

A SHOE-IN FOR THE JOB

Interactive direct mail amplified the need for drug efficacy to health care professionals.



Rheumatoid arthritis [RA] is a chronic debilitating disease that causes painful swelling and stiffness in the joints and other parts of the body. It can make simple movements – like untying a shoelace – difficult. In the United Kingdom, there’s little to differentiate RA treatments in a competitive market. Recognizing this, biopharmaceutical company AbbVie leveraged direct mail to promote their prescription medication Humira to health care professionals.

The company sent a “shoelace mailer” to more than 1,300 rheumatologists and rheumatology nurses to showcase how difficult the simplest tasks can be for people with RA and what remission means. The mailer had a cover image of a sneaker with a real shoelace. It opened to the message, “With RA that could have taken a lot longer.” It promoted Humira’s effectiveness in helping patients achieve remission and improve their quality of life. To read the message, health professionals had to untie the shoelace. Easy for them, hard for their patients. The mailer was part of a campaign featuring patients in sporting poses after being treated with Humira.

AbbVie’s direct mail amplified the debilitating effects of RA and the importance of drug efficacy. Of the 334 health care professionals who reported receiving the mailer, 76 per cent said they would maintain or increase their use of Humira in the next three months. Furthermore, 40 per cent of them remembered the efficacy of Humira in helping with RA. A simple yet effective case made with a shoelace.

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