

Internship report

On

IMC strategy: Acme's vision of lead the pharmaceutical market of Bangladesh

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IMC strategy: Acme's vision of lead the pharmaceutical market of Bangladesh

Letter of Transmittal

08th May, 2019

Mrs. Tania Akter

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Subject: Submission of Internship report

Dear Mam,

With immense pleasure I would like to inform you that I want to submit my internship report that was consigned as an important requirement of BBA program at BRAC University. My topic is on "IMC strategy: Acme's vision of lead the pharmaceutical market of Bangladesh". The report has been completed based on the knowledge that I gathered from 3 month internship at THE ACME LABORATORIES LTD, marketing department. I found this topic as different and help to understand the marketing trend of pharma market.

I also would like to show my gratitude for your support and persistence for me and I appreciate the opportunity that you provided by you in this report.

Yours Sincerely,

Syed Abu Ishmam Muztba

ID-14304106

Letter of Endorsement by the supervisor faculty:

This is to certify that Syed Abu Ishmam Muztaba Billah, ID-14304106, Students of Bachelor of Business administration (BBA) under BRAC Business School, BRAC University, has completed his internship report on "IMC strategy: Acme's vision of lead the pharmaceutical market of Bangladesh".

He was placed in The Acme Laboratories LTD for 3 months for completing his internship which is a requirement for the completion of the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA).

The internship report that he has submitted is up to the mark in terms of the quality and the organization.

I wish him every success in life.

Faculty supervisor

Mrs. Tania Akter

Lecturer

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

Acknowledgement:

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to The Almighty Allah for completing my internship report. Secondly, I would like to thank my faculty supervisor – Mrs. Tania Akter, lecturer, BRAC Business School, BRAC University for providing and assisting me with detailed guidelines and instructions in the report. Her effort to give guidance for this study make my report as sound as possible. Her direction and discussion facilitate me to understand the paper and analyze it properly. She successfully made me motivated to complete my report.

I am also thankful and admitted to my supervisor, Naimul Hasan Chowdhury Manager of Product management department, Kaisar Parvej Biplop, Assistant Manager of strategic brand management, Mohammad Shariful Islam GM and Head of Marketing and Md. Ferdous Khan, Directior of Sales. Without their direct help, suggestion, and assistance it was impossible for me to complete this report.

I would also like to thank the authority The Acme Laboratories for giving me the opportunity to work with them.

Executive Summary:

In order to complete my BBA program, I have been instructed to complete my internship report on "IMC strategy: Acme's vision of lead the pharmaceutical market of Bangladesh" under the supervision of Mrs. Tania Akter.

As Pharmaceutical industry in flourishing in recent years, being one of the oldest pharmaceutical company in Bangladesh, The Acme Laboratories is currently has vision to capture as much market share as possible. They are now offering both prescribed product and over the counter product to the customers. Marketing plays a crucial role to achieve their target. Their strong marketing team and dynamic marketing strategy is helping Acme to achieve their target. They are using all the communication tools that can be possible in the pharmaceutical market. However, some of the communication tools cannot be implemented because of the restriction from the Drug Authority. Acme is trying continuous effort to communicate with their target customers as much as possible.

As this study is on their IMC strategy and tools, only qualitative research was possible by interviewing various in charge of marketing Team of The Acme Laboratories LTD. After the qualitative research, it is found that acme's main promotional item is printed promo materials. They are using gift items as well as their promotional and branding tools. In addition, Sampling of the product is also very crucial method of Acme to promote their product.

Lastly, Acme's all these promotional effort is impacting in their communication positively which in reflecting in their revenue for last five years. There can some areas that can be improved though new promotional items and method.

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Industry Overview:

Pharmaceutical industry is one of the most promising and flourished sector of Bangladesh. Currently the total size of the pharmaceutical market in this country is about \$2.2 billion. This market is growing expeditiously at a rate of 15% a year. It is expected that it will become more than \$5-billion-dollar market by 2023 (The Daily Star, 2018). Almost 98% total demand of pharmaceutical products are fulfilled by local companies. There are around 450 pharmaceuticals companies in Bangladesh among which top 10 companies generate 68% of total revenue (IMS, 2018). Square pharmaceutical has the largest market share having more than 16% following by Incepta and Beximco Pharmaceuticals (IMS, 2018). Our companies are providing quality products within affordable price. Currently some of the companies are exporting in various foreign countries. According to The Daily Star (2018), Industry people of this sector is expecting to gain at least 10% market share of global generic product market which is expected to \$380-billion-dollar market by 2021.

