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# retail

R O U N D - U P

## Promote safe sun and increase holiday sales

Sun awareness week runs from 7–13 May, kick-starting the holiday shopping season. Hannah Pike finds out how community pharmacies can maximise this opportunity



Gracia Victoria/Dreamstime.com

**S**un awareness week will run from 7–13 May. As the weather gets warmer and customers begin to plan their summer holidays, community pharmacy staff should help to promote safe sun messages, and can use this as a chance to stock up on products to maximise holiday sales.

### Resources

A3 posters and related leaflets promoting sun awareness week can be ordered by telephoning the British Skin Foundation on 0207 391 6341 (e-mail bsf@bad.org.uk).

The British Association of Dermatologists and the British Skin Foundation have produced a series of educational posters and leaflets to promote the campaign's key messages to the public. These focus on knowing your skin type, checking moles for any visible changes and understanding UV forecasts. There are also tips on how to protect your skin from the sun. The British Association of Dermatologists recommends that people use a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Raj Nutan, pharmacy business manager at the National Pharmacy Association, says that pharmacies are missing an

opportunity if they do not stock this sunscreen, especially those located near beaches or in market towns.

Sun awareness week can also be incorporated into window displays, increasing the opportunity for linked sales of products that customers might need for their holiday.

### Patient education

Sun awareness week is also an ideal time to help educate customers about the sun protection they are buying. New results from a survey carried out by the British Association of Dermatologists and the British Skin Foundation show that customers do not fully

### Pharmacy advice

The older you are, the more likely you are to seek advice when buying OTC medicines. According to a survey by Retail Eyes, 63 per cent of people over 61 years of age sought advice compared with 59 per cent of 46–60 year-olds, 61 per cent of 31–45-year-olds and 52 per cent of 16–30-year-olds. Of those who ask for help, 95 per cent have confidence in the advice received and purchase the product. Women (61 per cent) are more likely to ask for advice than men (49 per cent).

### OTC slimming

*Over-the-counter orlistat is expected to be available in the UK within the next two years. Having secured OTC rights from Roche, GlaxoSmithKline has announced that it will be applying for a POM to P switch. An OTC product, containing 60mg orlistat, has already been approved in the US for use in conjunction with a low fat diet. GSK has proposed an age restriction of 18 years to reduce possible abuse by teenagers.*

### Car sickness

Almost two-thirds of parents admit to unsafe driving behaviour while helping a car sick child, according to a survey commissioned by McNeil Ltd, the distributor of Stugeron. In association with the RAC Foundation, McNeil launched a campaign last month, to reduce the number of potentially dangerous situations as a result of back seat distractions.



understand what they should be looking for in a sunscreen. Key results are as follows:

- One third of respondents did not know that children can develop skin cancer
- Only 13 per cent of respondents knew that the SPF on sunscreen indicates the level of protection against UVB
- 70 per cent of respondents were not aware of the star rating system used on sunscreen (indicating the level of UVA protection)
- Of the 30 per cent of respondents who were aware of the star rating system, 43 per cent gave an incorrect answer when asked what it shows.

## Retail Round-up

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### Editorial

Correspondence concerning editorial contents should be addressed to: The Editor, Retail Round-up, 1 Lambeth High Street, London SE1 7JN, UK (tel 020 7572 2425, e-mail [hannah.pike@pharmj.org.uk](mailto:hannah.pike@pharmj.org.uk)).

### Advertising

Contact Stuart Thomas (tel 020 7572 2224, e-mail [stuart.thomas@rpsgb.org](mailto:stuart.thomas@rpsgb.org)).

## Maximising sales

Mr Nutan says that over the next few months pharmacies should be looking at how they display their summer products. "Holiday health care products are often dotted around the store," he says, "So it would make sense to display them all in one area".

Mr Nutan also points out that there are sales to be made when customers return from their holiday, for example, from printing photographs. Customers could be given a discount voucher to encourage them to use the pharmacy for this service when they return (see p7 for more information about photography services in the pharmacy).

The NPA has produced a business brief on maximising sales in the holiday season. This includes advice on:

**Merchandising** Proprietors are advised to display signs in the "holiday section" pointing customers towards the pharmacy counter. Families going on holiday, for example, may require larger pack sizes of common holiday medicines.

**Targeting customers** Customers bringing in prescriptions for antimalarial tablets can be targeted for sales of other holiday products. Local business could also be targeted by delivering holiday checklist leaflets to them (see below).

