

**Against all odds! Using unconventional research to establish a life-changing migraine treatment as the leading OTC-brand in a saturated market environment.**

The paper outlines a best practise case in pharmaceutical research. The specific value for the audience will be the demonstration of a creative interaction between research institute and client: in most research and marketing phases of the German Formigran launch none of the “well-established” research routines would have worked. Using new and innovative research strategies and methods in concept, pack and communication research was a prerequisite for the Formigran success in Germany.

In the middle of 2006, GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare Germany launched the brand „Formigran“ as an OTC migraine therapeutic, containing the active agent naratriptane. Prior to that, the agent with the maximum dose of 2 tablets at 25mg per unit package had been released from being a prescription drug.

In terms of self-medication, migraine sufferers up to then could only resort to conventional OTC agents such as acetylsalicyl acid, paracetamol and ibuprofen, or go visit a doctor.

Formigran symbolized a downright revolutionary change regarding the self-medication of migraine – and yet nobody considered Formigran’s success possible at the time. The concerns of the German pharmacists against the active agent as well as it’s being non-prescriptive were too massive, the competition of the mainstream brands Aspirin, Dolormin and Thomapyrin seemed too strong and established, the market power of the main competitors Bayer, Johnson&Johnson as well as Boehringer Ingelheim too overpowering and the target group of sufferers too conservative and suspicious.

And yet: three years after the launch, Formigran is the market leader within the segment of OTC migraine therapeutics on a value basis, as well as being the number 1 brand in the mind-set of migraine sufferers and pharmacists!

All of that merely bought with the help of advertising budgets? Surely, Formigran’s success would not have been possible without investing in marketing and sales. But advertising investments only pay off when triggering a response from the consumer – that’s why consequent and innovative market research to identify the appropriate consumer approach before and after the product launch of Formigran was as least as important. This research contribution to the outstanding success of Formigran will be illustrated in the paper/presentation.

Thus, the contribution of market research in terms of a lasting market success for Formigran needed to consist of finding valid and robust answers to the following questions:

- What is the activating Key Consumer Insight, opening sufferers towards Formigran?
- How can the outer package/box be designed that the package is eye-catching, communicates consumer insight and clearly differentiates itself from the competition?
- What sales volume is realistic?
- What is the appropriate story and what are the appropriate pictures in terms of basic positioning?

During an intensive methodical exchange between GSK and ISM a sequential multilevel, comparative test approach was developed, in which the target group was initially supposed to evaluate the verbalized positioning of Formigran and the competitors, subsequently compare the unbranded packaging designs, and were finally again shown the same packaging designs with the original branding. A clear deduction which communication contribution the Formigran package itself could make and if the communicated contents pay into Formigran's basic positioning could be drawn from the comparison of all three survey levels.

As a methodological alternative to traditional trial-adoption models ISM developed together with GSK a new, tailor-made forecast approach reflecting the unique launch situation of Formigran.

The complete paper is available at [ESOMAR](#).

Do you want further information on this methodology? Please contact [ISM GLOBAL DYNAMICS](#).