There are two regulatory bodies that controls the pharmaceutical industry in Bangladesh namely, pharmacy council of Bangladesh (PCB) and Directorate general of Drug administration (DGDA). The pharmacy council was initiated under pharmacy ordinance act 1976 to guide the pharmacy practice of Bangladesh. Moreover, Directorate general of drug administration works under ministry of health and family welfare. It supervises and controls all the activities of pharmaceutical companies of Bangladesh regarding importing raw materials, packaging, production, pricing, sales etc. of all kinds of drugs including Ayurvedic, Herbal, Unani, and Homeopathic.

There is the list of top 10 pharmaceutical companies in Bangladesh based on their sales and market share.

Company Name	Sales	Market share
SQUARE	35,955,633,742	16.93%
INCEPTA PHARMA	23,973,625,732	11.29%
BEXIMCO	17,538,414,742	8.26%
HEALTHCARE PHARMA	11,111,985,864	5.24%
RENATA	11,007,760,813	5.186%
OPSONIN PHARMA	10,690,766,190	5.037%
A.C.I.	8,993,209,694	4.24%
ESKAYEF	8,874,799,556	4.18%
ARISTOPHARMA	8,617,799,896	4.05%
ACME	7,596,689,053	3.58%

Organization Overview:

The Acme Laboratories LTD. is one the most dominant and popular companies in Bangladesh for manufacturing world-class pharmaceuticals products. They are now currently holding 10th position in the pharmaceutical industry with market share of 4%. The journey of Acme laboratories started in 1954 by a visionary man named "Late Hamidur Rahman Sinha" as a sole proprietorship business. It is the oldest pharmaceutical Company in Bangladesh. It survived the Pakistani era successfully due to the relentless effort of the founders because pharmaceutical industry of that time was dominated by the multinational companies. In 1976 it became the private limited company and it shifted its manufacturing plant to Dhamrai in 1983. Since then they are continuously enhancing themselves with their long term strategic planning and introducing various state of the art technology contribute more in this industry. They have more the 500 products in various dosage forms. They are currently exporting in various Asian and African markets. With enormous resources and more than 7000 dedicated employees, their current vision to become the market leader in the pharmaceutical industry of Bangladesh.

Vision & Mission:

Vision: To ensure Health, Vigour and Happiness for all.

Mission: Their mission is to develop a comprehensive methodology to guarantee Health, Vigor and Happiness for all by formation of ethical drugs and medicine of supreme quality at moderate cost and growing in the local and worldwide market.

We see ourselves as accomplices with the specialists, medicinal services experts, and every single Customer, our representatives and cooperate with substantial issues.

Core Value:

Core value of The Acme Laboratories is to match with their thinking and actions. Acme is the center of what their stakeholder integrates in the past, present and the future. They work together based on their common interest which depends on customer focus, team spirit, desire to win, proactive action, respectability and perfection. These qualities decide their activities in everyday managing clients and colleagues just as in cooperation and joint effort with one another.

Description of their total business:

Entire business of "The Acme Laboratories" can be divided into four division based on product category. These are pharmaceuticals, Herbal & Nutraceuticals, Ayurvedic and veterinary Division. There are sub categories as well under these divisions. Human medicine are divided into various category which is called therapeutic Class. These are Anti-biotic, calcium, Anti-, CNS, Analgesic (Pain), IV fluid, Cough preparation, Musculo-skeletal etc. Animal Medicine has similar sub-category of products. Total number of therapeutic class of medicine that The Acme Laboratories produces are:

Sl. No.	Therapeutic Class
1	ABORTIFACIENT & CERVICAL RIPENING.
2	ANALGESIC
3	ANTI DIABETIC
4	ANTI-ASTHMATIC & COPD
5	ANTIFRIBINOLYTIC
6	ANTIHISTAMINE
7	ANTIINFECTIVE
8	CARDIOVASCULAR
9	CNS
10	COUGH PREPARATION

