

Clear everyday references: Quick routes to the patient

As digitalisation progresses, patients are becoming increasingly active players in the healthcare segment. In the case of OTC, the "patient" is already the person who makes the decisions when it comes to treating complaints. For a long time, a classic B2B mechanism applied to prescription medicines: doctor recommends, patient follows - more or less compliantly. On the patient side, more digital prior knowledge requires not only efficacy but also greater convenience to be communicated. And improved everyday integration also leads to greater compliance.

Adherence to various therapies could be significantly increased for prescription drugs if it were possible to establish a better link with the patient's everyday life. In most cases, however, the everyday environment of patients is ignored in doctors' practices. A necessary view of pharmacological and medical interrelationships does not do without a view of the emotional, contextual setting of the patient. However, in order to minimise the risk of non-compliance, it is necessary to consider the socio-psychological contexts of everyday life.

■ Through the eyes of those affected

Obesity, lack of mobility and various other poor health behaviours often result from personal attitudes and even more so from everyday routines. For example, when we indulge in one too many glasses of wine or

"exceptionally" eat more than necessary, it almost always depends on the circumstances. If the context for "more wine" is given, be it through particularly intense conversations or because an experienced frustration weighs particularly heavily, then situationally, people like to eat more wine.

"Actually" common attitudes and values are briefly thrown out the window. The context justifies the means ...

If an illness "doesn't hurt", if it causes hardly any other noticeable restrictions, the person affected will feel little motivation to change their previous (unhealthy) behaviour. Even though he or she is aware that it is possible to live healthier. We know from empirical evidence that

Ultimately, attitude and mindset are only effective in the long term if they are also reflected in consistent behaviour.

If there are people who are not bothered by a runny nose on cold and wet days, then no other aids are needed apart from Tempo handkerchiefs (or me-too-products). The same applies to various other minor complaints, common ailments or aches and pains. If, on the other hand, a perceived social pressure is particularly high, then a conspicuousness that was previously less necessary to treat, such as visible skin irritation, may seem particularly important of its own accord.

The cosmetics industry in particular is setting trends here with digital and analogue behavioural consequences. For many women, a positive aura and an orientation towards role models or beauty ideals are so important that (less necessary) therapies for clear skin, a firm body, perfect hair and nails etc. are popular and frequently used, as are clinical interventions. Conversely, tobacco consumption in Germany (and in many other countries) has been significantly reduced by banning advertising, significantly raising prices and banishing smokers from everyday sight (= public spaces) to demarcated, "focussed zones". Not least because of this, the incidence of smoking among young people has also fallen and prevalence remains at a significantly lower level than in the 1980s.

For other topics, too, the occasion and the contextual environment

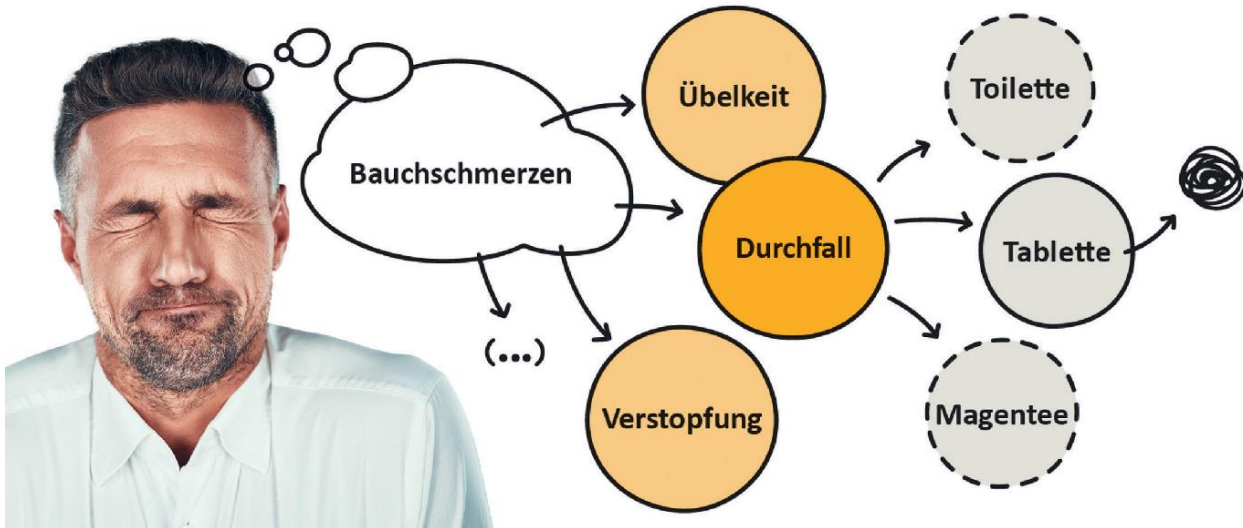


Fig. 1: Contextual references influence decision-making behaviour. Source: K&A BrandResearch

