Best Practices for Building a Copay Program Dashboard

Making your most important metrics count
Well Planned Dashboards
What can they do for you?

Overview

There was a time a decade ago when execution of a patient copay program meant putting your “dollars-off” offer on a plastic card and having your reps deliver them to your HCP’s. Everyone knows it’s gotten a lot more complex today with all of the new types of programs, both from a copay delivery standpoint and certainly from a data and analysis perspective.

Today, most brands realize how important it is to get a good handle on their data and how analyzing the data they have can provide valuable insights into the performance of their sales and marketing initiatives. There is a lot of information available on these programs, but most is stored in several vendor portals. This may sound great but having the data spread in different places and not aggregated does you no good! The challenge lies in making this information easy to access and translate for the key stakeholders who can then take the appropriate actions more quickly than before.

As data collected by brands accumulates into big piles of “nothingness”, targeted dashboard adoption has skyrocketed. Fortunately, gaining insights on your data is easier than ever with the use of a well-executed dashboard. More and more companies rely on dashboards to make sense of their data. They build dashboards with the hopes that they will turn mountains of data into actionable insights. Brands find that these dashboards are indispensable business tools that deliver a competitive advantage.

Patient incentive programs are here to stay for the pharma marketer and tracking the performance of these programs has become a key area of focus. These days there are so many ways to deliver these patient incentives: via the web, electronic delivery at point of sale (Relay Health), HCP rep delivered cards, e-Prescribing, delivery by the pharmacist at the point of sale and more.

A brand may have several different vendors for these channels and each one has its own set of reports or a vendor portal to access program data. If you want a complete view of your total copay program, you need to spend a lot of time and effort to pull all the information together from separate reports and/or portals and then try and make sense of it. Not only is it time intensive to bring these various data sources together, but even if you spend the time to pull everything together, the interactions between programs may not be very evident without a lot of analytical work. It is rare to find a brand team that has the time to do what is necessary to pull all this data together. This is where a copay focused dashboard can streamline the data gathering, mapping and charting process...freeing up the brand team to focus on strategic issues.

There are many benefits to leveraging a copay program specific dashboard. In this white paper, I review those benefits and detail the best practices for developing this type of dashboard.
The Benefits of Using a Copay Dashboard
One version of the truth

Tracks Your Program in One Place
Often several vendors can be involved in the execution of co-pay programs for a brand or company. A well-executed dashboard brings all the related spending and performance metrics from various vendors into one central location, aggregating and mapping all the pertinent data behind the scenes, greatly simplifying the reporting and analytical process. This allows you to track all your program performance from multiple vendors all in one place.

Allows You to Focus on Strategy
An excellent copay dashboard frees up the brand team to focus on program performance, KPI’s and brand building / strategic issues instead of data gathering and mapping. A properly optimized dashboard will make it easy to see how the patient incentive program and potentially other related marketing efforts are performing.

Not only will you be able to identify how individual program tactics are faring based on your KPIs and metrics, but you will be able to see program interactions as well. Net/net you’ll get an idea of how well your overall brand strategies are performing.

Customizes Reporting to Your Needs
Rather than relying on standard or even custom reports from different copay vendors, a customized dashboard can aggregate the most important metrics and trends to address your brand’s unique situation. For example, some brands may be interested in ROI reporting, or in tracking copay redemptions by vendor, channel, physician segment or geography. Others may be interested in tracking copay utilization rate, patient benefit amounts, abandonment, fraud metrics or some combination of all these (or even other additional measures). Each brand and situation is unique and each dashboard should be developed with those unique needs in mind.

Keeps Everyone on the Same Page
The dashboard forces everyone to keep to the update timeline, ensuring that the program will get the ongoing visibility needed for tracking, adjustments and effective decision making. In addition, all key stakeholders will have access to the same information on a timely basis. All interested parties will be able to see how the campaigns are performing, what’s working and what isn’t, thereby facilitating nimble decision making to improve performance.

Clearly there are substantial benefits associated with using a copay dashboard. But developing an effective dashboard is the key! To ensure that your dashboard becomes an indispensable tool for decision making, there are a few key best practices that should be considered during the development.

A well-executed dashboard brings all the related spending and performance metrics from various vendors into one central location.
Start with the End in Mind

What are the most important measures of success for your patient incentive program? Sales, adherence, ROI? Begin the design of your dashboard with those measures of success in mind, so the dashboard can provide actionable information and answer key questions. The dashboard should answer the questions you have on your specific objectives and track how you are performing versus those goals. If you stick to building a dashboard with the clear goal of making specific decisions, you will have a very valuable asset for your brand and company.

