



Data: Perils, Pitfalls and Competitive Advantage. Does your data support your business?

How to gain Sustainable Competitive Advantage (SCA) from your data.

In order to gain SCA, which leads to strong sustained market position and higher profits, your data needs to be able to pass four critical tests.

Does your data add value to your sales and marketing activities?

An example of adding value is the provision of seamless accurate monthly, or periodic reports. So what constitutes a good report?

Firstly, it should be necessary and fill a qualified and defined information gap; research in a variety of healthcare companies suggests that many routine reports are rarely read and even more infrequently acted upon.

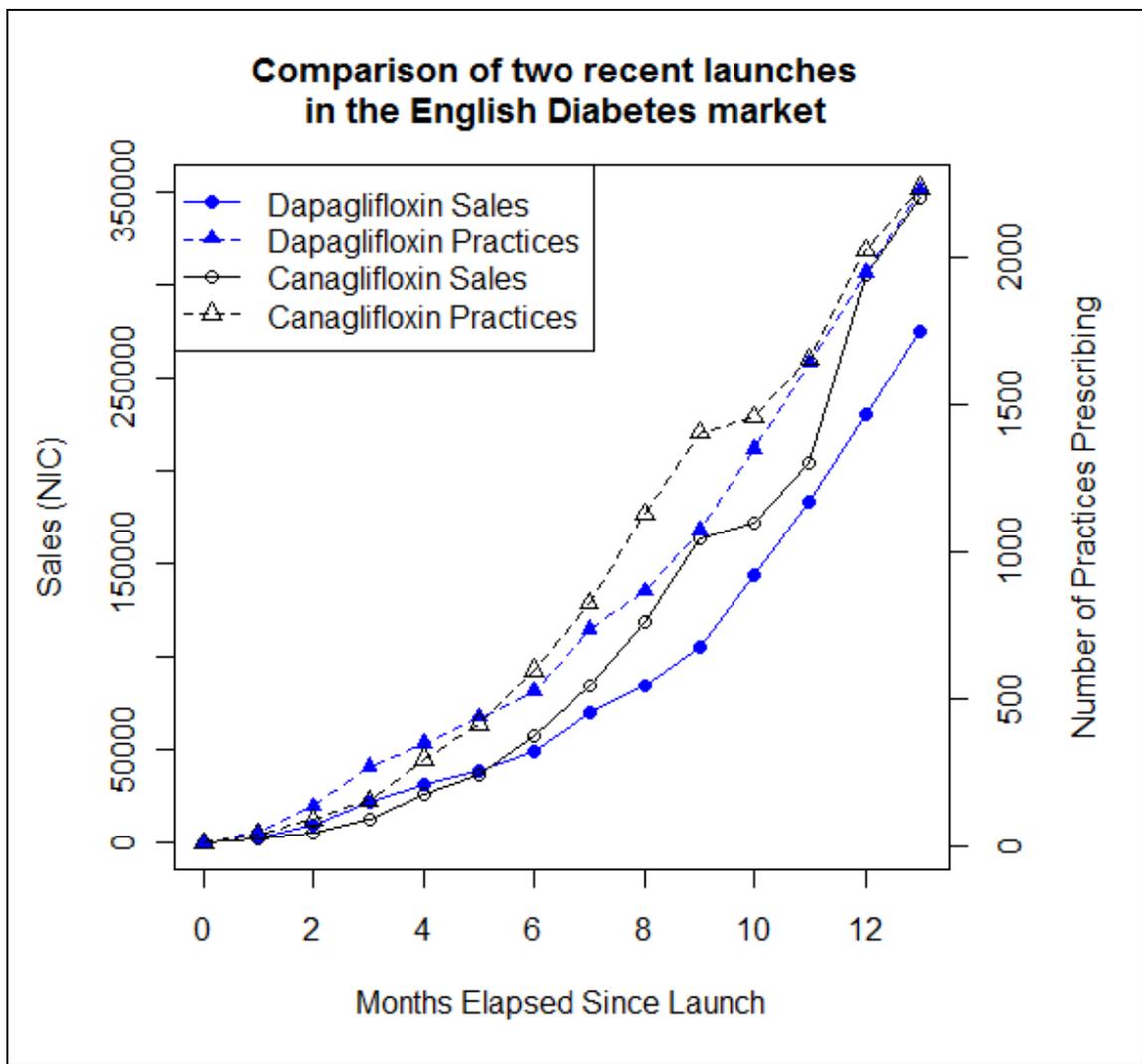
Secondly, it should be timely; it is no good reporting on the facts long after the opportunity to act on them has passed.