field for later behaviour or intended changes in behaviour (Fig. 1): If, for example, certain contextual aspects or symptoms are perceived as particularly painful or restrictive in everyday life in the case of general abdominal pain, then the search for suitable remedies is orientated towards this. In the case of diarrhoea, most sufferers intuitively rummage through their "medicine chest". If no activated charcoal tablet or similar is available, then a suitable remedy is sought which experience has shown to provide the best relief. In the future, patients will increasingly use digital technologies to search for a medicine with the greatest benefit for symptom relief in certain contexts. According to the fourth Roland Berger study in the Future of Health series, almost one in two respondents with a median age of 45 years is a digital user.

"... tend to be more open to new digital services". The However, openness to medical and digital innovations is dependent on the state of health and experiences significantly more opposition from respondents if they themselves have a health condition.

poorer state of health (Fig. 2).

The spectrum of individual patient needs and individual utilisation of digital healthcare services, including AI, will continue to expand when searching in the respective symptom context. An irritable stomach may not be a burden in everyday situations. However, the contexts are completely different before a customer presentation, a date or a business trip/holiday. In these contexts, those affected do everything they can to find relief with medication. This opens up many opportunities for manufacturers to access patients by addressing them in a contextualised way.

■ Talking medicine brands

Unfortunately, patients themselves hardly ever think of brands in complaint situations. The brand landscape for OTC (and even more so for Rx) is largely "faceless". In such a "pharmaceutical desert", it is difficult for decision-makers to find the best brand for certain complaints.

to find a suitable solution for themselves.

The more diffuse a perceived market environment appears to be, the more experts' recommendations are taken into account. The same still applies to many prescription drugs: What the doctor says will be right. However, this is beginning to change drastically depending on the generation, and in connection with the everyday nature of finding information digitally.

For the marketing of OTC brands, an ever-increasing problem arises when a brand has to influence the decision directly from within itself. Mental availability is essential in order to be able to decide in favour of something.

