship.

“The goal should be to truly integrate the information across all channels so there’s consistent, supportive messaging throughout all communications,” she says. “But that doesn’t mean hitting the same messages at every touch point; someone seeking emotional support won’t be impressed by ease-of-dosing information.” ♦

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To access a FREE Podcast featuring Paul LeVine and Michael Ball, Ph.D., from InfoMedics, go to pharmavoices.com/podcasts.



To access a FREE Whitepaper on the topic of multichannel marketing from InfoMedics, go to pharmavoices.com/whitepapers.



Mastering Multichannel **MARKETING:** Focus on the Consumer

Striving to deliver the right message to the right customer when he/she wants it requires a customer-centric approach.

“Marketing today to both physicians and patients must capitalize on the hallmarks of CRM,” says Nick Colucci, president and CEO, Publicis Healthcare Communications Group.

“Taking a page from direct marketing guru Lester Wunderman, we must listen, create, and learn,” he says.

Today, technology allows for the capture of vast amounts of data on the channels and messages that go to individual physicians and patients.

“Developing systems and processes that constantly monitor and analyze this information — in real-time — will enable marketers to make solid decisions about the channels and messages that resonate with each customer or customer segment,” Mr. Colucci says.

Dave Ormsher, CEO of Closerlook, also advocates the use of data tracking and adds that a company must be flexible enough to react quickly to what it learns from the constant analysis.

“The key factors necessary for an effective multichannel program are a good user experience at the integration hand-off points, real-time tracking through the consideration and purchase process, and nimbleness in making changes based on customer learnings,” he says.

Kelly Andrews, director of strategic planning at MicroMass Communications, adds that currently, there is a real need to know the target audience and what drives its behavior.

“To design effective multichannel communications, first a marketer must determine what the audience wants, fears, values, and needs, both consciously and subconsciously, before marketing to consumers effectively, we must understand their belief systems,” she says. “Marketers need to identify who influences their target audience; what ideas resonate with them and what turns them off; and how, where, and with whom they spend their time.”

Jonathan Kay, global practice head, brand and communications, at TNS Healthcare, says brand teams have more choices now than in the past; the question is, however, does the variety help or hinder marketing’s mission?

“With an increased focus on cost containment, many brand teams have to do more with less,” he says. “Just as their sales counterparts experienced in recent years, marketing departments are in the spotlight, facing accountability to deliver results. The good news is that

some of the new choices are more affordable, making them more accessible. In addition,

innovations in marketing strategy could add value and generate greater return.”

Lessons Learned in Multichannel Marketing

THE BIGGEST LESSONS LEARNED REGARDING THE PRACTICE OF MULTICHANNEL MARKETING

Behavior drives everything



KELLY ANDREWS. Director of Strategic Planning, MicroMass Communications.

“It’s absolutely essential to know your audience deeply, personally, and with a level of understanding that enables you to predict and be readily responsive to their behavior. It’s also essential to understand both the expressed and unarticulated needs of your audience, based on their behavior. If you choose a wrong channel, you can make a correction. But if you make a wrong assumption about behavior, you have to throw everything out and start all over.”

Focus and flexibility



NICK COLUCCI. President and CEO, Publicis Healthcare Communications Group.

“Multichannel means that customers have more opportunities to be exposed to messages and possibly misinterpret or misunderstand them. Therefore, two key words should be at the forefront of anyone’s multichannel efforts — focus and flexibility. First, focus; it is critical to deliver a clear, concise, and focused message. The message has to be well thought out as to how it will play or change in each of the various channels. In addition, there needs to be a plan in place to ensure that, in fact, each channel is a complement to the others.

The second is flexibility; once the initial plan is in place, it needs to become ‘evergreen.’ With every customer interaction, we learn more about that customer and how he/she interprets the message. We need to make this information actionable, which requires the multichannel programming to be dynamic and flexible to accommodate new information.”

Avoid trying too much too soon



BRIAN DALEIDEN. Director of Marketing, SupplyScape.

