

## Pharma sought safe havens for '09 consumer ads

PHARMA marketers placed safe bets and sought value in their consumer advertising buys last year, and that cautious approach is sure to continue.

Through the first nine months of the year, the top 10 pharma advertisers—which included heavyweights Pfizer, Merck, GlaxoSmithKline, Eli Lilly and AstraZeneca—decreased spend from \$955 million to \$865 million, according to Nielsen.

The roughly 9% decline was due in large part to a drop in network TV, more scrutiny on what brands should be supported and a greater emphasis on measurement, said Deborah Dick-Rath, SVP and healthcare practice leader at FactorTG, a technology company which measures marketing effectiveness.

“Overall, for most companies, there has been realignment behind brands that show pay-out and less willingness to risk



### Otsuka spent \$150 million on Abilify, a 75% increase over '08

expenditure if significant ROI is not predicted,” said Dick-Rath.

Pfizer placed heavy support behind cholesterol drug Lipitor—\$155 million through the first three quarters, according to TNS Media Intelligence, making Lipitor the top DTC brand dur-

ing that period. The company’s other DTC—for neurology treatment Lyrica, stop-smoking pill Chantix, as well as COPD treatment Spiriva (with Boehringer Ingelheim)—kept Pfizer in first place with \$704 million spent on DTC, according to the nine-month Nielsen figures.

Otsuka, which co-markets depression med Abilify with Bristol-Myers Squibb, exemplified the blockbuster mindset. The company spent \$150 million through the first nine months on DTC, a 75% increase compared to the first nine months of 2008. Not coincidentally, Abilify was the number-two DTC brand during that time frame, with \$150 million spent on consumer advertising, TNS figures show.

Companies lessening spend included GSK, which reduced advertising outlays by about 40% as of September. Merck reduced spend by nearly 17%,

the nine-month data show, reflecting decreased outlay behind its cardio franchise and Gardasil, as well as the Schering-Plough merger. Eli Lilly’s 24% decrease was due to cuts in areas like diabetes, as the firm concentrated efforts behind Cymbalta (\$141 million) and Cialis (\$122 million), the number-three and -five DTC brands, respectively, per TNS September 2009 data.

Pharmas more than tripled online spend to \$221 million during the first three quarters, according to TNS.

Commenting on greater use of cable TV, magazines and Sunday supplements, Dick-Rath added, “As [companies] evaluate the mix, return and impact of those channels, ‘DTC’ itself will continue to be less of a blunt instrument, but continue to evolve and to become an important part of pharmaceutical communication planning.” — Marc Iskovitz



### DDR on DTC BY DEBORAH DICK-RATH

Actonel, the osteoporosis drug from Warner Chilcot-Sanofi Aventis, is takin’ it to the streets! Their new “educational” campaign uses an actor dressed as a doctor (remember those quaint “man-in-white” TV guidance rules?) to accost people on city streets with the catchy phrase, “I’m out here talking about osteoporosis.” His purpose is to remind target women that their bones may be in danger. When they lament: “What can I do?” this “doctor” directs them to ask their own doctor about Actonel. The streets are conveniently loaded with brand signage—logos on the taxis and banners on the buildings. There’s even a computer screen street-side that pops up with pertinent info.

Leveraging a man-on-the-street format from the *Mad Men* era, these spots, do offer disease and treatment information and



Actonel’s doc-on-the-street ads are educational but not fresh

they do underscore a sense of urgency. The print ads use a straightforward doctor Q&A, and overall, the campaign’s integration of DRTV spots with brand-building is synergistic and effective. The drawback is that even though the doc-on-the-street approach is “educational,” it doesn’t feel very fresh and it certainly conveys a sense of “been there, done that.” Of course, for the target audience of aging female Baby Boomers, that might be right in their comfort zone. The only thing missing is the Doobie Brothers soundtrack.

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### NuvaRing DTC leads web traffic

NUVARING AND Latisse lead the pack in DTC-driven traffic to their brand.com sites, according to Manhattan Research.

The research firm’s ePharma Consumer survey found that Merck Contraceptive NuvaRing jumped five spots to take the top spot for ad-driven traffic, while Allergan’s eyelash-extender, Latisse, launched last year, placed second. Sexual health products dominated the top 10. Latisse was followed by Cialis, Boniva, Abilify, Gardasil, Yaz, Viagra, Levitra and Lunesta.

“These are things where talking to friends and family or doctors might be awkward, so they want to research it on their own,” said VP of research Meredith Ressi. — Matthew Arnold