Michael Plasmeier

# Metabical Sales Plan

Metabical is the first clinically-proven FDA-approved (assuming it is approved or the whole thing is moot) for moderately overweight people. It also has fewer side effects than previous weight loss drugs, such as Alli.

It is coming into a big market. 34% of the US population was considered overweight in 2000, and that was not counting another 25.8% who were considered obese. However, the weight loss category had seen some disreputable products before. Because losing weight with diet and exercise is hard, and many people want to do it, there have been many snake-oil salesmen who have tried to cater to the market. In addition, many of the other substances such as Alli and ephedra had serious side effects and were either banned or investigated to see if they should be banned.

Barbara has to overcome the skeptics of the products and convince them that Metabical is different. I think Barbara Printup has outlined a pretty good sales plan so far. Metabical is new to the market and CSP needs to get people to know about it. I am going to go section by section and discuss my thoughts.

## Advertising

I think Barbara is generally right to focus on direct to consumer advertisements. This is a product people will be calling up their doctors to ask for. In addition, because consumers will need to pay for it themselves, they are more likely to actually complete the transaction if they initiated the desire to purchase, as opposed to their doctors.

However, the patient’s doctors should know about the drug before a patient comes to ask. Doctors need to know that this is the first clinically-proven FDA-approvedweight loss drug. Advertisements, papers, and testimonials from other doctors will convince doctors that this is a safe and effective weight loss drug. I wonder why she only allocated $1 million for doctor advertisements as opposed to $12 million in consumer advertisements. It is important to note that this does not include the in-person advertising accomplished via sales reps. This will cost an additional $2-2.5 million.

## Promotion

 Promotion opens up the interesting world of social media. However, I do not think her idea to hold a nationwide contest to see who can lose the most weight is a good idea. National challenges are dominated by a few people who do very well. In addition, losing too much weight could be dangerous.

Instead, I propose an alternate campaign. CSP should create an application on Facebook where patients can pledge to lose a certain amount of weight to their friends, or some subset of their friends. Patients can then post updates to their friends to track their weight loss goal (including diet and exercise). If they are falling behind, their friends could be prompted to send words of encouragement. This individualized social “peer pressure” would give just the right amount of pressure to the patient. In addition, the user’s friends would not only see the Metabical brand, but see the drug in use by their friend. They might then go to their medical professional to try it again. This could work particularly well in women who like to share weight loss strategies.

The other, more traditional events would be good to run, in addition.

## Sales Force

The many individual sales meetings allow CSP to test out different sales strategies and marketing pitches. Because each meeting is individual, the meetings could be set up differently, the marketing material could be written differently, and the overall message of the pitch could differ. In addition, because reps get many individual tries, they can hone their skills over time. The control could be a more conventional pitch used on previous products.

This allows Printup and CSP to find the best value proposition for doctors for this new drug. Because of the challenges of other drugs in this industry, CSP needs to find the right message that balances the promise of the new drug with the skepticism held by doctors to new entries in this category.

## Conclusion

It is essential that CSP and Printup get this new drug launch correct. They have spent $400 million developing this drug and then need to build a long-term market where they will maximize sales, until their patent expires in 10 years.