

## Prescription for Success

SPIN<sup>®</sup> Selling Skills provides a framework for pharmaceutical companies to develop and improve the success of their sales people.

Traditionally, pharmaceutical companies have directed their sales efforts at getting as many meetings as possible with healthcare professionals with the expectation of influencing their prescribing. In recent years, pressures on the industry through increased competition, the need to recoup R&D costs and patent expiration mean that companies have sought to drive up sales by massively expanding their sales forces. The increased numbers of sales people calling on Doctors has led to meeting times being reduced and less value being gained from the meeting by either party. SPIN<sup>®</sup> Selling Skills encourages a more consultative approach which uses the meeting time effectively to ask the right questions to explore the Doctor's needs. The SPIN<sup>®</sup> model has proven success in building long-term relationships between sales people and healthcare purchasers.

### What is SPIN<sup>®</sup>

SPIN<sup>®</sup> Selling Skills is based on a body of research built up over 25 years using Behaviour Analysis (BA), an approach pioneered by

Huthwaite. It consists of over 35,000 observations of commercial transactions, analysing what successful people do differently which make them successful. This information was used to develop the training models for SPIN<sup>®</sup> Selling Skills and Account Strategy for Major Sales.

Very simply, SPIN<sup>®</sup> stands for four kinds of questions:

**Situation Questions** ask about Doctor's operating context and situation. *"Do you believe that indigestion is becoming more common?" "Which antacid do you tend to prescribe?"*

**Problem Questions** ask about the customer's difficulties, dissatisfactions or problems with the existing situation. *"What happens if the patient's symptoms return within the dosage period?" "What do you do when the drug causes side effects if taken with over-the-counter remedies?"*

**Implication Questions** ask about the consequences, effects or

implications of the Doctor's patient's problems. *"What happens if the patient's symptoms return during the night?" "What effect does this have on your patient?"*

**Need-payoff Questions** probe for Explicit Needs, either directly or by exploring the payoff or importance to the customer of solving a problem. *"Would it help if ..?" "How else might it help if ..?"*

The Four Phases of a Sales Call as defined in the SPIN<sup>®</sup> methodology are particularly relevant in the context of selling pharmaceuticals where time with the Doctor or Consultant is at a premium. The Four Phases of a Sales Call are:

**Preliminaries:** Identifying yourself and your company. Establish the purpose of the call. Gain the agreement for you to ask questions.

**Investigating:** Use the SPIN<sup>®</sup> framework:

- **Situation**
- **Problem**
- **Implication**
- **Need-payoff**

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**Demonstrating capability:** Benefits showing how your product meets Explicit Needs which have been expressed.

**Obtaining Commitment:** Check you have covered key concerns. Summarise the benefits. Propose and appropriate commitment.

Conducting Persuasive Case Analysis (PCA) complements the Four Phases by helping the sales person to establish in advance the

arguments and, therefore, the questions that will be most important in influencing the Doctor, Consultant or purchasing manager. Research shows that existing pharmaceutical customers are more tolerant of questions from the seller than new ones. Even with existing customers some types of questions are more useful than others. It's important not to spend time uncovering too many problems or difficulties with either new or existing customers - exploring the impact of a few

problems has a much more positive effect on success. All customers like considering what their ideal solution to a difficulty would be, and questions to help them do this can increase success rates to 75%.

Time with Doctors, Consultants and purchasing managers is at a premium, SPIN<sup>®</sup> Selling Skills offers sales professionals a methodology to optimise that time and get the commitment they are seeking.

<b>Preliminaries</b>	Identifying yourself and your company Establish the purpose of the call Gain the agreement for you to ask questions
<b>Investigating</b>	Use the SPIN <sup>®</sup> framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Situation</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Problem</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Implication</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Need-payoff</b></li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrating Capability</b>	Benefits showing how your product meets Explicit Needs which have been expressed
<b>Obtaining Commitment</b>	Check you have covered key concerns Summarise the benefits Propose an appropriate commitment