Then, with this in mind, think about how you can display your data in the most useful way. The key is to stick to the basics and clearly display your actionable metrics - those that show you where you currently are, where you’ve been and where you are likely headed in relation to your goals. These metrics support smart decision making and provide companies with critical information to successfully manage their businesses. Actionable metrics should be an integral part of your dashboard.

Consider Related Brands

If you are setting up your dashboard for a specific brand, it is important to keep expansion to other brands in mind from the outset of the project. If you feel your dashboard could be used by other brands in your company in the future then you should make that known early and spend the extra time and effort to set up the dashboard in a way that works for additional brands, especially if those brands have the same KPIs and/or are share managers.

Clarity and Simplicity Matters

Make sure to clearly label what you display in your dashboard without cluttering the dashboard with extraneous information. You want your dashboard to be more than just pretty charts on a page – you want it to facilitate informed decision making. Don’t just report on data that you have just because you have it! Include only metrics that address objectives and lead to clear action items. Metrics that really are not important enough to provide any useful action items should not be included. Clearly defined objectives are critical to designing an effective dashboard that incorporates the key metrics needed to track and manage your business.

Many dashboards try to do too much. They try to include too many features, or too much data all in one place. They try to fit as much information as possible on the dashboard page which makes the resulting output too confusing to users.

While the current school of thought may be to try and fit your dashboard to one page, it is almost never possible to do that when you have multiple copay programs all of which may need to be analyzed individually as well as together. While it is true that some dashboards stick to one page, this heavily depends on what is being tracked/measured. Many times, that is not desirable based on the amount of data and the variety of things that need to be reported on.

A tabbed dashboard can solve this. A tabbed dashboard lets you segment different programs or categories on separate tabs. It helps you create organized pages in your dashboard that don’t overwhelm the users. It’s better to start with one central page or a guided analysis which provides the highlights and provide backup pages that allow the user to dig deeper in specific areas.

A patient incentive program tracking dashboard should be clear and concise making information easy to access and understand. This will shorten the learning curve for new users.

It is critical to have a process-based team set up the dashboard to properly unearth the trends and business drivers that deliver real ROI. Some companies make the mistake of just having their technical team design their dashboard. If the appropriate folks are not involved, the result can be an ineffective dashboard that misses the key business “indicators”. Ineffective dashboards don’t drive strategic decision making, action or the desired business results. These dashboards are little more than colorful charts on a page.
Show the Complete Picture

A comprehensive patient incentive program dashboard does not need to contain every aspect of brand activity all wrapped into one. That would certainly not deliver on some of the best practices outlined here. However, it should contain every aspect of the program or programs associated with your patient copay incentive program.

As mentioned earlier, when a brand has multiple vendors and incentive program channels, looking at any individual set of reports, dashboards, or portals is showing only part of the story. The vendor specific reporting only shows that particular company’s programs but doesn’t combine data from different sources to complete the picture.

For effective decision making, a complete view across all vendors, incorporating all activities and spend is needed. Looking at programs individually will not give you the answers to key questions.

For example, if you add an electronically delivered coupon program to the mix, your rep delivered redemptions may decline. You need to trend the overall redemptions and certainly your costs along with your TRx’s to see what’s happening to both your topline sales and bottom line profitability.

There is a lot of data incorporated into individual vendor portals, reports and internal spreadsheets. But, let’s be honest... most of your copay program data is never viewed and certainly not aggregated and analyzed the way it should be given the spend levels. For most brand teams, there just is simply not enough time left in the day for this.

If you want an effective dashboard, it must give a complete view of your data. Sometimes this may mean expanding the scope to include additional patient incentive program related spending which can include data from additional outside sources. This could be data on HCP marketing efforts related to the copay program. The brand may be interested in understanding if that effort drove additional copay redemptions. And if so, which segment of the targeted HCP’s were the ones impacted? These metrics can be easily incorporated into a well-designed copay dashboard.

Look to the Future

In the past, KPI reporting would only tell you how you’ve done, and it was up to you to see the trends and then forecast where things were going. By including multiple trends and forecasts on key parts of the business, a well-designed dashboard can show how your individual campaign has performed and give you projections into the future. This allows you to adjust your strategies and tactics more quickly and drives faster recognition of any issues.