NPA members can order the business brief free of charge by telephoning 01727

## Holiday checklist ideas

The following items can be included in a holiday checklist given to shoppers or placed in shopping baskets:

- Sunscreen
- Pain relief tablets
- First aid kit
- Travel sickness tablets
- Antidiarrhoeals
- Mosquito repellent
- Bite/sting relief
- Travel adapter
- Plasters
- Malaria tablets
- Flight socks

858687 ext 3257 (e-mail [pharmacybusiness@npa.co.uk](mailto:pharmacybusiness@npa.co.uk)).

## Holiday checklists

A marketing tool sometimes used by the larger pharmacy chains is to produce a checklist of health care items that customers are likely to need for their holiday. This can be branded with the pharmacy logo and can either be handed to customers who enquire about holiday health care, or placed in the shopping baskets of customers browsing the store. Items that are commonly included in such checklists are outlined in the panel above.

# Business basics — answers to your common retail problems

By business contributor Reg Peplow

## Smile please

**Question** The layout of my shop is poorly designed and I am not always able to keep an eye on all customers. Cameras and mirrors are out of the question at present and I frequently "lose" small items. Is there an inexpensive theft deterrent that you could suggest?

**Answer** Criminologists suggest that most theft of the type you mention is of the spur-of-the-moment variety, and that people with sticky fingers are most unlikely to steal if there is a chance of them being watched. Do not hang about behind the counter, mingle where you can, and greet all customers with a smile. Friendly eye to eye contact could even enhance your trade.

## Payment on account

**Question** In the interests of security, we pay wages directly into employees' bank accounts. Recently, an employee asked for a cheque and we agreed, but by mistake the money went into her account as usual. She now tells us that she cannot withdraw the money because she shares the account with her husband and he has put a "stop" on it pending their divorce settlement. What is our liability?

**Answer** The Industrial Society suggests that as you failed to comply with your employee's request, you must give her the money again. You should also make it clear that, should she ultimately recover the money from the account, she has a duty to repay it to you.

# Is your pharmacy accessible to customers with disabilities?

Community pharmacies are obliged to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. Ingrid Saffin explains.

Since 1 October 2004 the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) has imposed obligations on service providers to make reasonable adjustments to their premises to overcome physical barriers to access. Community pharmacies, along with other retailers, are defined as service providers and are thus subject to the duties contained in the DDA. Pharmacy proprietors should have ensured that their current premises are compliant with the DDA, but the duty is a continuing one so will apply to any planned changes or refurbishments.

## What steps should be taken?

To ensure compliance with the DDA you should assess your premises or refurbishment plans. You may need to make alterations to make the premises accessible to people with disabilities. The DDA requires service providers to take reasonable steps to either remove or alter a physical feature that makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to use the service offered. If it is possible to provide a reasonable means of avoiding the feature, or a reasonable alternative method of making the service available to disabled people, that would satisfy the duty. If movement around the pharmacy is difficult, a display could be rearranged or the furniture moved. If prescription forms need to be signed, a board could be provided for customers in wheelchairs to rest on their knees, rather than having to lower a counter.

If you haven't already done so, consider having an access audit carried out by a qualified consultant from the National Register of Access Consultants ([www.nrac.org.uk](http://www.nrac.org.uk)). Your consultant will be used to spotting problems and thinking laterally to solve them in the most appropriate and cost-effective way.



Marilyn Barbone/Dreamstime.com

## When does the duty arise?

Any existing barriers to access must be dealt with now — waiting for a convenient opportunity to arise, such as a planned refurbishment, is not an option. It might be that there is a physical feature which does need substantial alteration or removal. However, it might also be possible to comply with the DDA by adapting the way in which the pharmacy service is provided to disabled members of the public.

Obvious problem features include steps up to the pharmacy. If there is no alternative access, these steps may have to be replaced with a ramp wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair. It might be that the provision of a collapsible ramp would be considered to be an acceptable solution in the context of a small, independent pharmacy. On the other hand, a national chain might be expected to have the means to install a permanent ramp.

Many pharmacies now have consulting rooms within the premises. These should be accessible to disabled people, so if a space is being partitioned to create a consulting

room, the access should be wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair. If the consulting room is upstairs or in a basement, and the installation of a lift is not possible, consider making space available for occasional consultations on the ground floor in order to allow disabled customers to use the service.

If you need a landlord's consent to carry out such work you must submit plans and specifications to your landlord who has 42 days to respond, failing which consent is generally deemed to have been withheld. Regulations specify conditions that it would be reasonable for the landlord to impose, such as obtaining planning permission, or the consent of any superior landlord.

