

Doctor communication

Increased practice efficiency, more successful therapy!

For a long time, marketing in the healthcare sector was based on the erroneous assumption that it had to be much more rational and, in this sense, also more scientific than is the case in other markets. In the meantime, the realisation is gaining ground that professional medical decision-makers are, in the end, only human.

Authors: Florian Klaus and Dr. Uwe H. Lebok, K&A BrandResearch AG

Doctors cannot simply discard their humanity, subjectivity or bias in their own perception at the practice cloakroom. This, of course, does not change anything about the official and outwardly presented expert role, especially of the medical specialists. Through their respective specialisation, they continue to differentiate themselves from each other and above all from general practitioners/internationalists/practitioners (API). Medical specialisation goes hand in hand with more knowledge or a knowledge advantage over others and the expectation, to be able to make "reasonable decisions". Marketing in the healthcare segment must take this view into account in that decisions should always be (post-)rationalised: Every communicative statement needs a factual, easily accessible justification.

Homo oeconomicus in medicina mortuus est

Under the surface, however, it is true that a healthcare professional (HCP) is by no means a homo oeconomicus, but a flesh-and-blood human being who has emotions himself and reacts to emotional appeal. The decisive question is which emotionality enables access to the decision-maker. Psychologically, the so-called self-efficacy expectation is at the forefront of all doctors' actions.

delns, because they want to manage challenging situations such as serious illnesses and patient suffering in the best possible way on the basis of their professional expertise. What provides maximum security in decision-making makes professional life easier for doctors and also supports their subjective impression of competence. The diagnosis and the therapeutic environment to be assessed are at the centre of the necessary decisions. For general practitioners and nurses, empathy-driven factors have a particularly strong influence on the perception of self-efficacy. The desire to help patients in the best possible way and to improve their quality of life is in the foreground. However, the more chronic and severe (life-threatening) diseases are, the more the "healer" role gains the upper hand in the medical profession. As a result, specialists in particular are much more focused on concrete therapy impulses and knowledge-based medical key codes.

Explanations for reacting quickly
Psychologists such as Daniel Kahneman and other representatives of Behavioural Economics have developed simple codes for everyday treatment. They have developed the scientifically proven image of the human being as a "satisficer, not maximiser", which has been awarded a Nobel Prize in Economics, among other prizes. People, especially in their respective professional roles, are not interested in

The women are interested in finding solutions to cope with their often hectic daily lives.

In this context, "suitable" is understood as a more concrete property that triggers action than, for example, "optimal".

In fact, everyone, including doctors, specialists and other HCPs, knows that there are many possible solutions or decision options depending on the context. Our everyday life and professional life is always "multi-optional" and will remain so to an increasing extent, but making a "suitable" decision involves ultimately choosing an option that represents the most efficient solution for oneself and/or others under the existing conditions and diagnostic prerequisites. Because in order to identify the objectively "best" solution, so much (cognitive) effort would usually have to be expended that it would ultimately no longer be efficient.

Everyday practice today

No doctor, dentist or other healthcare professional could manage their daily practice and work if they had to evaluate all possible decision options for the objectively best one. Too much thinking tires us, too much System 2 thinking encourages us to switch off. The System 1 mode of our brain, on the other hand, is a master of intuitive pattern recognition (cf. Ohne-mus, Lebok, Klaus: Context-Marketing,

CONTEXTUAL EFFICIENCY OF THE THERAPY DECISION

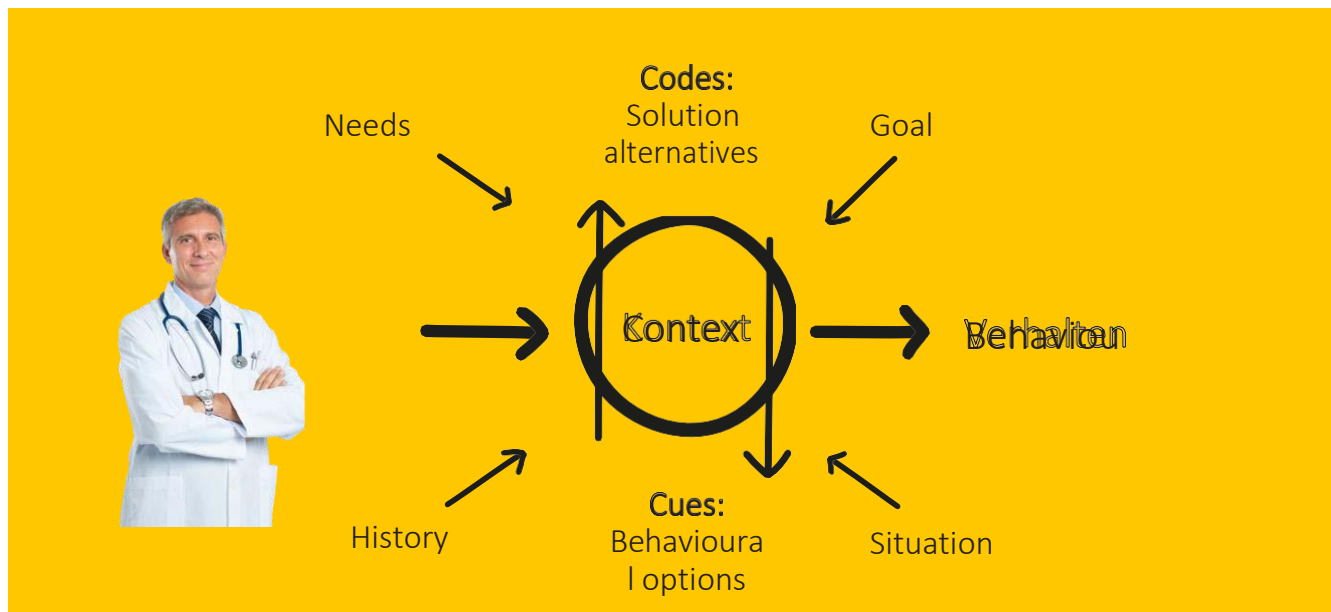


Figure: K&A

The doctor's treatment decision is based on numerous factors and follows the desire to help 'patients in the best possible way

