Chapter 15
Turkish Healthcare Industry Promotional Practices and Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, promotional activities of Turkish healthcare sector have been reviewed both on historical and contemporary basis. Anatolian medical folk culture regarding health and Islam give the traces of today’s pharmaceuticals. Herbalists are examined as the first pharmacists and the first promotional practitioners. The importance of good product quality, ethical and socially responsible considerations, community wealth to form health sensitive and conscious stakeholders has been observed. Legendary, made-in-Turkey painkiller and febrifuge pharmaceutical, Gripin, and its successful promotional practices and pioneering promotional activities of Eczacibasi health group has been examined in this chapter as well. Early healthcare promotional efforts between 1950-1990 and afterwards have been studied to forecast the future. In the last parts of this chapter, the importance of crisis management and ingredients of a new reputation formula in pharmaceutical industry and digital communication in health has been studied.

INTRODUCTION

Pharmaceuticals industry is one of the world’s most investing industries to technology. Corporate Reputation is so important for the pharmaceuticals industry. The main reason why the pharmaceuticals industry shows greater regard for corporate reputation has to do with the dichotomy between health and profit. On the one hand, pharmaceutical companies operate with the mission of fulfilling key duties in terms of the community and human health. On the other hand, they are also in the position of having to make money for shareholders. The industry experiences this dichotomy at every level of the business every day, and it is in the position of having to manage relations and communication between patients, physician and manufacturers on the basis of ‘trust’. Trust, however, is not a commodity you can go out and buy (Harris & Whalen, 2010). Contrary to popular thought, it is not the number of beneficial drugs pioneered that instils trust in the community.
Trust is something that everyone, above all investors, is keen to embrace within the framework of sustainability principles. Today, corporate social responsibility abbreviated as CSR constitutes an indispensable part of the agenda for company management. Companies are responsible towards the community from the day they are established. And they can’t dress up this responsibility in the guise of ‘profits, commercial interest or similar expectations’ (Kadibesegil, 2012a). Until a few years ago, social responsibility activities were something that companies took on voluntarily and at their own discretion. Today, however, there is evidence to suggest that they have become ‘an imperative if companies responsible for consuming the world’s limited resources are to honour their duties with respect to the sustainability of these resources’. This is why, for example, the British government has appointed a Minister for Social Responsibility. Similarly, the European Commission has a separate department dealing exclusively with CSR issues (Kadibesegil, 2012b).

Turkish healthcare industry requires a special review. Turkey is the world’s 13th and Europe’s 6th biggest medicine market on turnover basis. It has been estimated that the size of Turkish medicine market will reach $15.2 billion in 2013. According to the PriceWaterhouse Coopers’ report titled “Medicine Industry: Vision: How You’ll Follow A Path?” Turkey will be the 10th largest market in the near future. Worldwide increase in the population at the global level, a rapid increase in the drug demand, increased levels of prosperity and the growing popularity of the aging, obesity will accelerate the growth of the sector. Furthermore, the research conducted by Prof. Muammer Kaya declares that the healthcare sector is the 11th future promising industry in Turkey. According to Pharma 2020 Report, Turkish healthcare market is expected to be one of the largest 10 markets with the market growth of 10-15% each year for the next decade. Turkey’s large and rapidly growing population, as well as increasing average life expectancy and increasing elderly population and low drug consumption offer significant growth opportunities.

In this chapter, promotional activities of Turkish healthcare sector have been reviewed both on historical and contemporary basis. Anatolian medical folk culture regarding health and Islam give the traces of today’s pharmaceuticals. Herbalists are examined as the first pharmacists and the first promotional practitioners. The importance of good product quality, ethical and socially responsible considerations, community wealth to form health sensitive and conscious stakeholders has been observed. First legendary made in Turkey pain-killer and febrifuge pharmaceutical Gripin and its successful promotional practices and pioneering promotional activities of Eczacibasi health group has been examined in this chapter as well. Early healthcare promotional efforts between 1950-1990 and afterwards have been studied to forecast the future. In the last parts of this chapter, the importance of crisis management and Ingredients of a new reputation formula in pharmaceuticals industry and digital communication in health has been studied.

HISTORY OF TURKISH HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY PROMOTIONAL PRACTICES

Turkish pharmaceutical production has reached a comparable level with EU countries, and the sector has become attractive for foreign investors. As a result, multinational companies began to cooperate with local companies. 15 of the 20 biggest pharmaceuticals company in Turkey merged with foreign capital (Turk, 2008). Novartis was created in 1996 through the merger of Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz, established the first factory in Istanbul around the world. Fako was sold to Actavis in 2003. Eczacibasi as one of the leading company in the domestic pharmaceuticals industry sold