Thirdly, it should report a true, undistorted picture. Here dashboards are a major factor in strategic drift leading to loss of market position and spiralling wastage. Those produced by external data warehouse vendors may represent their view of “what is important – or convenient to report”, the result being the client is fed a “constructed reality” that may differ from the true picture. Alternatively the dashboard may reflect past priorities, long since gone and having never been updated. Such persistence of previous habit is a common flaw in reporting.

Take a fresh look at your data and only report significant events that need action or warrant investigation. Keep standard monitoring to a handful of visuals so you don't hide the facts in a mass of data.

Finally, visuals should be chosen specifically to report a key variable of interest. For example rather than have 3 or 4 separate graphs, try incorporating them in one. The below visual, one of our standard reports, illustrates this point well.

Here we make a comparison between two recent introductions to the English Diabetes market. By adjusting the x axis it allows us to compare how these two products fared after the same period of market exposure. Through introducing a second axis we can compare both sales (expressed in net ingredient cost) and practices recruited. Through use of colour and symbols we can easily see that canaglifloxin had a more erratic launch but succeeded in overtaking dapaglifloxin within 6 months. Clearly practice recruitment is the key showing the benefit of precise targeting. An interesting observation is that the canaglifloxin launch seems to briefly lose pace about 8 or 9 months post launch but then resumes its trajectory. This begs the question why?



Good reports present the facts in a clear, uncluttered way that visualises only those events that need to be reported, or that warrant constant monitoring. Our standard suite consists of only 5 graphs that provide all you need to know.

Recent research reveals that few companies actually use half the reports that they commission. By using only a few key reports that monitor and pinpoint key activities and events you will sharply improve productivity.

Does your data reduce costs?

A good example of cost reduction strategy is through having razor sharp targeting. This means that your most precious and costly resource, your sales force, is focused on the right customers at the right time.

Unfortunately this rarely happens in practice – most companies:-

- a) Buy in a customer list from an external vendor
- b) Select targets based on product usage deciles
- c) Allow the field force to change a few targets to utilise their *local knowledge*

Whilst entirely logical, this process, which is common to most companies, is heavily flawed.



The first two steps ensure that everyone is chasing precisely the same customers as their competitors with the same priorities. This means that targets wear out much faster, that non-targets are frequently more productive and sales productivity declines sharply.

The third step ensures that over time targets become adjusted in terms of ease of access and proximity to the representative's home location rather than true potential.

Our approach is simple – we build your target list from scratch using proven research on sales force targeting. This ensures that your targets:-

- a) Are fresh and tailored to your company
- b) Are not transparent to the competition
- c) Are not skewed by personal preferences

The result - sharper targets that are more productive to call upon.

Does your data help you build differentiation from your competitors?

Correct customer alignment to your market is critical. We ensure this by using your data to ensure that your team is the right size and the right activities are focused in the right places.

Using proven techniques we utilise your data to accurately align your sales and marketing activities to your market – ensuring strong customer adhesion.

This clear footprint differentiates you from your competitors and builds competitive advantage ensuring optimal market position.

Are your sales and marketing processes invisible to your competitors?

Finally our unique process ensures that your critical sales targeting and customer alignment activities are effectively invisible to your competitors which means that they can neither copy nor anticipate you. Keeping your leading edge sales and marketing processes invisible from your competitors is the fourth test of achieving sustainable competitive advantage.

In short, effective data management is key to a productive highly effective sales and marketing operation. We use proven academic research to underpin all we do, ensuring effective data management support, from timely business critical reports to effective targeting and customer alignment. This all means that you achieve higher returns, lower wastage, stronger sales growth and optimal market position.

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