Springer Gabler 2021). Once schemes have been learned, it is also easy for doctors to make the "right" therapy decision depending on the situation.

Routine treatments are an absolute must in the daily work of healthcare professionals. Constant innovations in the therapies or changes in processes would lead to continuous unrest and unchecked stress for all sides. Therefore, for most practitioners, therapy guidelines are initially a desired anchor for behaviour, as are personal experiences. Not only symptoms, but also patient types are automatically stored and recalled in a fraction of a second in combination with occurring context conditions.

From this point of view, doctors are real context thinkers in their everyday work, who, under time pressure and following their ideal of individual self-efficacy, have to meet the requirement of reacting effectively to the context of a treatment situation. This applies all the more to indications about which practitioners are less well informed at the moment of treatment than they should be as specialists. In most cases, HCPs are not even aware of their context-specific treatment routines and behavioural mechanisms.

For example, it is not uncommon for a doctor to react and evaluate differently when patients with the same diagnosis show differences typologically or in their previous pattern behaviour. Even with one and the same patient, the treating doctor assesses the situation differently if the practice situation has been enriched by additional information, symptoms or key images (see figure above). If the conditions of a treatment situation change, the therapy decision can also turn out differently as a reactive behaviour to the context. Similarly, therapy decisions in the treatment context are all the easier if a preparation is marked by codes that are as simple and distinct as possible, which are then understood as intuitive signals.

Context Communication works better ...

In psychodrama research we regularly experience that doctors defend established therapies with vehemence against (more effective) alternatives because they enable routine, efficient action. Anything that supports routine requires less reflection and makes decisions easier. The more imprecise the benefit

The less easily their codes can be located as an advantage in everyday professional life, the more difficult it is to change behaviour. Conversely, it is also true that stronger emotional signals, via which the central need or the relevant symptoms have been emphasised, are more memorable.

Perhaps the best thing at the end: Context references are an evaluation criterion for the effectiveness of advertising. Contexts allow a value-free view into the everyday behaviour of people, also in special occupational groups. Ideally, this is done from the perspective of scientifically recognised psychology, which directs the view to situations and people, and does not distract itself with so-called depth oriented towards the past. Those who understand people in context also find it easier to address them in advertising.

The shortlist of the 2021 Comprix competition provides convincing examples (see figure on page 56). HiVersity is a campaign that is right in line with the trend due to its diversity and purpose. In the context of World AIDS Day and the special attention of the population, the different and life dreams of people with AIDS are highlighted.

CAMPAIGNS WITH CONTEXTUAL RELEVANCE



Source: Comprix



Examples of Context Communication campaigns that all scored points in the Comprix 2021 creative competition

People actually become part of society and trigger reflection.

Strong visuals with contextual reference are provided by Ciclopoli with the victorious Victory sign on the foot as a symbol of success against nail fungus. Or Metvix as a precise treatment for actinic ketosis under daylight in a dermatological environment. Or Spravato as a quick relief for therapy-resistant depression: an exit from the **acting** stage of a personality that has collapsed in on itself.

Context stories" can also be found in the Comprix archive. For example, CSL-Plasma wants to stop the decline in the willingness to donate blood plasma. The high-contrast juxtaposition of the red blood bag with regained quality of life makes people concerned and can lead to action.

Velgastin focuses on flatulence in babies and specifically addresses paediatricians, midwives and mothers in humorous communication of the babies - Children's mouths speak the truth! Testo-

gel codifies the slacker as a stand-up man - made of wood in keeping with the times. As a simple announcement to APIs when patients complain of often being too tired, powerless and too tired for sex.

These examples show that contextual references create bridges into everyday life. And because of their effect, they underline

The new Context Communication matter once again shows that doctors and HCPs are also "human" and long to make their everyday decisions easier. Context Communication matters - and helps to find relevant markers for efficient decisions in everyday practice.

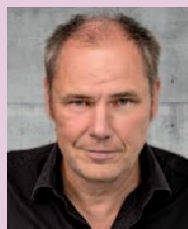


Photo:

Dr. Uwe Lebok

is a member of the management board (CMO) at the market research and brand consulting institute K&A BrandResearch AG in Röthenbach and a lecturer for social marketing at the iba - International University of Cooperative Education in Nuremberg. Lebok primarily supports medium-sized companies with research-based brand strategies. u.lebok@ka-brandresearch.com



Photo:

Florian Klaus

has been working at K&A BrandResearch since 2005 in client support based on consumer studies. As a partner, the diploma psychologist is a member of the K&A management team and looks after national and international clients from the food and beverage, telecommunications and new media sectors. f.klaus@ka-brandresearch.com