



FACTSHEET

Primary Care Representative

A **Primary Care Representative** is an ABPI qualified **Medical Sales Representative** who concentrates their efforts in the primary care setting, with customers who work in the primary care arena.

The Primary Care setting consists of local GP surgeries/ Health Centres/ Medical Centres/ Walk-in-Centres/ Community Pharmacies/ **Primary Care Trusts**(PCTs) and **Clinical Commissioning Groups**(CCGs). These locations will house the customer base for the Primary Care Representative – for instance: GPs, practice nurses, practice managers, dieticians, practice pharmacists, non-medical prescribers, community pharmacists, PCT personnel (medicines management team, medical director, prescribing lead).

A Primary Care Representative is responsible for business planning, budgetary planning and targeting, to make sure that they sell to the 'right people and see them the right number of times'. It is the role of the Primary Care Representative to build trusted working relationships with their customers and to implement the marketing plan in their area. They work closely with colleagues in their team, such as Hospital Specialists and NHS Liaison Managers, sharing relevant information so that customers receive excellent service from the company, and so that product sales grow optimally.

Typically, a Primary Care Representative will be a graduate with a science based background, although graduates in the Humanities, Commerce or Law fields are also employed. Occasionally, non-graduates with a good academic background and relevant background in sales may also be employed as Primary Care Representatives. Nurses, pharmacists and other health care professionals can also make excellent sales representatives if they have good commercial acumen and selling skills also. The most important qualities that an employer will be seeking in any potential Primary Care Representative are positive attitude, resourcefulness, commercial focus, good work ethic, ability to work autonomously, excellent planning and organisational skills, good time management skills and above all exceptional communication skills.

What is the typical working day of a Primary Care Representative ? Having already planned the day several days or more in advance, they tend to see GP's either during or after surgery in the morning, and see retail pharmacists and practice nurses in the afternoons. Their role is to build relationships with practice staff, doctors, nurses and retail pharmacists, to ensure that they create an environment where their products are most likely to be prescribed more frequently. These meetings will take the form of one-to-one discussions during which the Primary Care Representative will seek to understand the health care professional's needs through appropriate questioning and engagement in a two way communication to sell the benefits of their product portfolio for the customer and for the patients. Promotional materials may be used to remind a reinforce product benefits of the Primary Care Representative's visit but the nature of it's content and the format is tightly controlled by the ABPI.

Alternatively, the Primary Care Representative could hold a structured meeting with a wider audience which usually involves delivering a presentation during a lunch time break at a GP surgery or to a larger audience perhaps at an after hours educational meeting led by Key Opinion Leaders. A meeting or appointment may be subject to change at short notice as the healthcare professional who the Primary Care Representative is going to visit may have to attend to the clinical needs of their patients, so it is always prudent to have several back-up plans and contingencies for each day's work.

The success of a Primary Care Representative is largely measured by the sales of the products that they have in their portfolio. Sales data is usually collected by the amount of product that is sold into the pharmaceutical wholesalers and by the number of prescriptions that are processed by the NHS Business Services Authority who are the government agency responsible for reimbursing pharmacies for the NHS prescriptions that they have dispensed.

The Primary Care Representative may find themselves either employed directly by a manufacturer of a pharmaceutical product i.e. in what is known as a 'headcount' role or possibly as a part of a team of contract sales representatives, as either a dedicated or syndicated sales team.

Contract teams are run by organisations which specialise in putting sales teams into pharmaceutical companies who maybe wish to run a sales campaign for a limited period of time or want to assess the uptake of their product before they employ a large 'headcount' sales team. The pharmaceutical industry is held in very high regard for the excellent level of training that it gives its employees and for the ethical manner in which they work.



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