Let’s be honest... most of your copay program data is never viewed and certainly not aggregated and analyzed the way it should be given the spend levels.
Don’t Forget to Look Into Fraud

Unfortunately, fraud is a fact of life for just about every co-pay program in the market today. Fraudulent transactions can skew the measures that are important to your business. No matter how well you design your dashboard, if your data is not valid, you may draw some incorrect conclusions. Fraud happens, and for some categories such as dermatology (or any categories that use a “Buy and Bill” option), it happens a lot!

There are many things you can do when setting up your initial business rules that can certainly help prevent fraud, but given all the steps and various people involved, the program may still not be implemented exactly as initially intended. Including fraud metrics in your dashboard, and providing users the ability to isolate fraudulent transactions, will help ensure a continued focus on this important aspect of tracking your copay program spending.

If you have the claims data, you may as well use it to flag potential fraudulent transactions. The fact is that your copay vendor can’t identify all the fraud that is happening with their programs. So, while setting up your dashboard with the claims data, why not look to identify fraudulent activity at the pharmacy level? Your claims data contains a lot of great information that can help identify potential fraud, saving money which, in turn, can be used to help real patients.

Algorithms can be set up and results can be displayed in your dashboard to show the transactions that have been “flagged” as potentially fraudulent activity. This functionality completes your dashboard, giving you the information you need on your ongoing program, while providing the option to eliminate the invalid information that could skew results.

Provide Necessary Delivery Options

Another important aspect of an effective dashboard is delivery. How will you deliver access to your dashboard? Once again, this all depends on the number and the type of users and your goals. User access needs should be determined up front so you can design your dashboard appropriately.

Make Your Dashboard Accessible

You may have the best, most useful dashboard ever created. It might include actionable data that drives decision-making. It might extend across the entire business, delivering relevant data to every user. But, if it’s not accessible whenever and wherever your users need it, is it a useful dashboard?

We all know that employees have expanded outward and are not all bound to the home office...at least not all the time. If that is the case, you may want to consider having a web-based dashboard. Employees may also want to access your dashboard via smartphones and tablets. If real-time information is needed to make quick decisions, a mobile friendly dashboard is a good option. If needed, a mobile phone friendly version of your dashboard can be designed along with the desktop version.

Consider Automated Data Feeds

You may want to consider automated data feeds depending on what KPI’s are being tracked, the number of different data sources being used, the frequency of data updates and how often you make program or plan alterations.

If you plan on using your dashboard as a day to day decision-making tool, you should consider automating your data feeds. Dashboards that incorporate many data sources with frequent data updates can quickly become out-of-date if data feeds are not automated.
We asked 5 accomplished managers the things they would’ve done differently at the onset of their careers.

**Dashboard Best Practices**

**Provide User Choices**

Dashboards should be designed with the knowledge that users need to see how their patient incentive programs are performing as well as understand the reasons why they are performing the way they are. This can be accomplished by providing a summarized view with drill-down capability that shows details by specific program, region, territory, segment, specialty or even by specific providers or pharmacies.

This is particularly important if there are different user groups who will be accessing the dashboard, for example sales and marketing personnel, who may need to see the same information aggregated in different ways. For example, sales managers will want to see the information by sales territory while marketing managers may want to view results by physician segment. In this case, an all-encompassing dashboard should include customization giving the user the option to pick and choose which data to display, and how to display it. This lets the dashboard creator build a single dashboard that can be customized to meet individual user needs.

**Incorporate a Guided Analysis or an Executive Summary**

Let’s face it, pharma employees are busy people with active lives! There are many aspects of a brand’s performance that need to be analyzed - and tracking copay program investments is certainly a critical element. But, a well-designed, simple dashboard with a good amount of information in it may still not get used as much as it should, simply because the brand team is pressed for time and being pulled in many different directions. If this is the case, including a “guided analysis” or “executive summary” will ensure that key learnings are clearly communicated.

This concise overview should be an essential part of your dashboard as it lets you, with minimal time, get the most out of your dashboard. You’ll always be up to speed and nothing will get by you!

**Think Through Security**

Chances are your dashboard will contain some sensitive information about your brand or company which will need to be protected. A web-based dashboard that requires a username and password for access will provide security for your sensitive information. Any of the leading software products (such as PowerBI, Tableau and Qlik) undergo annual security audits and will already have security features built into their cloud and server based platforms.

Once you decide to adopt the additional security that going online provides, you should determine how many users you will have and their roles. Will they only be viewing the dashboards? Does each group of users have access to the same information? Are some dashboards more sensitive than others, for example, do some dashboards compare salespersons or brands against each other?

