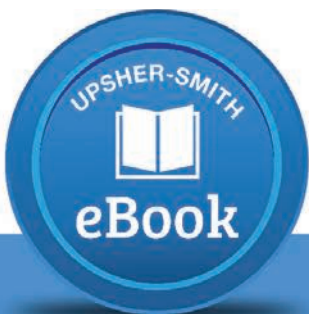


Community Pharmacy: Foundation for the Future

*Insights and exercises for developing the
community pharmacy of the future
(and the future is now!).*



UPSHER-SMITH

Partners in Health Since 1919

Community Pharmacy: Foundation for the Future

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Foreword

Upsher-Smith Laboratories, Inc.'s roots in pharmacy define us today. Founded in 1919 by F.A. Upsher Smith, a chemist trained in England, we understand that the work pharmacists do at every level is critical for both patients and healthcare providers. We especially appreciate the devotion and excellence in service community pharmacies provide to their patients and local area.

Our mission is to improve people's lives through innovative pharmacotherapy. We also strive to go above and beyond what is normally expected of a pharmaceutical company. Our belief in the importance of community pharmacies and the care they provide, and our mission of improving patients' lives, led us to the idea for this e-book, "Community Pharmacy: Foundation for the Future."



Community pharmacies have been an integral part of their neighborhood for decades, serving multiple generations of families as trusted healthcare providers, but these pharmacies face more competitive pressure than ever. With this e-book, we offer pharmacists/owners steps to help them remain thriving providers of critical healthcare counseling, services, advice, and solutions.

We value our relationships with community pharmacists, and we look forward to continuing to help them provide their patients with innovative products that provide better outcomes and healthier lives.

To the respected community pharmacists/owners for whom this e-book was written, we hope you find the content valuable and the insights actionable, and that the exercises provide direction and guidance in enhancing your patients' experience in your pharmacy. Ultimately, we hope this tool helps you strengthen your brand and build your business.

Scott Hussey, Sr. Vice President, Commercial Operations
Upsher-Smith Laboratories, Inc.





The community pharmacy universe

In a world where chain stores seem to dominate the retail universe, community pharmacies like yours are holding strong. According to research contained in the National Community Pharmacist Association's 2013 Annual Digest, there are 23,029 community pharmacies in the United States, and the channel generated \$88.7 billion in 2012. Community pharmacies face competition from a range of retailers including chain drug stores, dollar stores, and big box retailers. What sets these pharmacies apart is their level of service as well as their great interest in, and strong appreciation for, their patients.



With a strong foundation in your community, now is the time to look ahead to cement your future and continue to be the trusted resource your patients look to for all of their health and wellness needs.

Community pharmacies are unique and diverse, and yet, very much the same. You all have niches that may be vastly different from one another, but across the board, you're largely centered on service. You have more than a passing familiarity with your customers; you know their names and families, and you counsel and advise them based on your close attention to their overall well-being and healthcare needs.

Planning for the future (and the future is now)

There are several steps you can take to position your pharmacy among your competitors to achieve future growth. While you don't have to take these steps in the order presented, doing so will tremendously improve your outcome. If you already have some of these topics managed, simply begin where it makes the most sense.

1. Assess your competition
2. Define your brand
3. Know your shoppers
4. Pick your product assortment
5. Empower your staff
6. Promote, promote, promote
7. Deliver a memorable shopping experience

First things first

The best place to begin is to assess where you are today. The scorecard on the next page will help you determine the status of your store. These eight areas contribute to your position in the market.

In addition to completing the scorecard yourself, ask your employees to fill it out for an objective and collective viewpoint.



Self-Assessment: Where does your store stand?

Under each element below, check the box that best describes the current status of your pharmacy.

*got it covered!
needs work
haven't addressed*

Store appearance – exterior

- Is the exterior of your store in good condition?
- Does it appear welcoming?
- Is its “curb appeal” up to par?

Store appearance – interior

- Is the flooring in good condition?
- Is the wall color fresh and up-to-date?
- Does your store have “charm”?

First impressions

- Would a first-time visitor like what she sees?
- Are your décor and ambience warm and inviting?
- Does your staff greet customers within 30 seconds?

Staffing/communications

- Does your staff have the necessary training?
- Do you make the right resources available to staff?
- Do staff members deliver good customer service?