11	GI SYSTEM
12	HERBAL
13	HORMONE & STEROID
14	INFUSION
15	MUSCULO-SKELETAL
16	NASAL DECONGESTANT
17	OPHTHALMIC
18	SEX STIMULANT
19	SKIN
20	UROGENITAL
21	UROLOGICAL
22	VITAMINS & MINERALS

Introduction of the report:

Rationale of the study:

Current pharmaceutical market of Bangladesh is growing rapidly over the past decades. In contrast, as the oldest Pharmaceutical Company, The Acme Laboratories LTD. Does not make significant progress in gaining market share. Recent companies like incepta pharmaceuticals are capturing market share instantaneously whereas, Acme achieve a minimum market share. However, things are changing for The Acme Laboratories. Their Current vision is to lead the Pharmaceutical market of Bangladesh within next 5 years but it is not easy to gain that much market share as lot of competition is going on in this market. So they need to come up with strong integrated marketing communication strategy to reach their customers. Unlike other consumer companies, target market of any pharmaceutical is doctor. So, this study will find the current marketing mix and integrated marketing communication strategy (IMC) of Acme and provide an improved Integrated Marketing strategy with proper marketing mix for Acme to become the market leader in the pharma market of Bangladesh. This study will also assist them with necessary information of the market to formulate their marketing strategy. This study will support BRAC Business School to gain knowledge about marketing trend of Pharmaceutical companies.

Statement of the problem:

Aspiration of the study is to find out Acme's current condition in Pharma market as well as their strategy to lead the pharma market, they were doing good despite of booming pharma industry.

Scope of the Study:

Aim of the study is to find out the marketing mix of Acme which includes finding their target markets for products and how they are communicating with their target market through various communication tools. The major limitation of this study appears because of the target market of Pharma market. Unlike other companies, target of market of pharmaceuticals companies are doctors. So, it is very difficult of reach doctors from different areas. Moreover, Online Survey was not possible in this study as type and pattern of the research is different from other market.

Objective of the report:

General Objective:

General objective of the study is to understand the current effort that Acme is giving in order to gain market share in the Pharma market.

Specific Objective:

- Current Market trend of pharmaceutical industry
- ➤ Identify the segmentation and target market.
- Explain the current IMC tools of Acme
- Find out the barriers of IMC strategy
- ➤ Provide recommendations to improve IMC strategy based on research.

Limitations:

The motivation behind this report is to determine the marketing strategy of Acme and how it is trying to fulfill its vision. Nonetheless, the examination is confined by a few impediments which are specified beneath:

• **Data Collection:** Unlike other companies, pharmaceutical companies has different types of consumers. Their target customers are doctors. So it was hard to get in touch with them. It was not possible to gather data from the doctors. Moreover, primary data for quantitative research was not possible in this paper.

- **Restriction:** There is so many restriction in Pharmaceutical market that are imposed by the authority in applying marketing tools. So, it is very hard to recommend various advertising tools in this report.
- Confidentiality: There are so many information that are not possible to provide in this report due to confidentiality.

Literature Review:

- The pharmaceutical showcase in Bangladesh is profoundly concentrated where best ten companies control around 70% of the market. Due to immense competition aggressive marketing techniques are embraced for gaining higher market share, which now and then cross limit. There's need of information on this perspective in Bangladesh in order to understand the broader picture of this market. (MohiuddinM. Rashid,S.F. Shuvro,M.I. Nahar,N. Ahmed S.M., 2015)
- There are five types of medicine that are being produced in Bangladesh. Internal manufacturers are attaining 98% demand for medicine of Bangladesh. 851 functional manufacturing plants are continuously producing 266 types of Allopathic, 26 types of Unani, 207 types of Ayurvedic, 79 types of homeopathic and 32 types of herbal medicine. (Islam, Rahman, Al-mahmood, 2018)
- Due to High quality and low cost advantage, Bangladesh can create a huge demand of medicine in foreign market. Bangladesh is exporting more than 127 countries after meeting 98% local demand and now become the largest producer of formulated drugs among the least development countries. (Islam, Rahman, Al-mahmood, 2018)
- The field level medical representatives (MR) are fulfilling the essential role in the field of marketing. They are the key person in any pharmaceutical firm who bear all the responsibility to market the product from the factory. Efficiency and effectiveness of a medical representative are the key factors to success of pharmaceutical industry. (Habib & Alam, 2011)
- Regarding promotional activities and physician attitude towards the gift promotional items, a large number of pharmaceuticals accept that pharmaceuticals ought to be promoted by the quality and availability of their products, not by the promotional