## Penalties

The DDA is effectively policed by disabled people. If a person considers that they have been discriminated against because of their disability, they can bring civil proceedings against you within six months of the alleged discrimination. Organisations, including the Disability Rights Commission, provide financial assistance and practical help and advice. The DRC also provides an independent conciliation service for disputes arising under the DDA.

There is no case law yet that we are aware of that relates specifically to community pharmacies. However, we would expect that, in the event of a successful claim, damages might be awarded, and in those circumstances they would probably be assessed based on the loss suffered by the disabled person as a result of the breach of the DDA. It is worth noting that the DDA enables the court to make an award of damages by way of compensation for injury to feeling, but each case would be decided individually.

## Further guidance

The DRC has produced guidance on the DDA for service providers, as well as for disabled people. This includes the "Code of Practice: services to the public, public authority functions, private clubs and premises", which contains advice and practical examples of adjustments to premises (available at [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)).

*Ingrid Saffin is partner at Munday's LLP, Cobham, Surrey*

“Waiting for a convenient opportunity to arise is not an option”

# How knowing your shopper types can be good for business

Should pharmacies know their customer types? Lin-Nam Wang investigates

An article in the *New York Times* last month revealed that Wal-Mart's new marketing strategy includes categorising each of its customers (estimated at 200 million) into one of three types: the "brand aspirational", the "price-sensitive affluent" and the "value-price shopper". Brand aspirational are people on low incomes but to whom brand names are important, price-sensitive affluents are those who are wealthy but who like bargains and offers, and value-price shoppers are those who like low prices and cannot afford much more. In addition, the company, which is the largest retailer in the world, is creating special marketing teams for its five "power" product categories (one of which is pharmacy), that will base their work on these shopper types.

The big retailers have been collecting information about customers for years (facilitated by the advent of loyalty cards) because if they do not understand consumers and keep pace with their needs their businesses will suffer. And for some, part of understanding customers is to categorise them. According to the Coca-Cola Retailing Research Council, "understanding the needs that drive shopper choice is enabling supermarkets to identify new opportunities for growth and ways to avoid dedicating time, money, and other resources to efforts that have little meaning to shoppers". In 2004 it published a study entitled "The world according to shoppers", which describes nine shopper states of mind: budget, discovery, immediate consumption, efficient stock-up, care for the family, bargain, grab and go, reluctant and specific item. For each mind state, the study details what the shopper wants, the reward he seeks, his attitudes to shopping, his most frequently purchased products and reasons for choosing a particular store. For example, discovery shoppers want new ideas and products (their reward is to find something new) and they choose a store for its atmosphere and product selection. In contrast, immediate



Stephen Coburn/Dreamstime.com

consumption shoppers want to satisfy their hunger and get in and out of a store quickly. They choose a shop for convenience.

The same marketing strategy is used in pharmacy. Boots The Chemists, for example, has also invested in understanding its customers. "We track their behaviour and target them to build their loyalty and trust in Boots," says Colin Innes, customer insight manager at Boots. Using data from its loyalty card, Boots initially put its customers into eight product-based segments and then conducted qualitative and quantitative research to look at their attitudes and behaviours. However, this proved too complicated and, like Wal-Mart, the company eventually identified three main shopper types, which it named "Betty", "Tina" and "Charlotte".

## Using the information

Betty is an older customer, who is concerned about her health. Over 70 per cent of what she spends in stores is on health care products. Tina is a mother who buys for the family. Toiletries account for almost 50 per cent of what she spends. Charlotte is a young customer who loves to shop and a third of what she spends is on beauty products alone. Boots is using this information to develop its customer service. For example, it recently launched

"Healthclub", a service aimed at Bettys and "Parenting Club", a service for Tinas.

However, "there are various ways to segment customers. It is not one size fits all," says Raj Nutan, pharmacy business manager at the National Pharmacy Association. Basic categories include age and disposable income and Mr Nutan suggests that pharmacies use websites, such as [www.upmystreet.com](http://www.upmystreet.com), to look at the demographics in their area. A straightforward way of segmentation is to use times of day: "Pharmacies could look at their main type of customer between 9am and noon, noon and 3pm, and 3pm and 6pm."

Mr Nutan also recommends asking the customers themselves.

"Pharmacies in England and Wales are going to have to do patient surveys for the NHS and there is no reason why they can't kill two birds with one stone and ask extra questions like 'why do you come to our pharmacy' and 'what services do you want to see'."

