

Weekly Comment

Welcome to **Pharmacy Daily's** weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is Instigo's David Zivkovic.

Retailing is not just about buying

Let's face it, most pharmacists didn't do their pharmacy degree with the aim of becoming a retailer, but for many pharmacists being a good retailer is imperative.

There are plenty of buying groups around to help you buy into store better and hopefully manage your inventory more efficiently.

But you also need to be able to present your offer (merchandise) and promote it (marketing) using effective selling (customer service).

If you don't have all of these elements right you won't be the pharmacist and retailer you need to be.

Why would you want to focus on merchandising?

Because stock doesn't sell itself, it needs to be presented in a manner that encourages self selection, complementary sales and creates a pleasant shopping experience that the customer wants to repeat again and again.

Marketing is an essential part of the equation as well.

How much do you know about your customers?

If you don't know their spending habits, likes and dislikes and most importantly, your most valuable customers, you are really only guessing at what marketing is effective.

Customer service is the glue that binds all the elements of retail together.

The knowledge, willingness and ability to help customers can have a dramatic effect on sales.



The cost of untrained and unfocused staff should not be underestimated.

Blackmores looks to Asia

AUSTRALIAN health products manufacturer Blackmores is spreading its wings further offshore, with the announcement this morning of a new distribution agreement with a Korean firm.

Korea will be Blackmores' first new international market since the company entered Taiwan more than three years ago.

Blackmores has also operated in Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Hong Kong since the 1990s.

The new deal has been signed with a company called CJO Shopping, described as a "home shopping platform incorporating television, online and catalogue sales direct to consumers."

And as well as these direct to consumer channels, CJO distributes through a network of department and drug stores, and operates its own retail pharmacy chain across Korea, called CJO Olive Young.

The first Blackmores campaign in partnership with CJO Shopping will launch next month and feature Blackmores Omega Daily.

Blackmores ceo Christine Holgate described the company as "a high quality partner who will be able to maintain the integrity and positioning of our premium brand."

Holgate said the deal would give Blackmores "an opportunity to better understand direct to consumer marketing, which is a key sales channel in Asia".

Approximately 80% of vitamins and dietary supplements sold in the large Korean market are currently sold through direct to consumer channels, Blackmores said.

The company plans to launch a small number of other Blackmores products into the Korean market

over the remainder of the 2010/11 financial year.

MEANWHILE Blackmores is also set to expand its Australian product range, with the company's Director, People and Strategy, Richard Henfrey, outlining a "healthy pipeline" at an analyst briefing this morning.

As well as the new Everyday Stress product Blackmores is set to release "two innovative probiotic products" in the coming months - Digestive Bio Balance and Women's Bio Balance.

Henfrey also outlined a Blackmores strategy to deepen the company's online activities, with the relaunched blackmores.com.au website claimed to be the most popular health information site in Australia, with more than 100,000 unique visitors per month.

Merck Serono pedalling for MS



ABOVE: Merck Serono managing director David Garmon-Jones put together a team to ride in

US Morning After Pill controversy

PHARMACISTS are well and truly in the news in the US over proposed changes in Washington State which alter the way that pharmacists are able to dispense "Plan B", the so-called Morning After contraceptive.

The state's Board of Pharmacy voted to begin revising the rule which was established in 2006 and allows individual pharmacists to morally object to dispensing the medication, while requiring the pharmacy to still be legally required to help the patient.

The rule became mired in court action after it was challenged by pharmacists and family planning groups, with mooted changes including allowing pharmacists to continue to object but provide a so-called "facilitated referral" to another pharmacy.

yesterday's MS Gong Ride between Sydney and Wollongong.

As well as providing a great day in the saddle, the event aims to raise funds for multiple sclerosis research - and it's particularly appropriate that Merck Serono take part because the company makes a range of medications and devices for people living with the condition.

The team riding to Wollongong should already be in top condition because Merck Serono also took part in the City to Surf fun run earlier this year.

Pictured above from **left** are: Venus Amoro-Njuguna, Christina Schuetze, Jamie Clarke, Andrew Watt and David Garmon-Jones.



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Victorian briefings

THE Victorian branch of the Pharmacy Guild today released dates for a series of upcoming "Round 2 Member Briefings".

The events will take place through this month and December and provide the opportunity to catch up on the latest news, network with fellow Guild members and have access to Branch Committee District Representatives.

More information from Annita Sawyer on 03 9810 9999.

US Cymbalta approval

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved Eli Lilly's Cymbalta (duloxetine HCl) for the treatment of chronic musculoskeletal pain.

The approval follows clinical trials in patients with chronic lower back pain where the drug was proved to lessen patients pain.

At present, scientists have been unable to pinpoint exactly how Cymbalta stops pain, but have surmised that it increases the activity of serotonin and norepinephrine in the brain and spinal cord.

