

Return to Growth: How do you Rescue a Decline in Sales?

In this case study, I want to show you from my own experience how to balance the inside-out vs. the outside-in views to rescue an ailing business. Both views are important, but to balance isn't easy.

A company in biological medical products set itself the goal of repositioning one of its existing business units (BU). The business unit had existed for over ten years and had seen a significant decline in sales and profits in recent years.

- One of the most prominent problems was the need for more investment in marketing and sales. Little to no resources had been put into this vital area, resulting in a lack of visibility and customer loyalty.
- Another problem was the ageing and loss of key opinion leaders. They are crucial to the company's reputation, and their departure or lack of updating hurts reputation and credibility in the industry.
- The next pressing problem was the unstructured investment in product development. The allocation of resources to single projects didn't follow a clear strategy or prioritization, which resulted in waste.
- Finally, the exact cost structure and margins were unknown. As a result, the company did not understand the financial bottlenecks and how to improve profitability.

It was necessary to realign activities to the changing market and focus on the most promising products, followed by the required adjustments within the company. This was done following the marketing strategy playbook:



Understand the markets: The available products addressed various markets: ophthalmology, skin diseases, autoimmune syndromes, nutritional problems, etc. To better understand the opportunities, it is critical to directly interact with your existing and potential customers. Through an intensive analysis of the markets, the conditions in the market and the competition, a clear focus on neurodermatitis was chosen. The reasons for choosing this area were the needs of patients, the technical possibilities and the existing contacts with key opinion leaders, which were ideal for a new start to marketing activities.

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Accordingly, the strategy and activities in sales and marketing were systematically realigned, including:

- Development of direct-to-patient marketing via social media
- Re-design of the website
- Introduction of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool
- Realignment of internal resources to sales and marketing
- Consistent reporting and analysis of marketing activities
- Improving product margins by focusing on core products and cost-cutting measures in production

... just to rebound to the outside...

An essential focus of the strategy were the development of partnerships with patient organizations. These partnerships have made it possible to work more closely with those affected, receive feedback, and better understand their needs. Communication and interaction with potential customers were improved to benefit directly from new patient inquiries, ensuring that inquiries are processed quickly and that potential customers receive comprehensive information to facilitate their decision-making.

A decisive step in our strategy was the recruitment of new Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) in the field of atopic dermatitis. These KOLs have helped to establish the company as an expert in this field and strengthen its credibility.

... to end in success

All of these activities resulted in a significant increase in sales in the new core area of neurodermatitis. This will now be expanded through targeted marketing activities, the development of innovative products, and the expansion of the customer base to establish a strong presence in this market segment and drive growth.