“It may sound obvious, but the biggest lesson has been to restrain the impulse to plug into too many new vehicles too soon, especially for a smaller firm on the B2B side. From a customer-centric perspective, you certainly want to create a dialogue on key topics of interest to your customers and package that dialogue in the best vehicle for both message and audience. In a well-defined B2B market, it may not be as much about extending reach as it is about communicating more effectively. So, all types of communications from blogs to podcasts to video enter into the mix. Yet, in a smaller firm you run the risk of spreading yourself too thin and not getting the repetition and loyalty you need on any one channel.”

Prepare to think differently



LISA HENDERSON. Senior VP of Client Services at Epsilon.

“Multichannel marketing requires the integration of multiple functions, agencies, and partners, for example, response channel, fulfillment, copay card, and nurse support. In many cases, this type of marketing requires a new way of thinking and the introduction of new processes and required skill sets. Planning for organizational and process changes is critical.”

Execute call for action



PAUL LEVINE. VP, Analytic Services, InfoMedics Inc.

“I would have to say the biggest lesson we have learned in mastering multichannel

Increasingly, he says, brands must manage audiences who are hearing both “intended” messages from the brand team and “unintended” messages from traditional and social media.

“Brands have always juggled a complex

array of stakeholders — and that complexity is increasing,” Mr. Kay says. “A comprehensive marketing strategy must identify for each audience the best message, the best channel, and the best metrics to define success. Innovation in all these areas is key to ful-

filling the demands of marketing accountability.”

Along with knowing the audience comes knowing the significance of people’s media-consumption behavior. Understanding the strengths and limitations of each communica-

communications is to have a clear end result in mind for each individual brand. This requires the clients to clearly articulate across all channels the action that they want patients and physicians to take as a direct result of their communications. The required action will happen if the attitudes of the stakeholders are in sync with the action. The magic is in creating a program that effectively brings stakeholders to those desired attitudes and hence the desired action. In the case of patient feedback, this involves parallel tracks for patient and physician education and motivation. Both internal hurdles and silos can be broken down and consistency across channels can be more easily accomplished if everyone on the brand team — both on the consumer and professional sides — come together toward that common goal. ”

Never assume anything

DAVE ORMESHER, CEO, Closerlook Inc.

”The single biggest lesson learned in our efforts to master multichannel communication is not to assume anything. Don’t assume we know how consumers use media, don’t assume that a transition from one channel to another — often from one agency partner to another — will be understood and appreciated, and don’t assume that anything from the old planner playbook is still relevant. ”

Synergy breeds efficiency



KEN RIBOTSKY, President and Founder, Core-Create Inc. and Brandkarma Inc.

”One important lesson is to create and maintain a synergistic approach to marketing communications — not just across external channels, but within an organization itself. Often, organizations are structured so that different groups and individuals are responsible for different channels of promotion. With a more fluid and integrated organizational approach, campaigns can be stronger and more impactful across these

different channels. Without that synergy, inefficiencies abound, costs can escalate, and opportunities can be lost. ”

More choices than ever before



JOHN TAPPER, PH.D., CEO of Ziment.

”Marketers today are faced with two critical yet conflicting challenges. On one hand, they have an almost overwhelming array of channel possibilities — from traditional print and broadcast vehicles to new social media and e-detailing options. On the other hand, however, they are faced with tightening budgets that restrict the number of channels they can select. Ironically, just as they have more choices than ever before, they have less money to spread around and experiment. As they face a future of limitless choices and limiting budgets, marketers must ensure that every media dollar they spend is focused on the right channels to drive results.

In this new environment, segmentation will take on a new and crucial role in supporting optimal marketing mix strategies. Traditionally, segmentations have centered on improving targets or uncovering unmet needs. The new multichannel world demands a new kind of segmentation that helps companies most effectively communicate with their target physicians through the channels that will most likely drive action. Research has shown there are profound differences in how physician segments collect and interact with the information they use to make prescribing decisions. To succeed in the future, marketers will need segmentations that help them tailor their channel strategies and their messages to the information-seeking preferences of their high-value doctors. They will need to identify the optimal channels for their targets, so they can maximize every touch point between physicians and their brands. Rather than monolithic media plans, they will need to create segment-specific channel strategies that reach and influence their top prescribers. ”

Finding the right channel

STAN WOODLAND, CEO and President of Communications Media Inc. (CMI).