Traffic engineering

- Can your staff easily monitor the entire front-end?
- Are displays refreshed and eye-appealing?
- Does the traffic flow lead shoppers to new items?

*got it covered!
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Category adjacencies

- Are category adjacencies logical?
- Do they promote cross-purchasing?
- Are key OTCs near the pharmacy counter?

Merchandising standards

- Are brands arranged in brand blocks?
- Do you use signs to call attention to new items?
- Do you regularly re-set your departments?

Product assortment

- Are best-sellers always in stock and available?
- Do you regularly introduce new products?
- Is merchandise organized and easy to access?

Now that you have a sense of how your store is doing today, you can start laying the foundation for improvement and growth. This e-book will cover preparations needed to start your journey toward enhancing store operations and building a vision for your store's future in the community. Some areas of your self-assessment will be addressed here, but you'll find even greater detail in future books in this series.

1. ASSESS YOUR COMPETITION

You can build a better brand once you have assessed your competition and identified how you compare. What does your competitive environment look like? Your competitors are likely an assortment of chain drug stores, grocery and dollar stores, pharmacies inside clinics or hospitals, mass retailers, and club stores.

EXERCISE

How does your pharmacy compare to the competition?

Check the box for the retailer types that compete for sales of over-the-counter and/or prescription healthcare products in your community.

<input type="checkbox"/> Chain drug stores	<input type="checkbox"/> Club stores
<input type="checkbox"/> Mass retailers	<input type="checkbox"/> Grocery stores
<input type="checkbox"/> Clinic or hospital pharmacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Dollar stores

What are the primary areas of competition?
Check all that apply.

- Price
- Convenience (one-stop shopping)
- Service
- Product assortment
- All of the above

List three things that differentiate your pharmacy from your competitors:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



You may be best served by building a matrix for yourself in assessing your competitors, as you likely compete with each of them on similar and also different points of business. For instance, you may compete with grocery stores on convenience and price, but dollar stores on price alone. In each instance, highlight what differentiates your store. You'll confirm your strengths as you identify what is unique to your business when compared to each of your competitors.

While you likely don't have the resources to compete with each type of retailer directly, focusing on your strengths and unique offerings will help define your importance in the community and make obvious the areas where continued focus can help you attract new patients.

EXAMPLE: COMPETITIVE MATRIX

	Price	Service	Convenience	Assortment	All
Chain drug					
Mass retail					
Hospital pharmacy					
Club stores					
Grocery stores					
Dollar stores					

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION



Once you have identified what makes your pharmacy stand apart, leverage your differentiators.

First, ensure your staff is apprised of your competitive advantages. Then, make sure you highlight these strengths in your messaging to your target market (more on this in the “Promote, promote, promote” section).

KEY INSIGHT –

The dollar retail segment is one to watch.

In the spring of 2012, Dollar Tree launched a Deals store that includes a pharmacy.

While the other dollar store chains have not yet experimented with pharmacies, be sure to pay attention to the activities of dollar stores in your area. They are a growing competitive pressure.




2. DEFINE YOUR BRAND

Once you've thought about who you are competing with, what you're competing against and how you stand out from the crowd, you can define or refine your brand.

A brand gives a structure to what you want to be known for, and helps your customers know what you stand for. Your brand can provide direction for decisions you make about your business, and should communicate how your offering is different. Creating your brand demands thoughtful, careful consideration.

EXERCISE

What do you want your pharmacy to be known for?



	List all of the attributes you want associated with your brand. Examples include "friendly, helpful, the pharmacy that cares."
	1.
	2.
	3.
	4.
	5.
	6.
	7.
	8.

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Your customers are bombarded with thousands of messages each day. Make sure your brand stands out. Here's how:

Strategically leverage your brand – Brand development and maintenance should be considered a company-wide initiative involving owners and all associates.



Develop a brand personality – When you develop a clear personality for your brand, you establish consumers' expectations. Refer to the attributes you listed in the Exercise and prioritize them. Then, choose the adjectives or phrases that best describe your brand. What emotions do you want your customers to have when they think of your brand? Incorporate this personality into your staff training, promotions, and graphics used in signage, promotion, and any store communications.

Create consistent graphic standards – Consistent graphics will help your brand break through clutter, and are essential in building awareness and recognition, as well as differentiating you from competitors.

