



The role of metrics in regulatory advertising and promotion

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Metrics can provide valuable information about business operations and, if used appropriately, can provide insight into key process efficiencies and challenges. This article discusses the role of metrics in regulatory advertising and promotion and how they can be used to increase efficiencies for the promotional review process.

Introduction

The review of promotional materials and their associated processes may vary through a content's lifecycle, from conception to final distribution. But despite varying processes, the goal generally remains the same: To create impactful and compliant materials in a timely and cost-effective manner. Metrics can be collected as a quantitative assessment of this process from content creation to distribution to help track and ensure operational efficiencies. In addition, analyzing these metrics can provide valuable insights in regard to process improvements, detecting inefficiencies, and calculating potential cost savings.

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Some common metrics used in industry include:

- **Volume of content** – Sum of new content in a given month. Content refers to promotional materials/documents.
- **Days to enter review** – Time between the content entering the review system and the initial date in review
- **Days in review** – Time amounted between the initial date of review and the date the content is approved for distribution
- **Days to approval** – Number of days from content submission into the review system to approval for distribution
- **Number of review cycles** – Cumulative number of times a document enters for review before it is approved for distribution.

Based on data from between January 2021 and September 2021, **Table 1** provides the averages of the abovementioned metrics for the top 40 global pharmaceutical companies and **Table 2** and **Table 3** (both on p. 3) show volume of content and average time to approval for region of the world and content type, respectively. The tables include space for an individual company to add its specific metrics as a means of comparison.

It is important to note that the best-in-class category represents a single company with the fastest time for average days to approval. It may also be beneficial to view the best in class in terms of average days in review. Looking at the metrics for an individual company compared with industry averages and best in class can be helpful in informing meaningful conversations about potential inefficiencies. For example, although the days to approval might be fast compared with the industry average, the days-in-review period may be quite long. Metrics can provide insight about the overall process that drives the lifecycle for promotional content and could initiate important conversations among stakeholders to better manage the process and detect potential inefficiencies.

These metrics provide a snapshot of content volume and the time taken for the key steps in the advertising and promotional approval process. If a company gathers metrics over time, averages can be obtained for establishing a performance indicator. The indicator can be compared with industry averages and help inform efforts to align with averages as needed. Furthermore, metrics can support brand planning with respect to product timelines and major events, such as product launches, congresses, and sales meetings, to efficiently move content through the system. Based on the data available for high-revenue

Table 1. Top 40 global pharmaceutical companies by revenue, January-September 2021

	Volume of content ^a	Average days to review	Average days in review	Average days to approval	Average no. of review cycles
Individual company data ^b	[xx]	[xx]	[xx]	[xx]	[xx]
Industry average	936,670	6.7	14.6	20.7	1.4
Best in class		1.1	11.3	13.7	1.1

^aSum of new content in a given month. Content refers to promotional materials/documents. ^bIndividual companies can add their specific metrics in this row as a means of comparison with industry average and best-in-class metrics.

Source: Veeva Pulse Content Metrics

companies,¹ some common process-related challenges include excessive internal meetings, high volumes of content slowing down time to approval, and poor-quality materials entering the system, leading to multiple rounds of review. These inefficiencies vary across industry and will be better understood over time and with deeper knowledge of individual systems, processes and agencies.

Table 2. Volume of content and average time to approve by region, January-September 2021

Region	Volume of content ^a			Average time to approve (days)	
	Industry	[Individual Company ^b]	[% share of indiv. company ^b]	Industry	[Individual company ^b]
Africa	21,438	[xx]	[xx]	21.5	[xx]
Asia-Pacific	83,067	[xx]	[xx]	17.5	[xx]
Canada	16,306	[xx]	[xx]	22.9	[xx]
China	43,275	[xx]	[xx]	13.8	[xx]
Europe	339,243	[xx]	[xx]	19.5	[xx]
India	12,753	[xx]	[xx]	16.6	[xx]
Japan	49,576	[xx]	[xx]	13.9	[xx]
Latin America	87,382	[xx]	[xx]	20.1	[xx]
Middle East	45,568	[xx]	[xx]	19.5	[xx]
Russia	19,791	[xx]	[xx]	17.3	[xx]
US	126,666	[xx]	[xx]	29.3	[xx]
Outside of US	810,004	[xx]	[xx]	19.4	[xx]
Not region aligned + other	17,072	na	na	27.8	na

na, not available

^aSum of new content in a given month. Content refers to promotional materials/documents. ^bIndividual companies can add their specific metrics in this row as a means of comparison with industry average and best-in-class metrics.

Source: Veeva Pulse Content Metrics

Table 3. Volume of content and average time to approve by content type, January-September 2021

Content type	Volume of content ^a			Average time to approve (days)	
	Industry	[Individual company ^b]	[% share of indiv. company ^b]	Industry	[Individual company ^b]
Corporate communications	21,588	[xx]	[xx]	17.9	[xx]
Electronic sales aid	43,505	[xx]	[xx]	23.3	[xx]
Email	48,389	[xx]	[xx]	22.6	[xx]
Event material	98,061	[xx]	[xx]	14.1	[xx]
HA form / comp. package	3,263	[xx]	[xx]	6.6	[xx]
Mobile app	1,972	[xx]	[xx]	25.5	[xx]
Print/physical resource	75,016	[xx]	[xx]	23.2	[xx]
Reference materials	25,926	[xx]	[xx]	15.7	[xx]
Social	19,628	[xx]	[xx]	20.8	[xx]
Training materials	41,263	[xx]	[xx]	22.8	[xx]
Video	37,052	[xx]	[xx]	25.1	[xx]
Web banners	12,565	[xx]	[xx]	23.9	[xx]
Website	44,920	[xx]	[xx]	24.3	[xx]
Other or not specified	446,032	[xx]	[xx]	20.8	[xx]

HA, health authority

^aSum of new content in a given month. Content refers to promotional materials/documents. ^bIndividual companies can add their specific metrics in this row as a means of comparison with industry average and best-in-class metrics.

Source: Veeva Pulse Content Metrics

Conclusion

It is crucial to view the promotional review process holistically and to be more deliberate in how we use metrics to accomplish our goals. Looking at metrics for use, reach, accuracy in submission, and content effectiveness can help with getting content approved within a timely manner and creating a feedback loop to enhance the quality of the content.

[It's] very important to have a feedback loop, where you're constantly thinking about what you have done and how you could be doing it better. [The] single best piece of advice [is to] constantly think about how you could be doing things better and questioning yourself.

– *Elon Musk*

Metrics can be useful for speeding up the process driving the content lifecycle and making it more efficient, and for providing guidance in creating more impactful content to better serve patients and the healthcare community.

About the author

Malyha Mannan, PharmD, is a senior manager in regulatory affairs, advertising and promotion at Amgen. She has more than 8 years of pharmaceutical industry experience. Mannan completed a postdoctoral fellowship in regulatory promotion at Eli Lilly and obtained a doctor of pharmacy degree from Temple University. She can be contacted at mmannan@amgen.com

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Reference

1. Veeva Pulse Content Metrics, January-September 2021. <https://go.veeva.com/contentmetrics>. Accessed 22 December 2021.