



Kirsty Dollisson is General Manager of Marketing and Commercial at TorchMedia.

# Sales 'off the plan': driving impulse shopping in Pharmacy

Research shows that Pharmacy is a channel where the shopper's decision can be influenced in-store more powerfully than in any other channel. How then do we, as pharmacists, maximise the opportunity for impulse purchases? Pharmacy Guild's in-store advertising partner TorchMedia enlightens us.

## What is the role of impulse in Pharmacy?

Naturally, the channel is primarily dedicated to caring for the health of its clients. Pharmacies are also retailers, however, and those same clients can, and will, purchase items in other channels outside Pharmacy that they could have purchased with you – if they had only been prompted in-store. Let's look at the facts, and then we'll offer some tips on how to increase your impulse sales.

## The Pharmacy shopper

Shoppers are more open to in-store influence in Pharmacy than in other channels (in health categories).

As demonstrated by research, shoppers are more likely to be influenced in health categories in Pharmacy versus any other kind of store: See table below.

So, you have their attention, and you are a trusted source of information. Now, how to make the most of this for impulse sales?

Here's a plan to cater for 'off the plan' shopper behaviour.

### 1. Impulse by ailment

Understand impulse opportunities

by ailment, and market this way in-store.

Shopping occasions in Pharmacy are unique, versus any other channel, because they tend to be driven by physical ailments or conditions. While there will always be more generic category sales, such as soap, toothpaste etc, what tends to drive people to Pharmacy as a destination is a compelling physical need. Even vitamins, which could be considered general 'preventive maintenance', are still ultimately shopped by condition, such as immunity, women's health, cold and flu, etc.

The first question to ask is: what are the impulse opportunities for the main conditions your shoppers come in for?

If it's winter and many of your clients are coming in with coughs and colds for over-the-counter drug relief, what else can you offer to assist them in their condition that they may not have planned on purchasing? Vitamin support, as well as OTC topical application products (such as Vicks and dry skin cream for red, flaking skin around the nose), travel tissues, hand sanitiser, red eye relief drops ... the list goes on!

Can you bundle complimentary

condition-based products together to increase impulse by offering more total care in an easy pack? This may include the 'cough and cold saviour pack', or a number of pack options, depending on symptoms. Bundled offers can be promoted in-store in so many ways – via your digital screen (if you're a Guild Pharmacy) where you can determine your own content, through at counter and at shelf displays and signage and, importantly, through staff recommendation.

Have a think through how this may apply for other conditions; weight loss, for example. You might bundle meal replacement sachets, or tubs, with meal replacement bars, soups, vitamin support for weight management, planner or recipe booklets, cards, and diaries. Then market these bundles in-store using POP displays, digital, and staff advice (when approached about weight loss – one of those sensitive categories).

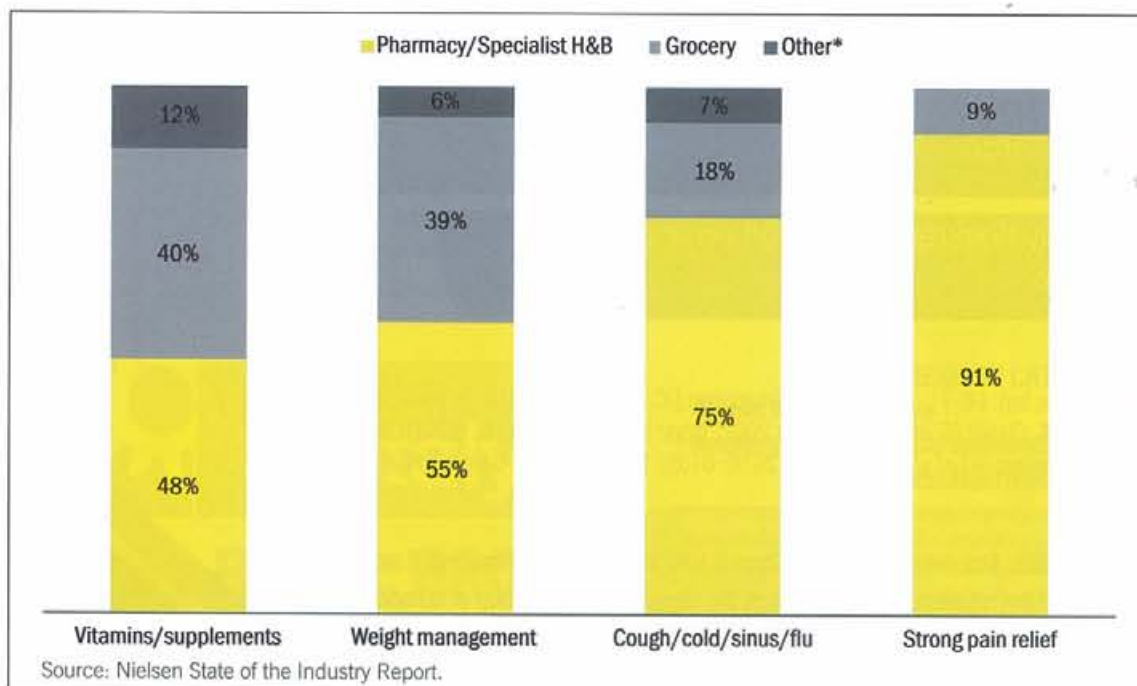
### 2. Infotainment while you wait

Provide impulse-driven infotainment during script waiting times.