Make it legal – Trademark your company name, service or unique promotion names to further distinguish your brand in the consumers' minds. Visit the United States Patent and Trademark office website at www.uspto.com for more information.

KEY INSIGHT –

Your brand is an asset.

It drives strategy that will ultimately increase awareness, sales, and profits. Sticking to standards helps ensure it is easily recognizable and builds the credibility of your brand and your business.



brand (noun)

A brand is a customer experience represented by a collection of images and ideas; often, it refers to a symbol such as a name, logo, slogan, and design scheme. Brand recognition and other reactions are created by the accumulation of experiences with the specific product or service, both directly relating to its use, and through the influence of advertising, design, and media commentary.

– American Marketing Association

3. KNOW YOUR SHOPPERS

You most likely know your patients on a more personal level than larger-volume pharmacies know theirs.

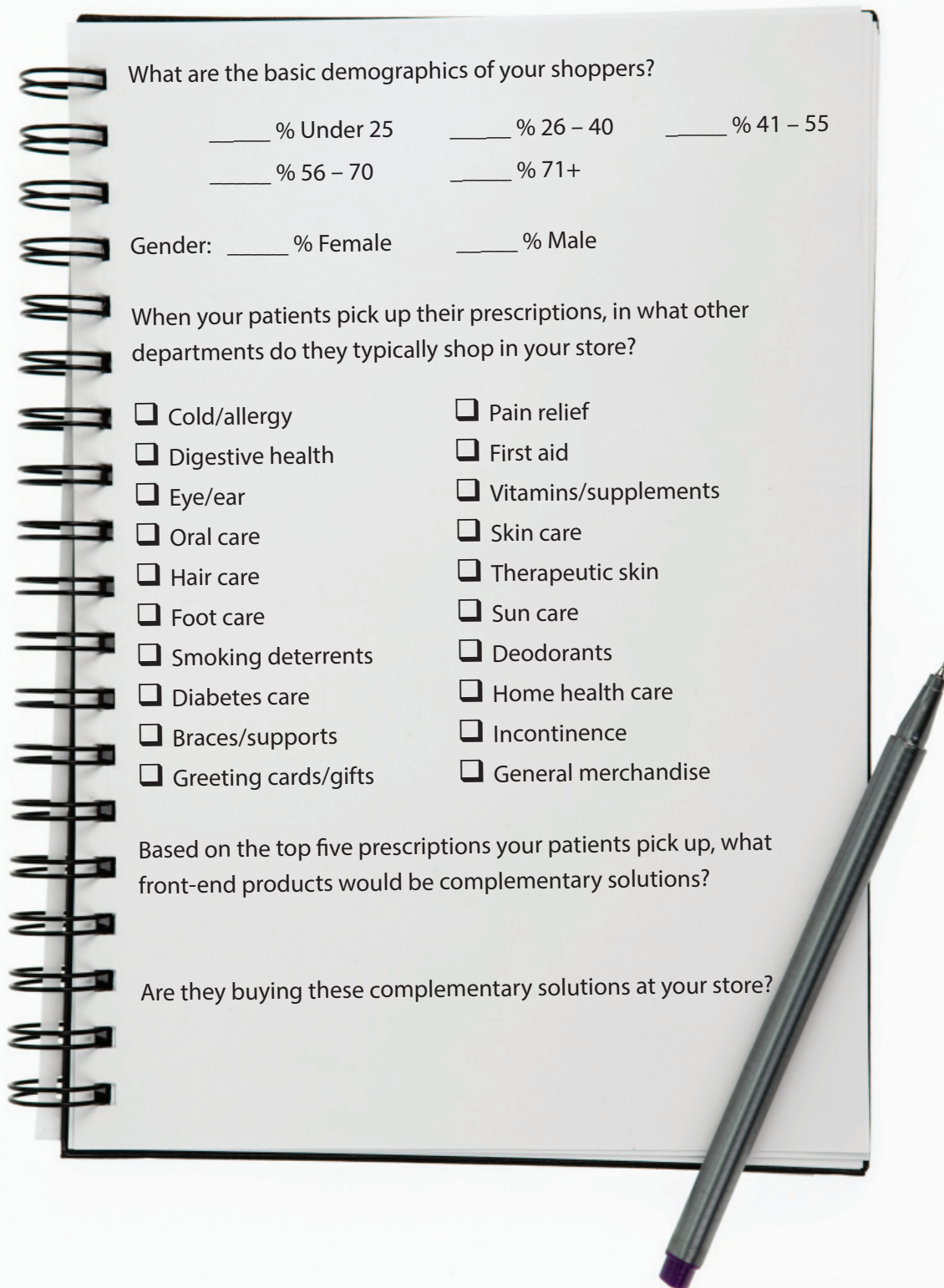
Looking at the demographic make-up of your shoppers will help you position your store, enhance your brand, and make sure your store layout, interior decor, and product assortment create a pleasant shopping experience.

