

4.8 PERSONAL SELLING

The pharmaceutical market is dominated by personal selling (detailing) as the most effective element of promotional mix. Detailing on the pharmaceutical market implies sales calls by pharmaceutical sales representatives (PSR) to physicians in their surgeries. During a call, which lasts between 2 to 5 minutes? The PSR talks to the physician about one or several of his company's products, primarily the composition of the drug, mechanisms of action, the product's therapeutic value, dosage and potential adverse effect. During the call, the PSR may leave drug samples and some gives of small value, primarily memorabilia⁸⁶ bearing the name of the company or the drug promoted. The choice of physicians to be visited by PSRs is not random; they choose the physicians that are believed to be more likely to prescribe a drug in their practice, or prescribe it in larger quantities. Prescribing physicians are expected to form specific demand for ethical drugs by prescribing certain therapies. The physician's decision to prescribe a certain therapy is made in complex circumstances which are a combination of available information and the physician's experience and knowledge:

The physician's decision tends to be rational.

Physician seeks to prescribe the therapy that is most suitable for the patient in the given circumstances.

The content of the message is of primary importance, where the interest is dominant in terms of indications, contraindications and their drug's adverse effects.

The content of the message is complex; the message contains expert knowledge from several fields (medicine, pharmacy, epidemiology etc.).

The sales representative must have comprehensive knowledge of the product, its mechanism of action, the drug's positive and negative characteristics, etc. For this reason, the Serbian legislation provides that a sales representative Stout states that in 2000 Pfizer spent 86