Pharmacy is unique in this way: on many occasions, you have a captive audience as clients wait for scripts. Again, this is a major opportunity to drive impulse.

Following on from the previous point, what are the primary ailments for which people are coming in with scripts? What are the impulse opportunities for those ailments? How can other complimentary support products be bundled, or consideration prompted? Are heart conditions one of your major drivers – and can non-script support products also be suggested (such as heart health support vitamins, pedometers, or gentle exercise-based products etc)?

As pharmacists, you are in the best position to understand the contraindications of script purchases with other complimentary products and provide appropriate total care for the condition.



### Back to the captive audience

Some of your shoppers may be waiting 10 minutes for a script. What are you doing to entertain them, and provide information and advice, during this time?

If you have digital screens in-store, this is your primary opportunity to provide education, information, and compelling messages around impulse purchases. These may also be generic add-ons, as well as condition-based.

You may have in-store specials to promote in oral care, personal care, skin and hair care, or men's grooming. You may have new products in-store that are likely to be impulse-driven that can be promoted on screen during this time.

If you don't have a digital screen, you could consider 'while you wait' leaflets that staff automatically give to shoppers who are waiting for a script. These leaflets might outline key impulse offers for the month, and where in-store to find them.

Store staff can also suggest activities based around your POP displays for while you wait times: "Just to let you know, we have new educational displays in the beauty section and the oral care section [point it out]. Feel free to take a look while you wait; we always love to hear your feedback."

Staff can also provide suggestions and support for complimentary ailment-based products: "While you wait, can I direct you over here? You may find this range particularly helpful for your cold right now."

Staff who know their customer and the customer's family personally can ask after family members to determine whether they also need support.

There is always a balance to strike in Pharmacy, however. You don't want to be 'too salesy', but at the same time these are people with needs that you can cater to more comprehensively than you probably are right now – and you may well be losing sales to other channels, such as grocery, in the meantime.

While shoppers are captive in your store waiting for a script, you have an opportunity to meet as many of their needs as possible.

### 3. Educational POP

Use educational Point of Purchase to assist decision-making.

We've already started to address this, but to take things a step further, think through points one and two and how they then dovetail into this area.

For example, you could have educational 'stations' by ailment in-store – Cough and cold station', 'Weight loss station', 'Heart health station', etc – where health information and complimentary products for a particular ailment are stocked in a visually appealing way, supported by your digital content and staff directing shoppers to the displays.

This approach actually provides an alternative way to merchandise your store and maximise the impact of POP displays. Sometimes suppliers may go some way to doing this for you with their

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own promotions and displays, but you need to leverage these yourself in-store by making sure enough information is available at each ailment station to keep a shopper occupied for 10 minutes while they wait for a script.

Consider producing your own educational information as well, if you don't feel supplier information is comprehensive enough – this does not need to be an expensive exercise – and take a more active role in how fixtures, fittings and displays are used in your store to best effect when displaying educational information and products together.

Or, bring in a displays agency if need be to set up your generic ailment stations. The initial outlay will pay for itself, many times over, in increased impulse sales.

### 4. Link POP and training

Link your staff training to your POP impulse promotions.

We've already covered this to an extent, but to recap: every promotion you are running in-store needs to have clear staff training

around it, preferably supported by cheat sheet cards or other tools to which staff can refer.

Staff need to be trained to identify impulse opportunities, and to assist shoppers more comprehensively with their whole-of-health needs. If suppliers aren't giving you the staff training tools you need to effectively increase impulse sales, consider producing your own 'this goes with that ailment' checklist of generic impulse products. Also, train staff to ask the right questions while providing health care advice, in order to better determine the overall needs of clients in store.

### 5. Make your counter count

Use the counter as an effective impulse retail space.

This is a whole article in itself, but essentially the counter is your most important retail space in-store and needs to be leveraged for impulse. That means impulse-driven counter displays of small products, staff recommendation at counter, digital display above the counter, multi-buy offers, trial packs for new products etc.

So, there are five key ways to increase your impulse purchases. We hope they're helpful. If you're a Guild Pharmacy with a digital screen, we also suggest you have a chat with your local TorchMedia representative about how you can best use the percentage of your screen time that is local to your store, with content determined by you. This is one of the best opportunities you'll have to drive impulse, and we're here to help. 



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