Marrying your brand to the wants and needs of your shopper segments gives you the formula to market to your core customers.



EXERCISE

Let's see how well you know your patients beyond their prescription needs.



What are the basic demographics of your shoppers?

_____ % Under 25 _____ % 26 – 40 _____ % 41 – 55
_____ % 56 – 70 _____ % 71+

Gender: _____ % Female _____ % Male

When your patients pick up their prescriptions, in what other departments do they typically shop in your store?

<input type="checkbox"/> Cold/allergy	<input type="checkbox"/> Pain relief
<input type="checkbox"/> Digestive health	<input type="checkbox"/> First aid
<input type="checkbox"/> Eye/ear	<input type="checkbox"/> Vitamins/supplements
<input type="checkbox"/> Oral care	<input type="checkbox"/> Skin care
<input type="checkbox"/> Hair care	<input type="checkbox"/> Therapeutic skin
<input type="checkbox"/> Foot care	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun care
<input type="checkbox"/> Smoking deterrents	<input type="checkbox"/> Deodorants
<input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes care	<input type="checkbox"/> Home health care
<input type="checkbox"/> Braces/supports	<input type="checkbox"/> Incontinence
<input type="checkbox"/> Greeting cards/gifts	<input type="checkbox"/> General merchandise

Based on the top five prescriptions your patients pick up, what front-end products would be complementary solutions?

Are they buying these complementary solutions at your store?

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Consider your individual patient's needs, and you can often find similarities among your customers.



This will provide a way to segment your customers. If you find you do have segments with similar challenges, then you naturally have direction for products to keep in stock and ideas for programs you can offer to help your patients manage their conditions.

These customer segments also help you hone your messaging when you're determining how to promote your store. If you're trying to reach your older demographic of patients, the methods of reaching them (newspaper, radio, digital, etc.) and the language you would use in an advertisement would be different than an ad directed at your young mom shoppers, for example.

KEY INSIGHT –

Who do you want to attract to shop at your pharmacy?

Take care to consider Millennials, the generation born between 1980 and 2000. A large segment of this group appreciates and wants to support independent, small business owners. Attracting this generation early can secure lifetime customers.



4. PICK YOUR PRODUCT ASSORTMENT

The groundwork you have done assessing your competitors and thinking about your clientele should give you a solid indication of the product assortment you should stock. Naturally you want to maintain all of your categories with basic-needs products, but you also should look at specialty items and clinically-focused solutions that meet the specific needs of your core patient base.

Make use of planograms (pictures showing a shelf-by-shelf arrangement of products) for optimal category flow, identification and placement of key items, and the overall category strategy.



Answer the questions below to help guide your thinking about how to enhance your product assortment. Pinpointing need-states of your current and target customers can attract people who may be desperately seeking solutions. Cater to them, and you will grow your business.

EXERCISE

How can you customize your product assortment to improve sales?

Do my patients have any special needs that I could cater to with items that wouldn't be found at other retailers? For instance, psoriasis or migraine sufferers, weekend warriors always in need of pain relief, braces and supports, or baby boomers in need of an expanding selection of home health care solutions?

Is there a large enough segment of my patients challenged with a chronic disease that it would make sense to create an endcap or section of products that address their specific conditions (e.g., diabetes, heart health, weight management)?

Are there new customers I could draw in by carrying a certain item or line of items? Perhaps moms who want to go to one section for all of their pediatric health care, or customers who want all-natural or organic health, beauty, and wellness products.

