

Trends in consumer health care:

Increased focus on improving the consumer experience

The consumer healthcare industry is changing fast, shifting from traditional tablets and pills to more confectionery-like formats in order to meet demands for more user-friendly and convenient products.

What are the major trends that drive the consumer healthcare industry today and tomorrow? Learn more from Anne Pedersen, Director of Business Development at Fertin Pharma, a leading contract developing and manufacturing company.

Q: From your perspective, which consumer trends should the industry pay most attention to right now?

A: Clearly, the concept of ‘self-care’ stands out as one of the important drivers in consumer healthcare. This trend has further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. People are more and more concerned about their health and take an increasing interest in what they can do themselves to keep fit and healthy, feel good, and perform well rather than simply treating illness. We experience that the trend of self-care drives the development of new and user-friendly formats. Take gummies as an example. Within a few years, this format from the confectionery industry has become very popular for delivery of supplements.

Other trends I would like to mention are convenience and trustworthiness – these are not new of course, but still highly relevant. Consumers tend to go for products that fit an active life style, products that are discreet, enjoyable and convenient, and at the same time delivers the needed benefits.



Q: How do you see the industry responding to these consumer trends?

A: Innovation is the short answer. It is evident that the current consumer trends challenge the entire industry to invent new formats and packaging solutions. In the past, we saw a lot of focus on clinical claims, which is still the case, but now coupled with a strong wish to innovate the consumer experience.

This means that health care companies have to ask themselves, how they can make a real difference in consumers’ lives by making more convenient and enjoyable products when delivering active ingredients and nutrients to them. And the answers are often found in new delivery formats that provide unique mouthfeels and creative packaging.



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Q: Could you describe in what ways the rethinking of the consumer experience affects the work of a CDMO like Fertin Pharma?

A: I believe that the current trends make our service offering more relevant than ever, as we can use our long experience in confectionery and pharma to inspire the innovation processes. On top of that, we are continuously strengthening our capabilities within consumer insights, consumer testing and proof of concept testing of our formats.

We have geared our organization to meet our customers' innovation challenges and come up with suggestions for new formulations, tastes and textures, new actives or packaging solutions. As an example, our Zapliq chewable tablets and compressed chewing gum formats respond well to consumers' demand for convenience and have rated high on pleasant mouthfeel, taste and aftertaste, and we have several new products in the pipeline based on these and other new formats.

The innovation challenges are exciting, but we must never lose sight of the critical aspect of balancing enjoyable formats with regulatory requirements for supplements as well as drug products posed by US FDA, EMA and other regulatory bodies. For us and for our customers, quality management, regulatory compliance and IPR are crucial to successful product development and long-term viability of the products.

Q: What are the customers looking for in a partnership with a CDMO?

A: We definitely see a trend that companies increasingly rely on cooperation with CDMOs. I think there are several reasons for this. First, it is a matter of speed to market. Instead of building in-house capabilities within R&D and manufacturing, for instance, it is attractive to work with CDMOs that can offer a fast and agile process from the first idea to the final product.

Our dialogues with consumer health care companies reveal that many prefer full-service partners, who can help them all the way, so that they can focus on their own core business and strong capabilities within branding, marketing and distribution. In other cases, they may look for special expertise within for example taste masking that are key to successful products. Not to forget GMP manufacturing and high quality standards all the way, which remain important fundamentals in any cooperation.

To sum it up, I would say that health care companies are typically looking for the full package that offers flexibility, scalability and fast time to market especially when it comes to setting new standards with innovative and effective products.



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