

Patient-centric approach

Change is afoot at **PHOENIX group**, with improvements to procurement and pharmacy partnerships to provide customers with the best logistical and marketing support. Stefan Jung, head of pharma services and group sourcing, discusses the march of progress.

A supplier's time and resources are too often taken up by things other than manufacturing. Attempting to enter a new regional market can be particularly time-consuming: it means setting up supply chains, negotiating with suppliers, navigating foreign regulations and gathering business intelligence. Outsourcing that complex tangle enables suppliers to get on with what they do best, while those with experience handle the work of selling and transporting their goods.

Adapt and thrive

German-based PHOENIX group is an integrated one-stop shop for pharmacies and manufacturers across Europe. Its packages cover wholesale, retail and pharma services, including supply chain optimisation, sales and marketing, patient services and procurement. PHOENIX aims to make business easier by handling the logistics for customers and partners so they can focus on research, retail and production. That means flexibility and versatility are required to adapt to trends, market shifts and new regulations.

Stefan Jung became head of pharma services and group sourcing at PHOENIX group in April last year and has already made several sweeping changes. From its previous emphasis on consultancy and tailor-made plans, PHOENIX has expanded the existing portfolio of ready-made packages within PHOENIX All-in-One, which is designed to increase sales and revenue at multiple stages from production to point of sale.

“ PHOENIX group's adaptability makes it a reliable partner for any pharmacy or supplier needing an expert logistical hand. ”

“A lot of customers are not so much into the details. PHOENIX group wants to offer the customer faster, easier-to-use, easier-to-understand, ready-to-use solutions,” says Jung. Jung, who previously worked for ratiopharm in Ulm, Germany, has taken the group sourcing department on to an international track, introducing a new focus on procurement excellence. His team adapts business models to different European markets, depending on the pre-existing setup in each region.

Its widespread presence enables them to apply its knowledge across countries with similar markets so that a success story in France becomes a happy ending for Italy or the UK as well. Other changes over the past year have included hiring an innovation manager to develop big data

and IoT services, so that PHOENIX's market intelligence remains ahead of the curve.

PHOENIX's Pharmacy Partnership programme is its most widely used service, incorporating a total of more than 14,000 pharmacies across the continent; 2,050 are owned by PHOENIX through the Benu, Apotek 1, and Rowlands Pharmacy brands. For manufacturers, the partnership offers easy access to a large base of retailers, a cost-effective path to market and the benefit of specialised local knowledge.

Pharmacies receive marketing and efficiency support as well as special conditions. Besides existing partners, Jung says the focus this year will be on attracting large OTC manufacturers and biotech companies for longer contracts and an expanded customer base.

“It's not only that PHOENIX group can increase your sales in our own pharmacies – it also has 12,000 related pharmacies,” says Jung. “It is also trying to take a step beyond the regular stuff, which is a yearly negotiation, and work out more sophisticated strategies with the suppliers which put them in a more stable position – for example, by increasing contracts from three to five years.”

Matter of patients

PHOENIX group makes 150 million patient contacts each year through various channels. Its patient services department offers patient-direct services including home visits in partnership with suppliers, but this represents only the tip of the iceberg.

“The patient-centric approach is there across all products that PHOENIX offers, because at the end of the day, it's the customer who wants to know about the patient,” confirms Jung.

Jung recalls monitoring the launch of a hormone replacement drug in a European country when the PHOENIX business intelligence team noticed that the drug's major consumers were female patients aged 25–45, instead of the expected 45–65 age range. On further investigation, it discovered that the supplier's original marketing strategy had been misdirected and doctors were instead prescribing the drug as a contraceptive. PHOENIX's expertise was vital in ensuring that the right patients got the right drugs.

It's a convenient summary of the complexity involved in bringing a drug from production to patient. PHOENIX group's adaptability makes it a reliable partner for any pharmacy or supplier needing an expert in value-added services and a logistical hand. ■

Further information

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The European pharmaceutical market environment has changed significantly over the last years. Regulatory demands and increased cost containment measures in healthcare systems have impacted our customers business, demanding comprehensive solutions. The solution: **PHOENIX All-in-One**. This full-service-offering helps our industry partners to grow business, increase sales, lower cost and optimise processes – this joint approach ensures success.