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Try offering innovative ways to help your patients treat their conditions. Here are some examples to consider:



1. Become a resource to the patient, family, and caregivers. Conduct classroom learning sessions that can demonstrate the effects of the condition and treatment options available.
2. Connect the prescription needs of the patient to the front-of-store. Offering a "store tour" to point out the myriad products available that offer a solution to ongoing or temporary symptoms will create loyalty.
3. Improve the shopability of the store aisles. Create helpful displays (endcaps and power wings) that are one-stop "solution centers" for shoppers.
4. Remain committed to involving the entire pharmacy staff. Prepare cheat-sheets for associates with answers to patients' frequently asked questions.

KEY INSIGHT –

Work with your partners in the supply chain.

Your distributors and product manufacturers want to help you succeed. Seek out and present your vision to them and ask where and how they can help you increase sales while you ensure you are meeting your patients' expectations.



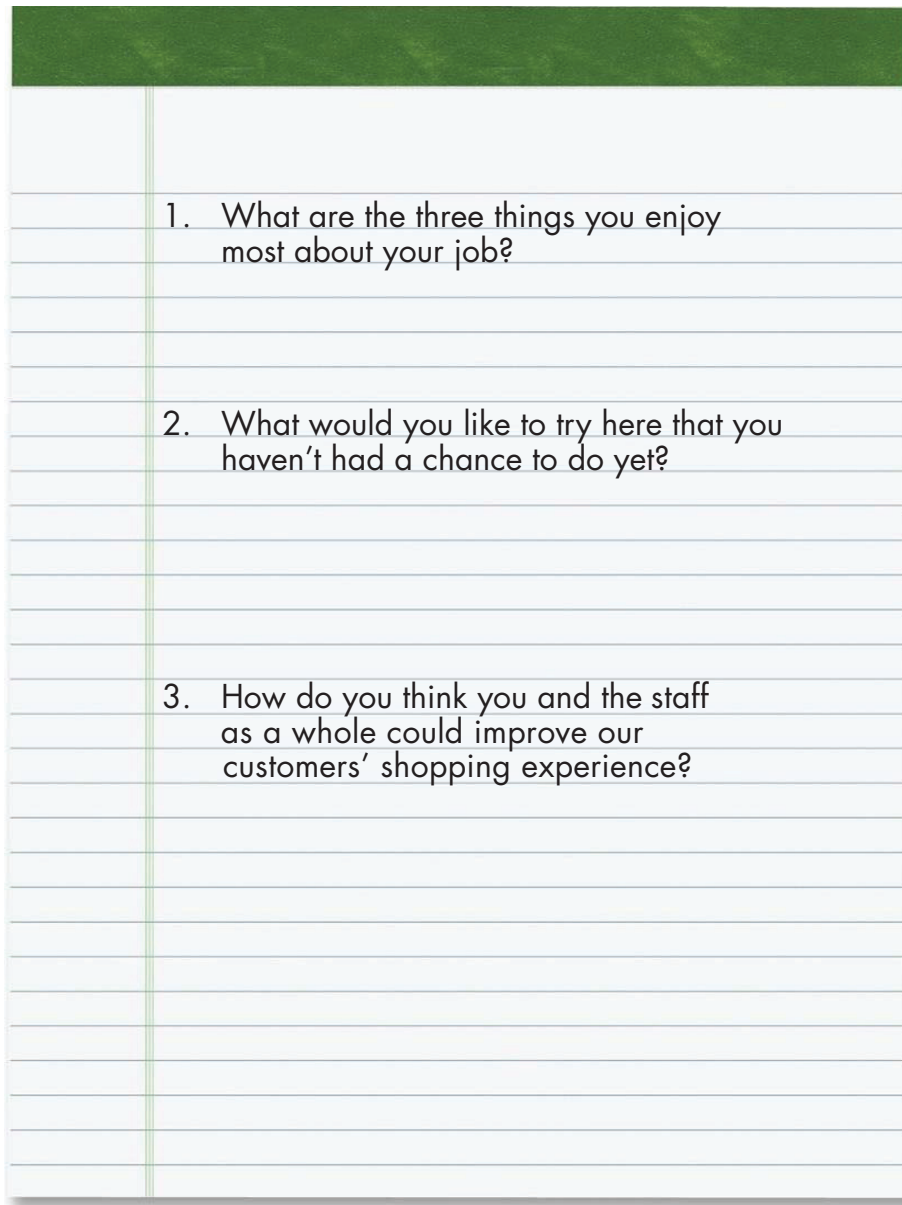
5. EMPOWER YOUR STAFF

You already know that your staff is your most valuable asset. What can you do to expand their knowledge, enhance their skills, and improve on the great service they already offer? You likely know where each associate's strengths and weaknesses lay. Ask them what they think their strengths and weaknesses are and what will help them improve. When you ask your employees for their opinion or recommendation, they feel like a more integral part of the business.



