

The value of consumer insights in consumer healthcare

Consumers know what they want - and how. Understanding consumers' needs and desires is at the centre of successful healthcare products and is essential to business development. Along with product efficacy studies, insights into a pool of consumer expectations, thoughts, feelings and behaviours provide valuable input to innovation processes and product development.

At Fertin Pharma, we are expanding the in-house consumer insights capabilities to support our customers' product development and successful market entry. In this interview, Head of Consumer Insights Rikke Pranger shares her thoughts on the value of consumer insights and the route to reliable and relevant data.

Q: Why are consumer insights a strategic priority at Fertin Pharma?

A: Consumer insights is one of our strongest tools to create innovation for our customers. Dialogue with consumers is an unfailing source of inspiration and new ideas. As a CDMO, it is our role to be product specialists. As such, it is our obligation to discover new, fundamental potentials that can be incorporated in our products, giving our customers sustainable advantage over time.

Q: How do you apply consumer insights in your company?

A: Consumer insight is not just about what consumers need. It is about understanding the challenges, consumers face, and then being able to offer the right solution, both at format and final product level. At Fertin, we typically use consumer studies for different purposes. Consumer studies may inspire brand new concepts and platforms, or it may be used in the on-going process of developing and improving our existing formats. It is extremely important that the purpose of the study is clear from the beginning to make sure that we get relevant, reliable and applicable data that feed into our R&D activities.

Q: Can you give an example of how consumer insights led to a new product?

A: I have a favourite example from our work with nicotine replacement therapy, where we interviewed more than 500 smokers to gain insights on their smoking habits and their struggle to quit. We talked to a hairdresser with a strong desire to quit. She was not allowed to chew gum during work hours. She tried nicotine patches, but they did not cover her needs during stressful periods. She tried lozenges, but did not have time to use them correctly during her breaks. With the current NRT formats, she never really got the help she needed to quit – and she is not alone. Her input



gave us the initial inspiration to develop two new prototypes of discrete smoking cessation formats that can be consumed in just 60 seconds. We are now in the process of discussing the opportunities with partners in the NRT segment, and hopefully the new products will soon be available as an attractive opportunity for line extensions and incremental sales.

Q: What kind of set-up do you apply to gain relevant and reliable consumer insights?

A: At Fertin Pharma, we believe in structured processes and tools targeted to different kinds of studies, be it quantitative or qualitative methods. It is equally important that consumer insights is not regarded as a stand-alone process, but integrated with other key processes such as R&D, sensory analysis, sensory testing, etc.

We perform studies on our own and in collaboration with our customers. In both cases, we take care to establish a resilient process based on a country-by-country approach that complies with local legislation, is approved by Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) and relies on cooperation with local research partners. At the moment, we have partners, processes and approvals in place to conduct studies in the US, Canada, Germany, UK, Denmark and Sweden.

Q: What is the future of consumer insights?

A: Societies and industries are rapidly changing. Understanding consumer habits and preferences will become more and more important. At Fertin, we strongly believe in consumer insights as a lever for continuous innovation and competitive advantage. Therefore, it is our ambition to support our customers with a full suite of services comprising everything from consumer insights and R&D capabilities to prototyping, testing of prototypes among consumers and of course manufacturing and packaging.