Set security to accommodate the different needs of user groups and varying sensitivity of dashboards.

Once users and user roles are defined, here are a couple of other things to consider with respect to security:

- **Buy enough user licenses:** Don’t try and get away with using only one set of log-in credentials because passing that information around risks the security of your data and violates the licensing agreement with the software company.
- **Make sure your users don’t share their username and password with others.**

**Share your Success**

If your dashboard is set up properly it should give you great insights into your business. Why not share your dashboard successes with other brands within your company? Expanding adoption of your copay dashboard to other brands will drive consistency in how programs are tracked and evaluated within your company, enhance communication across brand teams as you are all seeing the same measures, and facilitate tracking for managers of multiple brands.
The Bottom Line

A copay dashboard is much more than just a series of reports – it’s a must-have tracking and decision-making tool. The potential success of future programs/campaigns depends heavily on your ability to collect and analyze your company’s most important metrics and KPIs and determine how your copay program efforts are affecting your business results.

What separates “best-in-class” companies from their competition is their strong commitment to the marketing and sales process. Many companies emphasize reporting but get lost in the process of reporting monthly numbers without any trending or insights. The top performing companies who use effective dashboards can gain deeper insight into key performance areas and ROI and are able to better align their marketing processes while accelerating sales performance.

In this white paper, we have reviewed the benefits of a well-designed copay dashboard and some key principles to incorporate in your dashboard:

1. Start with the end in mind – incorporate the most important measures of “success” in the dashboard
2. Think about expansion and applicability to other brands
3. Show the complete picture in a simple, concise way
4. Don’t show too much – consider separating out fraudulent transactions
5. Look to the future – include trended information / projections
6. Allow drill downs for key data
7. Think through data feeds, delivery options and security issues

Following these best practices will help you develop an effective dashboard incorporating all pertinent copay metrics and business KPI’s.

By leveraging a well-designed dashboard, the brand team and management can focus on strategic issues vs. data gathering and number crunching.
About Al Kenney

Al Kenney has 30 years experience in sales, marketing, and analytics within the pharmaceutical, OTC, food, direct marketing, and software industries. Al’s expertise lies in the areas of marketing, sales, business process redesign, data, software application design, program implementation, forecasting, and the analysis and measurement of marketing and sales spending. Al is now applying his knowledge and skills specifically to the pharma and bio-technology industries.

Al is the founder of Alpha 1C, an innovative company focusing on strategic marketing, predictive modeling and measurement. Prior to this, Al spent eight years in the software industry specifically focused on advanced analytics, supply chain, and forecasting. He founded, owned and operated Performance Wave Inc. a software company which also specialized in modeling and forecasting pricing and product assortment for both major Consumer Goods manufacturers and retailers. Performance Wave was sold in 1999. Later, he served as the General Manager for Demantra Inc., a leading provider of scenario optimization and program measurement software (which is now part of Oracle).

Al has been working on planning, forecasting, and optimizing copay programs since 2008. In addition to evaluating thousands of sales and marketing programs across many different industries, Al has analyzed and optimized hundreds of copay incentive programs in over 90+ pharma, bio-pharma, and specialty pharma categories. Al has written almost a dozen white papers on various subjects around copay program deployment. Al also works on securing partnerships for Alpha 1C with some of the leading companies in the copay and managed care industries.

About Alpha 1C

We are marketing, sales, and analytical industry professionals with a deep background in strategy, predictive forecasting, and post event tracking and analysis for sales and marketing programs (with a major focus on copay).

We have vast experience solving complex problems and providing key insights across more than 20+ core industries. For the last 7 years, we have been focusing our solutions primarily on the Pharmaceutical and Bio-Tech marketplaces.

Alpha 1C provides key insights to brand teams allowing them to make more informed decisions that provide a better ROI. We are known for goals based predictive models which recommend the best options for you based on your stated objectives and budget.

We apply truly innovative, strategic thinking and leverage predictive analysis tools to help solve your complex business problems and ensure that business goals are achieved.

Alpha 1C has unparalleled experience in:

- Strategic Marketing
- Marketing Program Optimization
- Predictive Modeling & Forecasting
- Sales and Marketing Program Measurement and Reporting
- Brand Building

Our work is easily paid for through the efficiencies and insights we bring to your business.

Alpha 1C is headquartered in Sherman, CT and was founded in 2012.

To learn more you can contact Al Kenney @ al@alpha1c.com
or call 860-354-7979