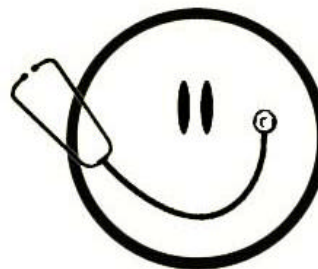


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Dear Pharmaceutical Representatives,

Welcome to my practice! To maximize my time, and to minimize both our frustration levels, I have written down some helpful tips that I hope will guide our interactions and optimize our relationship.

How to Sell Pills Without Becoming One: A Guide For Our Pharmaceutical Representatives

Do tell me why you think your drug is exceptional. Use the STEPS approach, describing the Safety, Tolerability, Efficacy, Price and Simplicity of your drug.

Don't say negative things about your competitors or their drugs. Tell me why your product is superior, not just passable. Telling me that your drug is better than a bad drug is not exactly a glowing endorsement.

Do tell me why the cost of your drug is a better value than generics in its class. Compare the cost to your brand-name competitors only if there are no acceptable generics in your drug's class.

Do keep me updated on the formulary and tier status of your drugs. This is often more important than your cash price because a high-tiered drug may cost my patient six to 10 times the generic price or two to three times the price of a preferred brand-name drug.

Do show me patient education materials about diseases your drugs treat. But please omit drug names, logos, icons or mascots. Including the company name in small type is acceptable. My goal is to distribute information, not propaganda.

Don't ask me to sign for samples or vouchers. I have decided to simplify my office operations by NOT keeping or distributing samples. I prefer to use your information to make the best therapeutic choice for my patient and then have them take a prescription to the pharmacy for the medication we choose together. It takes my staff and me out of the loop of being sample controllers. I also believe that if samples were eliminated altogether, the cost of your medications could be lowered for everyone – a great benefit passed on to all!!

Don't tell me how much another physician in the area uses your drug or how he or she uses it off-label.

Don't tell me that you use databases to profile my prescribing habits. I know it happens, but I am not comfortable becoming a demographic target in your

marketing efforts.

Don't ask me what I prescribe or why I prescribe it. This makes me feel like you are collecting marketing information and trying to debate my prescription choices.

Don't bother inviting me to evening dinner presentations. I don't need extra reasons to spend time away from my family. Similarly, don't ask to bring in lunch or snacks for our office – we're all struggling with our diets and this enormous cost savings can also be passed on to our patients by lowering drug costs!

Don't expect me to stay long to discuss your drug. My schedule is very tight, and I don't like to keep patients waiting. I'll stay long enough for a brief discussion, to sign your paperwork, and then go back to my patients.

Don't ask to leave pens, paper products, or other "goodies" with your drug's name on them – I make enough money to purchase my own pens and pads with my logo on them. Again, I believe that if the advertising gimmicks were eliminated altogether, the cost of your medications could be lowered substantially for everyone – again a great benefit passed on to all!!

Do offer me textbooks, PDA software like *Epocrates* or *The Sanford Antimicrobial Guide*, or subscriptions to the *Medical Letter* and other educational products that will benefit my patients by improving my care decisions.

Do feel free to talk about the weather, movies, current events or other small talk. Just realize that my time is limited and we will have a smaller window in which to discuss your drug.

Don't comment on how long it has been since you've had a chance to talk to me. I will always try to give you some time in a busy day of seeing patients, but the guilt trip makes me want to give you even less of my time.

Don't give me volumes of material to read later – keep it succinct and educational. The best information is from *The Medical Letter*, or head to head comparison studies - and I am capable of doing my own research if I feel I need more information.

Don't ask me to prescribe your drug or whether I will prescribe it. I make that decision on a case-by-case basis together with my patients.

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My goal is to provide my patients with the best, most affordable health care possible. Your goal is to sell your product. I hope by following the above guidelines we'll be able to leave our encounter feeling like our time together helped both of us to further our goals.

Dr. Rohde