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## Prescription Solutions: E-Mail Newsletter Builds Awareness with Consultants

How a pharmacy and medical management company built awareness and credibility with its key audience of benefits consultants with an e-mail newsletter.

### The Company

Prescription Solutions, a Costa Mesa, California company, is an innovative pharmacy and medical management company founded in 1993. It provides integrated pharmacy benefit management (PBM) services to more than 5.5 million health plan members nationwide, including more than one million seniors. The company is a subsidiary of PacifiCare Health Systems, Inc., a publicly traded health care services company.

### Strategic Issues

Prescription Solutions is well-positioned to help managed care plans, employers and trusts to find innovative solutions to rising prescription drug costs that improve the overall delivery of health care. However, due in part to its small size and its ownership by PacifiCare, the company is not well known among its potential customers. A strategic marketing campaign, including a proactive public relations campaign, has been very successful in increasing this awareness with managed care companies from 5.4% in 2000 to 30% in 2003, and among employers from no awareness in 2000 to 20.8% awareness in 2003.

However, there is another group that serves as the gatekeeper to most self-insured employers seeking a pharmacy benefit manager and to many managed care plans as well: benefits consultants. Benefits consultants are experts in employee benefits who are frequently asked to identify and screen potential PBMs, and to handle the RFP process when a firm decides to find or change PBMs. Prescription Solutions needed to find a way to increase awareness among this group, and to position itself as a PBM that consultants would include on their RFP distribution lists.

### The Tactical Solution

Working with Scott Public Relations (SPR), the company developed an electronic newsletter that would be distributed directly to consultants via e-mail. The goal of the newsletter was threefold: increase awareness of Prescription Solutions, position the company and its executives and pharmacists as “thought leaders” in the profession who have solutions in prescription drug management that benefits all constituencies, and to highlight the company’s expertise in medical management and clinical research.

Scott Public Relations sourced a company that published newsletters on the pharmaceutical and benefits industries and negotiated to obtain five stories

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for each newsletter, every other month. These stories were featured in the electronic newsletter in “briefs” with the reader encouraged to click on a link to see the full story. The link took the reader to the Prescription Solutions website.

In addition, each newsletter featured an in-depth article on a topic or issue of current interest in the PBM sector, such as the new wave of generic drugs, reference-based pricing, or the value of prior authorization. These articles were written so that consultants could forward them to their employer clients, thus positioning the consultant as an expert with information on the latest trends that could bring value to the employer and help solve their problems.

This article was also introduced “in brief” in the electronic newsletter, with the opportunity to click on an Internet link to see the full article. Again, the link went to the Prescription Solutions website.

### Results

The newsletter is one factor in a dramatic increase in the number of RFPs that have included Prescription Solutions - almost double the number of RFPs were received in 2003 over 2002. And awareness of Prescription Solutions among the employer market increased from 8.4% in 2002 to 20.8% in 2003.

An added benefit of the newsletter was the ability to interest the news media in the article topics, and to either run bylined articles on these topics or assign reporters to research and write a story. Thus, Prescription Solutions received additional visibility and credibility from this project through this additional media coverage.

### Scott Public Relations...

“A Step Ahead” is a publication of Scott Public Relations ([www.scottpublicrelations.com](http://www.scottpublicrelations.com)) a public relations firm specializing in business-to-business communication for firms in health care, insurance and technology. Scott Public Relations helps its clients, ranging from Fortune 100 firms to start-up companies, stay “A Step Ahead” in their marketing programs and in their industries.

### For More Information

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### Would an e-newsletter work for you?

- Does your constituency read information sent by e-mail?
- Can you create a newsletter with valuable content that people will read?
- Can you present unbiased and objective information so that you can credibly be a news resource?
- Does your content reflect the sophistication or knowledge level of your audience?
- Is it topical?
- Does the targeted audience require and value receiving timely information that helps them do their jobs better?
- Can you track the response via website traffic and identify those who respond?