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GUEST AUTHOR - 04/07/2016

A serivce-based, forward pharmacy model is a no-brainer…or is it? asks Glenn Guilfoyle

As a stakeholder in the retail pharmacy industry it has become nigh on impossible to be unaware of the exhortation chorus to adapt the service model for health customers to the rapidly changing and emerging new world order.

To summarise the call-to-arms and analogise an AFL paradigm (forgive my Victorio-centric view of the world) …..

- Get the pharmacists out the front to play full forward
- Get the techs over the back to play full back
- Marshall the pharmacy assistants to play midfielder, gathering the loose ball and dishing off to bring customers into the play
- All this in the name of teamwork to bring about the winning result………a differentiated, relevant, profitable and consistent total engagement, complete solution service model

So, how has our industry been progressing over the past four years as the spectre of 2020 looms? To answer this question, we take a deep dive into the ever-growing pool of data collected by *The Next Level* over the past four years which contains the pharmacy by pharmacy scores across a range of behavioural and performance factors under the broad topics:

- Customer engagement effectiveness
- Script processing efficiency

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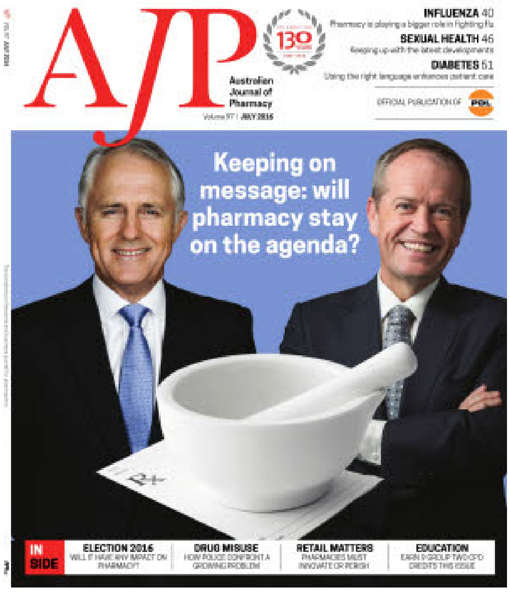

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POLL

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○ Filling all scripts for patients who present with them

- Team tasking (who, by role type, is doing the customer engagement and who is doing the script processing)

Prosecuting the year by year data, we find that, when focusing on the script customer visit experience……….

- The bedrock, adequate resourcing of the dispensary team, has shown no clear trend, perhaps surprisingly given the pressure on cost reduction. It has hovered above and below the current average of 7.7 per 100K scripts produced. The proportion of the team comprised by pharmacist resource, after taking a clear drop 4 years ago from just above 50%, has shown no real trend since, bobbing around 45%.
- With adequate team resourcing, the team can aspire to deliver script processing speed and efficiency. In fact the time to process has also oscillated around a 4m 15s average with no real trend either way.
- With good processing speed, the team can aspire to invite customers to stay in the store, rather than go to the Coles/Woolworths and come back again for a second time to pick up. Again we find no real trend, with annual results bobbing up and down around an average of 47%.
- If the team achieves higher script customer visit retention, then it can focus on increasing engagement duration. This time we do find a trend. Sadly, it runs the wrong way. The data shows that engagement duration has shrunk from 2m29s average four years ago to 2m1s now. And this duration represents 46% of total visit duration. Ouch.
- If the team gets focused on increasing engagement time, it normally follows that they get focused on re-positioning the pharmacist out the front. Incredibly….no trend. The results on forward orientation of the pharmacist have bounced up and down over the four years, with the current index running at 50%. That means that half the time a health customer approaches a customer serving counter they will be greeted and served by a pharmacist.
- In those pharmacies where the pharmacists are considerably more forward oriented than this 50% benchmark, the team can then focus on maximising the proactive counselling and solution conversation part of the engagement. Again …. No trend, with these critical conversation durations bobbing up and down around the current average of a mere 33 seconds.

- And then the holy grail for those that embrace the notion that providing rich proactive counsel maximises the number of relevant health products and services added on during the script customer conversation. We do find a trend……..there is only three years of this particular data, and it has risen steadily……….from 17 non-script health product add–ons to 37.

How do we explain this performance result result , which seems to defy all previous behavioural results? The customers are being more proactive in adding-on than the staff. Ouch ouch.

2020 all of a sudden seems so so close. The change is too slow.

Glenn Guilfoyle is Principal of The Next Level, building better systems and better sales. Click here for more information.

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