strategies. According to the study. 84.62% pharmaceutical companies accept that endowments given by them encourage the doctors to endorse their products while 87% doctors concede that they consider the goodwill of the company and quality of the products during the time of prescribing. Moreover, it is found that 50.5% doctors favored information more instead of appealing gifts but only 11.77% pharmaceutical companies concurred with this articulation. (Sultana & khosru, 2011)

Expansive industry gifts are considered as actuations whereas little gifts such as pens, paper weight, card holders are considered satisfactory by numerous. Frequency of visit to the doctors by the sales personnel and individual relationship of the doctor with the Medical representatives has significant effect on the medicine behavior of the physicians. It is a straight forward condition that in Bangladesh, there are more than 250 pharmaceutical companies over 1000 brand products. Moreover, a doctor continuously inclines toward the quality of the medicine for his/her patients. That is why quality of the medicine is so much crucial. A product with less or no quality not suitable in the long run. With better quality item, medical representatives to get additional confident to detail the brand in front of the doctors. Same thing to the doctors as well, since they can type in it unreservedly. (Biswas & Ferdousy, 2016)

Methodology:

This report aims to provide a detailed scenario regarding the marketing communication strategy of Acme Laboratories to gain share in the pharma industry and the effectiveness of the implementation of their strategy. In order to collect valid information required to make such thorough report, this report was based on both qualitative and quantitative research. Most of the information are covered by the qualitative research through interview. However, Market analysis and growth are quantitative research. Both primary and secondary data were collected in this regards.

Segmentation targeting and positioning of Acme (STP):

Segmentation, targeting and positioning is one of the center strategical approach in today's marketing. It is the foremost common and far reaching applied marketing model that are practiced by most of the companies. This model is exceptionally supporting to formulate marketing communication plans and how to apply on the consumers. It assists marketers to create significant messages to engage the audiences through communication tools. STP model is very crucial for pharmaceutical industry as they use direct marketing approach or door-to-door selling approach. Like other industry and related companies Acme Laboratories also formulated its own STP model. Unlike other consumer companies Acme's primary customers are doctors. So they have to formulate their STP model carefully.

Segmentation:

Even though Acme's core customers are doctors, they use demographic segmentation on their segmentation strategy. They divided their whole customer base according to their specialization. For an example, there are doctors who are specialist in giving treatment to diabetic patients are called dialectologist. Acme has divided their total customer base into different categories. These are:

Sl	Specialty
1	CHILD
2	DIABETOLOGISTS
3	CARDIOLOGISTS
4	CHEST
5	GASTROENTEROLOGISTS
6	MEDICINE
	NEURO AND
7	PSYCHIATRY
8	GP
9	ORTHOPEDICS
10	ENT
	URO AND
11	NEPHROLOGISTS
12	DERMATOLOGISTS
13	GYNECOLOGISTS
14	RHEUMATOLOGISTS
15	RMP

16	SURGERY
17	ONCOLOGISTS
18	OPTHALMOLOGISTS
19	DENTISTS
20	HOSPITAL

Among these segments, Medicine and general Physician (GP), rural medical physician (RMP) are actually general doctors who can prescribe general medicine for all diseases. Apart from these segments, there is another type of segment in the pharmaceutical market. That is called over the counter market (OTC). There are some medicines that can be taken without prescription of certified doctors. These types of medicine is called over the counter products.