EXERCISE

Set aside 30 minutes to ask your associates about their jobs. Try these questions:



1. What are the three things you enjoy most about your job?

2. What would you like to try here that you haven't had a chance to do yet?

3. How do you think you and the staff as a whole could improve our customers' shopping experience?

Once you've weighed your associates' answers against what you have observed, you can determine the steps to improve staff performance. Perhaps you'll find a staff member who is excited about merchandising – let her do it! Or perhaps another staff member has ideas for promotions. Work with him to develop a campaign.

Maybe you'll learn that there are customer service techniques you can share, or guidelines for proper wardrobe and appearance. When you can play to the strengths of your staff, you give them and your store better odds for success.



Be available to your associates so they aren't inhibited to share their ideas for improving the store, customer service, and overall business.

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION



Create an **associate work plan** that will help you align your staff with specific categories or responsibilities within the store. Not only does this free up some of your time by relieving you of these responsibilities, but you'll give your associates a defined purpose and direction. You'll be amazed at the pride they take in this sense of ownership and the sales results that follow.

EXAMPLE: ASSOCIATE WORK PLAN

Pharmacy Work Plan				
[Date]				
Name		Position		
Work and Development Plan				
Item no.	Task	Frequency		Comments
1	Attend to customers	Every Shift		
2	Restock cold & allergy, pain relief, and digestive health departments	Every Shift		
3	Stock any new products in other departments	Every Shift		
4	Dust the general merchandise (candy, dollar items, etc.)	Weekly		
5	Dust cold & allergy, pain relief, and digestive health departments	Weekly		
6	Come up with ideas for endcaps			
7	Rotate checkout displays			
8				
9				
10				



KEY INSIGHT –

Focus on productivity.

Your pharmacy department probably runs like a well-oiled machine. Your front-end can too.

Productive front-end employees are well-trained. Make sure your associates know what they can do to make the store run more smoothly when they aren't waiting on customers or have completed their regular duties.



6. PROMOTE, PROMOTE, PROMOTE

Once you have progressed through the five previous steps, you are ready to market your unique product offerings and excellent customer service, always emphasizing the brand attributes that make you stand apart from your competition.

If you don't have anyone on staff with a marketing background, you can check with your distributor about any programs they might offer that you can take advantage of, or find a local expert who can help.



EXERCISE

Whether you work with a distributor or local marketing firm, start by asking yourself these three questions.

1. What would entice my core customers to come in even when they don't have a prescription to pick up?
2. How can I attract new customers?
3. What could I do to win over my competitors' customers?

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

You may know what you could promote to bring your current customers in more frequently, or perhaps you need some information to figure it out. Going back to your customer segments, you could look to industry research sponsored by the Healthcare Distribution Management Association, which interviewed independent pharmacy shoppers across the nation and categorized them into five distinct shopper profiles. These profiles indicate how to attract and keep each shopper segment and could provide you with some ideas.



When it comes to attracting new consumers, you gave this some thought when you were considering your product assortment. Knowing the demographics of who you want to reach helps your assigned marketing team determine how to reach them, whether through radio ads, social media, newspaper inserts, or other vehicles. It also helps them write the message that will resonate with those consumers.

Winning over your competitor's customers could be a bit trickier depending on what your strengths are versus theirs and why shoppers are choosing them over you. Highlight those areas where you excel and emphasize your clear advantage. Innovative thinking can be your key to success here. Try new media channels to reach potential customers. Partner with other local small businesses to offer a truly unique program or service to your community.



KEY INSIGHT –

You have two opportunities for growth.

Growing your business is not an either/or proposition, it's a both/and combination.

Your pharmacy can gain more sales from existing customers and earn new customers. It's easy to fall into the trap of neglecting your current patients to focus on earning new business, and vice versa. Create a budget and plan to market to both.