Mr Nutan says there are two basic ways that shopper information can be used. The first is to tailor stock. For example, if a pharmacy finds that 34 per cent of its customers are young mothers, it should review how much space it gives to baby products. It could look at how many vitamins for children it stocks or even consider having a separate section for children's vitamins. The second is to tailor customer service. For example, if a pharmacy finds that lunchtime customers are in a rush, it could train its staff to spot these signs. "If you need to give information to these customers, you could give a leaflet and ask them to come back at their convenience, instead of trying to have a 10-minute chat," he says. Shopper information can also be used to match staffing profile to footfall and types of customer queries.

According to Mr Nutan, a thorough knowledge of the customer is a key requisite to being successful in any business, regardless of size, and those with fewer resources can still pay attention to this area.

# Where have all the photos gone?

In the age of digital photography and home printers are customers still taking their holiday films to the pharmacy? Hannah Pike finds out whether it is still profitable for pharmacy proprietors to provide photography services

For many customers, community pharmacies have historically been the destination of choice for dropping off camera films for processing and collecting them a few days later, or earlier if express services are offered.

However, the move towards digital photography and away from traditional film processing may leave pharmacy proprietors uncertain about whether it is still profitable to install a photo lab in their premises. The sale of over six million digital cameras in the UK last year and the affordability of home printers has seen a number of specialist photography retailers close.

## Recent trends

Nigel McNaught, operations manager at Photo Marketing Association International told *Retail Round-up* that there has been a 25 per cent decrease in the sales of camera film per year over the past few years, and the number of prints being made from film has dropped accordingly. He explained that despite the growth in sales of digital cameras, people were not initially printing out their pictures, but were just storing them on computers or sharing them electronically. However, the number of prints being made from digital sources is now increasing, and is finally offsetting the decrease in prints being made from film.

Mr McNaught explained that there are three options for printing photographs from digital cameras: home printing, online printing services or visiting a retail outlet. Over the past three to four years the majority of photographs were being printed at home. However, quality issues and the cost of printer cartridges are encouraging more customers to return to professional outlets, and the proportion of prints being made at home has now fallen to below 50



Ilina Tischenko/Dreamstime.com

per cent. This year's figures show that about 7 per cent of people order their prints online, 45 per cent produce their own prints at home and 48 per cent use a retail outlet. Mr McNaught says that these proportions are expected to stabilise, but the number of prints being made in all areas is set to increase.

## Business options

Raj Nutan, pharmacy business manager at the National Pharmacy Association, says that photo printing can now be profitable for community pharmacies, especially those located near tourist attractions or in areas where customers take frequent holidays.

"It is not for everyone," he says, "but for some pharmacists there is still a business opportunity to attract new customers and increase turnover." He adds that some pharmacies are located in areas where they may be the only retail outlet offering

photographic services for two or three miles. "If there is customer demand for it you would be foolish not to offer it," he said.

Mr Nutan explained that pharmacies have traditionally offered offsite processing or installed their own minilabs. Apart from time, a disadvantage of offsite processing is that customers using digital cameras may be reluctant to part with their memory card. A solution to this may be for the store to install a compact disc burner so that the CD is sent to the wholesaler instead.

Today's minilabs are capable of producing prints from both film and digital sources. They can provide a faster service than outsourcing to a wholesaler but, because they are expensive to buy, Mr Nutan says proprietors should be certain of customer demand before installing one. Space may also be an issue since minilabs can measure about 3m by 5m.

A third option is to install a photograph kiosk, where customers can insert their memory card and print off their own photographs using a simple touch screen computer. Kiosks might be a better option for an independent retailer who is new to the photography market since they are often leased rather than purchased. There are several types of kiosk available and they can be networked to a minilab, which may be useful for a small retail chain.

## Linked opportunities

Pharmacies that offer a photography service should also consider stocking camera accessories and items such as batteries, memory cards and photograph albums. Sales of single use cameras peaked over the past few years and, although demand appears to be slowing down, they remain popular for situations when customers might not want to take their digital camera out.

Mr Nutan adds that customers coming in to the pharmacy to use the photographic service will also be exposed to any health promotion campaigns running in the store, and might be encouraged to bring in their prescriptions if they do not already do so.

The NPA will shortly be publishing a photography resource pack containing advice to members about how to optimise these services. To register your interest in receiving the pack telephone 01727 858687, ext 3257 (e-mail pharmacybusiness@npa.co.uk).

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