”One of most important lessons learned in our efforts to master multichannel communications is to know and understand that we live in a truly channel-neutral world. Some believe the Internet is the future and tend to forget about more traditional — and proven — vehicles; meanwhile, some are hesitant to embrace newer digital channels and are reluctant to relinquish their more traditional ways. The best way to forge ahead into the future is not to forget about or dwell in the past, but to openly embrace the possibilities that may lie ahead.

Before designing and implementing a multichannel marketing program, one must know what success looks like, and one must develop success metrics to benchmark accomplishments along the way. Without a clear vision of a successful end-state, and without key performance metrics to measure the program along the way, one is creating a rudderless assortment of marketing tactics likely to deliver poor ROI.

In addition to defining success, crystal-clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations should be defined for all parties involved. Whether it’s a single agency partner, multiple agencies and a brand team, brand marketing teams, or medical/legal reviewers, everyone’s roles must be defined before the project launches. Establishing expectations of each player, as well as of the program, further guarantees flawless execution and positive program results.

Once a program launches, keep things fluid; be open to optimizing along the way. Build in checkpoints throughout the development and execution phases. By remaining flexible throughout the program, one may be able to make a good multichannel effort even better by tweaking it from time to time as schedules and complexities of the medical/legal review process allow. ”

MULTICHANNEL marketing

tions channel and when and where each touches the audience helps marketers use each channel more effectively.

“Someone Googling a particular topic usually wants immediate, concrete information,” Ms. Andrews says. “Someone visiting a social media site or reading an article in a magazine may be interested in a topic, but not actively seeking information. Someone reading a piece of waiting-room literature on a condition they’re already being treated for may ask specific questions about what they’ve read when they get inside the exam room.”

Brian Daleiden, director of marketing at SupplyScape, says there are two elements in particular that have grown in importance during recent times: capturing data and feedback mechanisms. These key elements are creating a bidirectional dialogue as much as possible, while ensuring that the marketing channel doesn’t operate in a silo separate from the sales function.

“Making marketing communications bidirectional can be a big challenge, but pays big dividends when done right,” Mr. Daleiden says. “Not only is it important to capture data on various participation mechanisms such as click-through rates to understand marketing effectiveness, but also building feedback mechanisms where the audience can commu-

When a structure is in place and all distribution channels are established, changes in brand messaging can easily be delivered in a timely fashion as the product matures, faces new competitors, or expands its indication.

PAUL LEVINE
InfoMedics



nicate back to the marketer is more crucial than ever. With these types of bi-directional platforms, marketers can learn what consumers want, whether it’s more information or what tools would help them better digest or use the information.”

While synchronizing the marketing communication process with the sales process may not be flashy, it definitely leads to a greater impact at reduced cost, he says.

“Business success revolves around building a continually valuable discussion with a prospect through a very customer-centric sales process,” Mr. Daleiden says. “Every customer touch point needs to be valuable in its own right as well as having a clear place in the overall journey from ‘hello’ to ‘sign here.’ In that sense, we look to the marketing program as an ability to leverage an indirect salesforce composed of various marketing vehicles.”

Each marketing program element should

be designed to play its own part in the formal sales process, and the messaging, timing, and execution of those marketing elements in light of the overall sales goals need to be reviewed continually to ensure both functions are working in concert instead of at cross-purposes, he adds.

According to Paul LeVine, VP, analytic services, at InfoMedics, the company has recently collaborated with an innovative brand team that successfully integrated multiple patient outreach channels with a strong, consistent message platform.

Mr. LeVine refers to a coordinated ADHD treatment program that included patient starter kits, DTC advertising, patient and parent/caregiver educational materials, online, and multimedia DVD programs, as well as a comprehensive online/offline CRM program. Patient feedback was an integral component of all communications, with an invitation for patients to drive their experience and positive brand messages back to their prescribing physicians.

“Now that the structure is in place and all distribution channels are established, changes in brand messaging can easily be delivered in a timely fashion as the product matures, faces new competitors, or expands its indication,” Mr. LeVine says. ♦