See www.fda.gov.

Sibutramine slimming alert

THE UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency on Friday issued a public warning about various 'herbal slimming pills' which contain the banned prescription-only medicine sibutramine.

The MHRA said the move followed a number of warnings from overseas regulators, with the matter of particular concern because sibutramine has been withdrawn from the market after a warning that it increased the risk of heart attacks and strokes.

In Australia, around two weeks ago the NSW Health Department

recalled three brands of imported "slimming food" coffee and chocolate because they were found to contain sibutramine.

The recalled products are Moti Angel Coffee, Sumabe Acai Berry Coffee and Leptin weight loss chocolate, with NSW Chief Health Officer, Dr Kerry Chant, urging consumers considering using such products to "discuss a weight control plan with their general practitioner".

The UK MHRA says it regularly investigates cases where unlicensed 'herbal' slimming aids are labelled as '100% natural' and 'safe with no side effects'.

"Often these products are found to illegally contain undeclared pharmaceuticals, banned or toxic ingredients and as such pose a serious risk to consumer health," the MHRA said in a statement.

RGH E-Bulletin

THIS week's edition of the Repatriation General Hospital Pharmacy E-Bulletin covers drug-induced lupus erythematosus - an autoimmune disorder affecting the skin, joints, heart, kidneys, lungs and brain.

It is thought that up to 10% of the 5 million cases of lupus worldwide are drug-induced.

View the bulletin at no charge at www.auspharmlist.net/ebulletin.php.

Friday's winners

CONGRATULATIONS to Brad Garnett from Apotex who was the lucky winner of Friday's A'kin Radiance competition.

Plus, congratulations to Kirsten Peck from APhS Calvary Healthcare Riverina; Irene Nimorakiotakis from Pharmore Pharmacies; Jodie Watson from Beckenham Pharmacy; Nigel Bell from Coffs Harbour Health Campus; and Gail Thewl from Calman Pharmacy Picnic Point who were all the lucky winners of the Slim Secrets competition which featured in Friday's PD.

Wine for malaria

A RECENT study into resveratrol (found in the skin of red grapes), has found anti-malarial qualities within the compound.

According to reports, scientists treated malaria infected red blood cells with resveratrol, and found that the compound restricted the ability of the parasites to bind to the cell lining of blood vessels, thus lessening the severity of the illness.

Vaxiplace is now live

THE new vaccination portal, Vaxiplace, which features the latest up to date info on vaccines- as well as a health community forum is now live at www.vaxiplace.com.au.



DISPENSARY CORNER

A CHINESE man will probably become known as the Human Pincushion after he survived being impaled by 13 steel rods in a bizarre accident at a concrete factory in western China.

24-year-old Weng Tao was making reinforced concrete blocks when a mould reportedly exploded, sending the heavy reinforcing bars into his thigh and hip "just like spears".

Some of the rods were so long that his workmates had to grab angle grinders to shorten them so Tao could fit into an ambulance.

The rods were removed in a four hour operation, with Tao saying he's been told he will make a full recovery "and I can't wait to get back and laugh about this with my mates."

In a masterpiece of understatement, he added: "It stung a bit at the time but I was so shocked I didn't feel much".

MCDONALD'S Happy Meals are not so happy in the California city of San Francisco, which has passed a law which bans fast food restaurants from giving away free toys with unhealthy kids meals.

The rule was passed by San Francisco's Board of Supervisors and will take effect in a year's time, on 1st December 2011.

The law will require that meals meet certain prescribed nutritional standards before they can be sold with toys - with a requirement that they have less than 600 calories, contain vegetables and fruits and include beverages without excessive fat or sugary ingredients.

A spokesperson for McDonald's, Dayna Proud, said "We are extremely disappointed with today's decision."

"It is not what our customers want, nor is it something they asked for. Getting a toy with a kid's meal is just one part of a fun, family experience at McDonald's," she added.

Proponents of the ordinance say that it aims to tackle childhood obesity and promote healthy eating habits.

WIN A TRAVEL PALETTE



Every day this week, **Pharmacy Daily** is giving readers the chance to win a Travel Palette from the Perfect Presents range, courtesy of **Total Beauty Network**.

Designer Brands Travel Palettes are the perfect, portable make-up companion!

The mineral formulation contains skin nurturing ingredients like Aloe Vera and Vitamin E, and the long lasting formulas provide a fabulous finish every time.

Complete with the essential shades for your eyes and lips, this kit is a must-have for this Christmas.

For your chance to win, simply send through the correct answer to the daily question below:

How many Travel Palettes are there in the range?

Email your answer to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

The first correct entry received will win!

Hint: Visit www.dbcosmetics.com.au