

14054 COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

The critical questions we faced were first how to fund and how to distribute the programs that we could develop. Three alternatives were considered. The first was for us to raise capital, develop programs at our own expense, and sell completed programs to physicians in practice. We rejected this alternative because our studies indicated physicians would not pay for the programs, and we had no system of distribution. Second, we considered proposals to appropriate Federal Government agencies. We rejected this idea because of restrictions in Federal health care spending, the time involved in getting proposals written and approved, and most importantly, the inability of the Federal Government to provide adequate distribution. The approach we settled on was to utilize the resources of industry. They have the financial resources, the responsibility to good medical practice, and the distribution outlets to insure awareness and usage of completed programs.

Why would industry use these resources to support educational programs for physicians? The answer is that pharmaceutical manufacturers develop excellent products that undergo extensive testing before being sold to the public. These products are differentiated by scientifically proven benefits as well as side effects. Each product becomes a potential tool in the physician's armamentarium. The problem is how to properly and accurately communicate the benefits, side effects, and therapeutic role each product has in the diagnosis and treatment of a patient. In marketing products, industry does not sell products to a doctor, but rather fulfills needs that a doctor has in the comprehensive care of his patients. Accepting this statement as dogma, it is an absolute necessity to provide adequate and accurate information which allows the physician to make informed decisions in selecting methods of diagnosis and treatment