Target market:

The Acme Laboratories is targeting most of the segments of doctors by providing various kind of products. They are currently producing more than 400 products in various dosage forms to target most of the segments. However, they do not have any direct product to target Oncologists or cancer specialists. This market is very narrow market and only few companies is currently targeting this market. Currently they are planning to target biotech products such as insulin for diabetic patients. Products for the each segments are:

Sl	Specialty	Products to target customers
1	CHILD	Baby Zinc, Nutrun Junior
2	DIABETOLOGISTS	Janmet, daomin
3	CARDIOLOGISTS	Amloten, Liptor
4	CHEST	Monas, Salflu MDI
5	GASTROENTEROLOGISTS	Maxima, PPI
6	MEDICINE	All (FIX-A)
7	NEURO AND PSYCHIATRY	Neugalin, Leptic
8	GP	All
9	ORTHOPEDICS	A-cal-D, Arth-D
10	ENT	Azolin, Cipro-D
11	URO AND NEPHROLOGISTS	Uropass, Darifen EK.
12	DERMATOLOGISTS	Bet-CG, BetCL
13	GYNECOLOGISTS	Nutrum PN, Tycon
14	RHEUMATOLOGISTS	Skelofen,winop
15	RMP	Renidin, Azin
16	SURGERY	Trizon, fulspec
17	ONCOLOGISTS	Patron winop (No direct anti-cancer drug)

18	OPTHALMOLOGISTS	Eyemox, Cipro-A eyedrops
19	DENTISTS	Setorib, Maxima
20	HOSPITAL	All injectables

Positioning:

The Acme Laboratories LTD. Follows a different approach to position their products to the doctors. They follow:

- Discuss about the problem and position the products as probable solution
- Directly talk about the potential of the products or why the product is better.

First of all, when they launch any new products or target new doctors, they first contact with the doctors through their medical representatives. Along with marketing representatives, their marketing executive go to doctors and start with the problem they have identified. Then they position their product as a solution for the patients. It helps doctors to understand to which doctors the medicine can be prescribed and efficiency of doctors. In addition, sometimes the medicine is positioned directly as better solution. In that case, marketing executives directly talks about the potentials of medicines. Acme always tries to position their products as much doctors as possible. That is why they sometimes launch their products in medical conferences. It helps them to reach many doctors at a time.

IMC tools used by ACME:

It is instructed by Directorate general of Drug administration (DGDA) that pharmaceutical companies cannot use all the promotional tools to promote their products. Like other pharmaceutical companies, Acme is limited by the drug authority to use various promotional tools. The promotional methods that are used by The Acme Laboratories are:

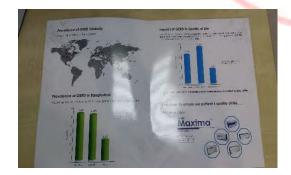
Printed promotional Items (PPM):

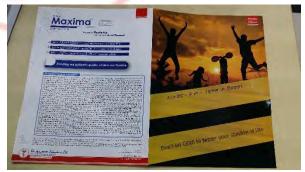
Printed promotional items are common and widely used promotional tools used The Acme laboratories to communicate with their customers, doctors. They also use this promotional tools to chemist and chemist shops to promote their products. This is the only promotional tools that the can use to promote their products. There are many types of printed promotional items such

as, literature, Showcard, Greetings card, various types of pads where their brand names are embedded with, literature promotional items are designed in such way, so that doctors are attracted by the design at first glance, then they can read the literature related to the branded products. Thus, Acme tries to communicate with their primary customers. Moreover, some medicine can be advertised in newspaper as well, like over the counter products. So, they provide newspaper advertisement They also advertise their products in the cover of **Current Affairs** which is useful for doctors who want to give BCS exams. These helps Acme to attract new doctors or potential future customers. There are some example of printed promotional matrials.











Sampling:

Sampling is another types of communication strategy that the Acme laboratories follows. They provide large number of sample of their products not only to the doctors but also to the chemist shops. It is now becoming a widespread strategy used by pharmaceutical companies and approved by the drug authority. Acme take this strategy into another level. They sample every single product they are currently producing.