7. DELIVER A MEMORABLE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

You've prepared your store and staff, your promotion and marketing efforts have paid off, and the patients are in your store. Now you must deliver a memorable shopping experience that will leave such a positive impression that it brings them back again and again.

Think back over what you have learned throughout this e-book, particularly regarding branding your pharmacy, empowering your staff, and knowing your shoppers. All of this knowledge pays off when you apply it to everything you and your staff do during a typical business day. When you reap the rewards of careful planning, training, and promotion, you will begin to see how the opportunities for community pharmacy are virtually boundless.



Here are some tips to help you make that happen:

Get your staff ready – Make sure all associates – in front of and behind the pharmacy counter – know what your goal is for the store, understand the brand they are representing, and have a clear understanding of your expectations.

Appearance matters – this pertains to the store, the associates, the shelves, and the check-out counter. Don't let any of these slide as they all impact the shopper's experience. Take some photographs of your store, inside and out. As often happens when we see a photograph of ourselves, we notice new things from this fresh perspective. When you look at photographs of your store (interior and exterior) you may see something you don't normally notice. This exercise can help you more easily see areas for improvement and opportunities for success.

Customer service is king – the number one job of you and your staff is to assist the customer, whether it's to answer a drug interaction question, show them where the anniversary cards are, offer a recommendation for an elbow brace, or read a pain relief package for them. Never let it seem like they are interrupting you – you are there for them!

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

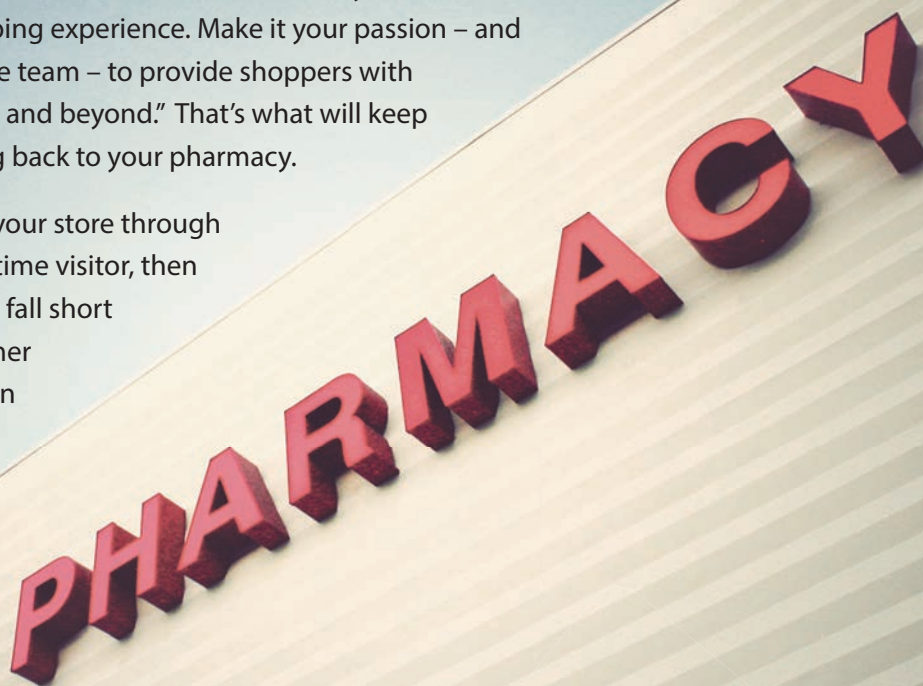


Customers form an impression of your store within seven seconds.

You have even less time than that if you don't deliver on your brand attributes. The shopper's experience begins in the parking lot and continues through the front door. Walk the path of your customers and ask yourself if you are providing a memorable shopping experience every step of the way. If not, change something. As Einstein suggested, "You can't keep doing the same thing every day and expect different results."

A “wow” experience at retail includes store design and atmosphere, consistent, exceptional service, reliable product availability, and making customers feel like they’re special. Consider these elements as you strive to deliver a memorable shopping experience. Make it your passion – and engage your entire team – to provide shoppers with something “above and beyond.” That’s what will keep customers coming back to your pharmacy.