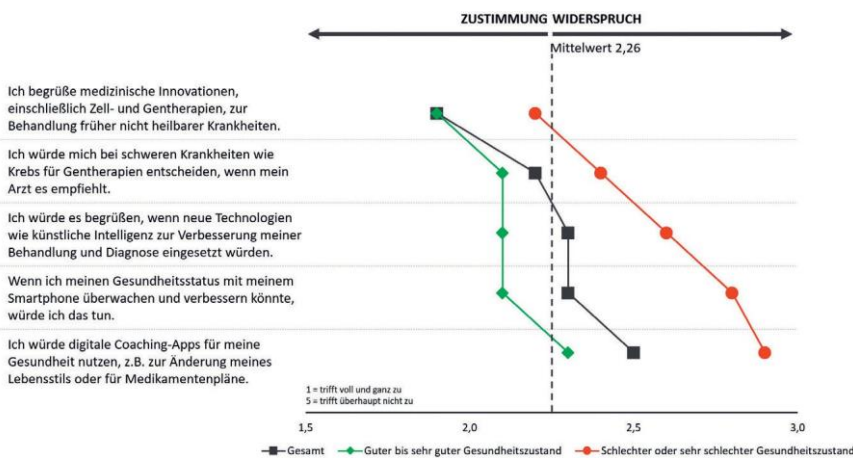


Fig. 2: State of health and openness to innovation. Source: Roland Berger

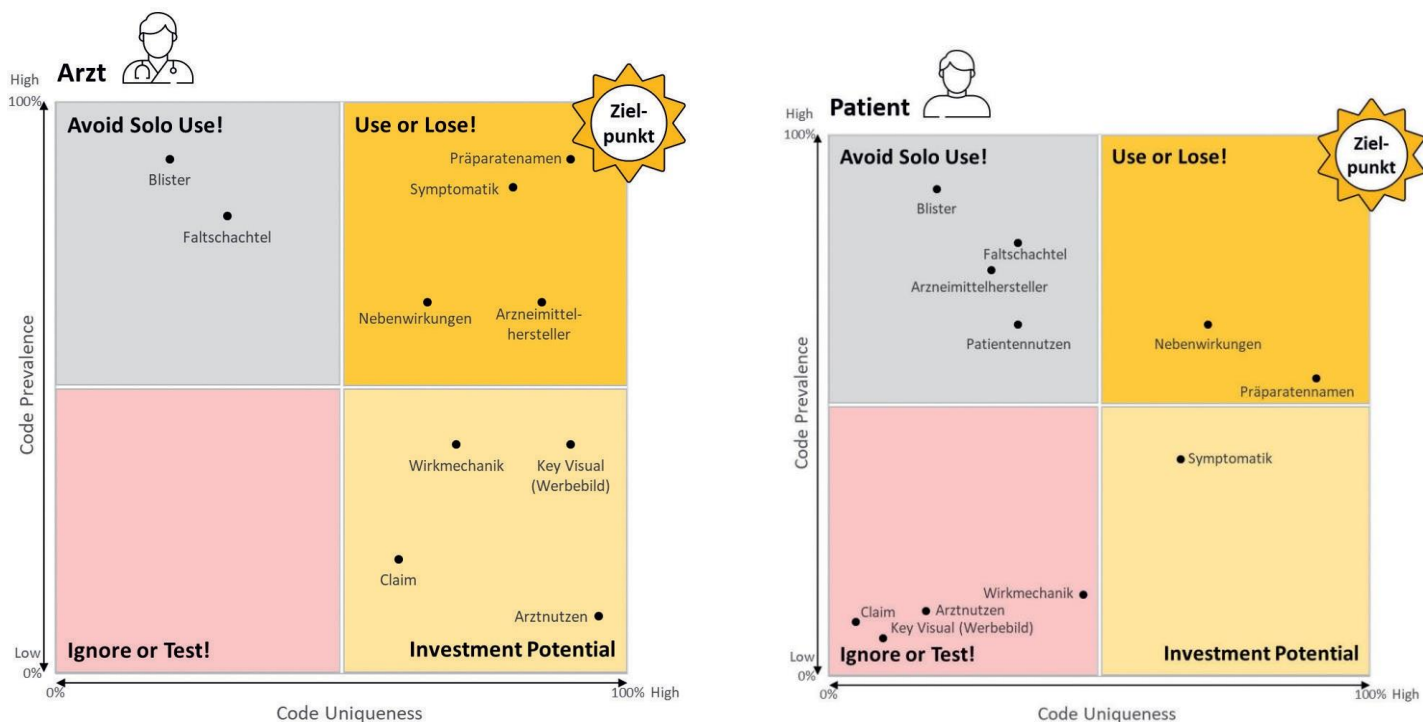


Fig. 3: Distinctive brand assets for therapies (view of doctors/patients). Source: K&A BrandResearch

This can be done either via previous experience or via communicative stimuli that are clearly aimed at one product so as not to be confused with others. Such distinctive brand assets create a mental simplification of (brand) codes and are a basic prerequisite for us to decide in favour of a specific product via the system 1 autopilot - without having to think too much. Decoding makes it easier to assign a therapy and brand or, ideally, provides specific benefits, for example under very specific contextual conditions.

Unfortunately, most OTC products are re-branding is relatively weak, which also applies to most Rx products due to advertising restrictions. The further back the time of continuous use (e.g. dry cough or specific skin care), the less intensively the product has been used, the more likely it is to be quickly forgotten. In most cases, the "brand knowledge" of prescribing physicians is much more pronounced than that of the patients using the product (Fig. 3): The everyday experiences and routines of prescribing allow a clearer assignment of codes than, for example, with the patient (six months after treatment). The weakness in the branding of OTC brands can be remedied most quickly if

it is possible to establish concrete contexts in the target groups. "If-then rules" are a possible orientation aid that our brain can also memorise relatively easily. For example, communicatively addressing specific symptoms, complaints or application contexts helps to remember a medication more quickly in everyday life.

■ Concrete everyday contexts strike a chord!

Context thinking - thinking and understanding from the everyday experiences of the target customer - which is to be implemented more strongly in management decisions, enables a change of role in the relevance of marketing messages in the respective context of the user on the one hand, and on the other hand this approach has an activating effect.

"mental levers" that lead more quickly and intuitively to a change in behaviour in the intended sense. Searching for such "contextual hooks" and communicating them in such a way that they encourage a change in behaviour.

"strange" wow are key areas of behavioural economics research and consulting that we at K&A BrandResearch have to deal with on an ongoing basis. However, what is not easy to implement in everyday situational decisions for those affected, becomes more important in these areas.

is forgotten, is not remembered - ultimately loses market significance. It is therefore better to facilitate everyday references, enable quick contextualisation and thus strengthen market success in the long term.



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