Gift promotional items:

Gift is the new form of promotional item to communicate with the target customers, doctors. This most commonly used but most effective type of communication strategy used by any pharmaceutical company. The more attractive and relevant gift are provided; the more doctors will prescribe the medicine. The Acme laboratories always tries to provide the perfect gift items to make doctors happy. Along with that they embedded their brand name with gift items for communicating with the products. In addition, there are some doctors who sometimes practices in their rural areas. As they are high profile doctors and they usually visit once in a month in those chambers, it is obvious that lot of patients want those chambers to take proper treatment. Acme provides various food and beverage, even transportation to those doctors. Doctors most of the time are happy with these kind of gifts from acme and they prescribe more acme's products to the patients. This is very small but effective strategy by acme to make the doctors happy as well as get higher prescription rate. There are some gift sample below:



Sponsorship:

Sponsorship strategy is most widely used communication strategy used by not only pharmaceutical sector but also any companies. There are many conferences that are organized nationally such as Gastro conference, Bauscon conference (Bangladesh Association of urological surgeon) etc. These events are very crucial for Acme as lot of doctors gather in these events.

Sponsoring these events helps them to get attention from large number of doctors. Moreover, they set stall as well in those events to promote their products.

Results of their current IMC strategy in their performance:

Acme's continuous afford in marketing and communication strategy is affecting positively on their revenue. After some years of downfall, The Acme laboratories is increasing their revenue, that means their marketing and communication strategy is working.

Yr	Value	Gr%
2014	451	3.96
2015	498	3.80
2016	705	3.98
2017	736	3.75
2018	760	3.58

According to IMC(2018), if we see the growth of acme by revenue, it has been increased from 451 crore to 760 crore in just 5 years. It means that doctors are prescribing more to take the medicine of Acme than before. Growth is also promising since 2014. Moreover, their market leader brand Monas is doing significant impact in the company's revenue as it maintains the leading position for consecutive 6 years.





Findings:

We have found that Acme laboratories is using most of the promotional tools available and usable in the pharmaceutical market in Bangladesh. However, they cannot use Television commercials (TVC) as their promotional tools because there is restriction about publishing such kind of promotion without the permission of drug authority (DGDA). However, they show promotional video in various conferences where they promote their medicine. These effort are impacting the revenue of Acme positively.

Recommendation:

Even though the Acme Laboratories LTD. is doing better in recent years, still there is ways that they can improve. They can also try following strategy to improve their performance:

- Acme's most of the integrated marketing strategy is focused on highly qualified doctors and also general physicians. There are also a segment of doctors whom they did not targeted. This segment is comparatively large and still not touched by most of the pharmaceutical companies. In addition, they can be significant target market as they are the future doctors. If acme ca communicate with them properly in present, they can not only be potential customer but also loyal to acme.
- Acme is currently doing all the traditional marketing programs that every pharmaceutical
 companies is doing. However, social media can be a good platform for them to not only
 connect with doctors but also engage them with various activities. They can create a
 group for doctors and physicians. They can use various fun activities related to their

- product which not only engage their customers but also sometimes provide new product idea. Acme can also arrange some prizes for fun activities. It will help acme with not only marketing but also product development.
- In gift promotional items, Acme is using common items such as pen, watch calendar etc. they can provide very uncommon gift items that not one is giving. Power bank can be a good example. It can be a very good gift promotional item. Normally doctors will not want from companies, but it is very necessary for them as they can hardly charge their phone on duty. Acme can embed their product name in the power bank, which work as branding of their product as well.
- Acme can start royalty club service for the highly specialized doctors who prescribe
 highly Acme's products. Acme can provide special facility to them. It will help them to
 spread positive word of mouth by those doctors because no companies is doing such kind
 of promotion. These doctors will work as promoters for Acme.

Conclusion:

Being one of the oldest pharmaceutical company in Bangladesh, The Acme laboratories did not achieve much compared to other pharmaceutical companies. Even though with cutting edge technology and better quality, they were barely surviving in the market. However, this thing are going well for acme in recent years. Acme's changing marketing strategy and continuous effort their strong marketing and Medical representative team is improving their business condition gradually. However, Acme can bring some innovation in their marketing strategy. It is true that being a pharmaceutical company, it is hard for acme to apply various marketing tools. But they can renovate with modern and unique tools. It will improve better communication with their primary customers, doctors. Lastly, Pharmaceutical market of Bangladesh is booming in recent years. It is high time for acme to capture as much market as possible to become the market leader.

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