The goal is to see your store through the eyes of a first-time visitor, then address areas that fall short of the best customer experience you can possibly deliver.



PHARMACY

KEY INSIGHT –

A little appreciation goes a long way.

Show your appreciation for your staff, loyal customers, and community-at-large on a regular basis to build good will and strengthen relationships.

Also take time to appreciate the impact you have in your town, city or county, and be grateful that so many people patronize your store, trust your advice, and come back for more.



Conclusion

Before you start implementing any of the changes you've been inspired to make as a result of thinking about the areas covered in this e-book, consider taking note of some facts and figures that you can use for a "before and after" comparison later. It's the easiest way for you to measure your success and clearly see what changes had the most significant impact.

You and your pharmacy are important to the fabric of your community. You have tough competition from multiple local retail outlets offering prescription services, not to mention mail-order pharmacies. With attention to building your foundation on the attributes you want your business to be known for, and by excelling in all of the areas discussed, you can solidify your preferred healthcare service provider status for many, many years to come.



About the Author

In 1980, Hamacher Resource Group (HRG) pioneered drugstore category management to help retailers and wholesalers optimize the independent pharmacy front-end. With our roots firmly planted in providing services to help independent pharmacies succeed, today we use that expertise to develop category management, marketing, and research solutions for the entire health, beauty, and wellness supply chain. We serve consumer healthcare product manufacturers, chain and independent drugstores, food, mass, convenience, dollar and online retailers, retail technology providers, and healthcare distributors. All of our solutions are developed with the same goal in mind: dynamically shaping the shopping experience for consumer healthcare at retail. Learn more at www.hamacher.com.

About Upsher-Smith

Upsher-Smith, founded in 1919, is an independent and privately-owned specialty pharmaceutical company headquartered in Maple Grove, Minnesota that focuses on product growth and innovation for branded and generic pharmaceuticals. Upsher-Smith has a particular focus on developing therapies to assist people suffering from central nervous system diseases and also markets products relating to cardiology, dermatology, and women's health. For more information, visit www.upsher-smith.com.

The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the author (HRG) and do not necessarily reflect those of Upsher-Smith Laboratories, Inc.

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Appendix



Self-Assessment: Where does your store stand?

Under each element below, check the box that best describes the current status of your pharmacy.

got it covered!
needs work
haven't addressed

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- Is the exterior of your store in good condition?
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- Does your staff have the necessary training?
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- Are category adjacencies logical?
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- Are brands arranged in brand blocks?
- Do you use signs to call attention to new items?
- Do you regularly re-set your departments?

Product assortment

- Are best-sellers always in stock and available?
- Do you regularly introduce new products?
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- Chain drug stores
- Club stores
- Mass retailers
- Grocery stores
- Clinic or hospital pharmacy
- Dollar stores

What are the primary areas of competition? Check all that apply.

- Price
- Convenience (one-stop shopping)
- Service
- Product assortment
- All of the above

List three things that differentiate your pharmacy from your competitors:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

List all of the attributes you want associated with your brand. Examples include "friendly, helpful, the pharmacy that cares."

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

What are the basic demographics of your shoppers?

_____ % Under 25 _____ % 26 – 40 _____ % 41 – 55

_____ % 56 – 70 _____ % 71+

Gender: _____ % Female _____ % Male

When your patients pick up their prescriptions, in what other departments do they typically shop in your store?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cold/allergy | <input type="checkbox"/> Pain relief |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digestive health | <input type="checkbox"/> First aid |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eye/ear | <input type="checkbox"/> Vitamins/supplements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oral care | <input type="checkbox"/> Skin care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hair care | <input type="checkbox"/> Therapeutic skin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foot care | <input type="checkbox"/> Sun care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smoking deterrents | <input type="checkbox"/> Deodorants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes care | <input type="checkbox"/> Home health care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Braces/supports | <input type="checkbox"/> Incontinence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greeting cards/gifts | <input type="checkbox"/> General merchandise |

Based on the top five prescriptions your patients pick up, what front-end products would be complementary solutions?

Are they buying these complementary solutions at your store?

Do my patients have any special needs that I could cater to with items that wouldn't be found at other retailers? For instance, psoriasis or migraine sufferers, weekend warriors always in need of pain relief, braces and supports, or baby boomers in need of an expanding selection of home health care solutions?

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