

flourish

A Publication of Pharmalliance, Africa's Premier Retail Pharmacy Business Support Network

ISSUE 12, MAR. 2021

Also in the Edition

MUSINGS OF A VILLAGE
PHARMACIST

ARE WE MISSING OUT
ON THE SUNSHINE
VITAMIN?

THE LAW OF RECOVERY

A portrait of Pharm. (Sir) Anthony Akhimien, a Black man with a mustache, wearing a white traditional African headwrap with blue patterns and a white traditional African garment. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a gentle smile.

Transpicious: **E**rudite: **O**ratorical
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PHARM. (SIR) ANTHONY AKHIMIEN FPSN, FPCpharm, MNI

Founder/CEO, TEO Pharmacy Limited



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EDITOR'S NOTE

It is here again. It gives me great joy to present the 12th Edition of your treasured publication FLOURISH to you.

This edition has the usual features which keeps you spell bound from cover page to back page. As usual, we have 2 interviews in this edition. Our cover page interview features a foremost Pharmacy leader Pharm. (Sir) Anthony Akhimien of Teo Pharmacy who is blazing the trail as a leader, an academic and an entrepreneur. The second is an interview with Pharm. Olubunmi Olugbeja, an energetic and dynamic Pharmacist and a member of Pharmalliance.

The clinical section of this edition focuses on Vitamin D and Covid 19. Other articles stem from our regular columnists **Aunty Pharmacist** and **Tomi Majekodunmi**. We also have a free gift inside for everyone from our Partners, New Heights Pharmaceuticals.

We are grateful to our regular advertisers who have kept faith with us to ensure the continuous production and distribution of this free magazine.

As you digest the contents of this edition of flourish, we pray that your business will continue to flourish despite the prevailing economic realities



Yours Sincerely
Temitayo Aderemi

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FEATURING



Tomi Majekodunmi

She's a young pharmacist based in Lagos



Timeyin Ogungbe

She's the founder and CEO of Elbeth Pharmacy

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AFTER-SALES FOLLOW UP

TomiMajekodunmi



To sustain the success of any community pharmacy, top-notch customer service is key. Customer service is an act of helping people find what they want during the entire transaction process. A brand reputation also relies on exceptional customer service.

In recent times, retail pharmacies are constantly developing new and innovative ways to serve their customers and attract prospects. It is becoming more crucial to continuously be in touch with current and prospective customers to build strong and trusting relationships with them.

After you have met a customer's need by offering them the right products or services, there's a palpable level of excitement on both sides. You become thrilled as a salesperson and your customer is also excited to put the solution or product provided and/or recommended into use.

Yes it's exciting, however, many sales persons fail to recognize this period after a sale as an opportunity to properly follow up with their customers in order to build trust and retention of such customers. Instead, many focus on how to satisfy the next and the next customer without seeing the need to have each of them followed up.

After sales follow up is one of the key strategies to owning and sustaining loyal customers. Most customers are not going to purchase from you simply because they purchased from you at one time, even if they had an impeccable buying experience. If you do not stay in touch with your customers, they will simply switch to someone else. As far as your prospects are concerned, most of the times, it is not possible to close a deal in a single conversation. However, timely follow-ups with prospects can convert them into customers but you need to be patient and can't always expect results with just 2-3 follow ups.

By understanding what after-sales follow-up is, how it impacts you and your customers and what comprises an effective after-sales follow-up strategy, you can quickly begin fostering strengthened customer relationships, gaining referral sales, and improving your overall sales performance.

What is After-Sales Follow-up?

After-sales follow-up in simple terms is when you, as a salesperson, contact your customer after a successful sale with the purpose of achieving the following goals:

1. Feeling of being valued

When you contact customers after the completion of a sale, you communicate to them that you care and you genuinely wish to be of help to them. Over time, this fosters a relationship of trust and mutual respect between you and your customer, opening the door for future opportunities to serve their needs or those whom they might refer to you.

2. Meeting the customer's needs with the right product or service

Customers needs are unique though they share common stressors or discomforts that makes your service or product valuable. Following up assures you that the solution you've offered is helping or not helping your customers solve the problems they had and this communicates to your customer that you're actively interested in their success and make them view you as a genuine source of help.

3. Addressing concerns customer might have

After a successful sale, a customer might have unexpected issues trying to figure out how to use the product or enjoy the service gotten from you. Following up, helps you address concerns a customer might have with the product or service provided. When the customer is still excited about the product or services



rendered, make them understand that you are always available to answer questions and ready to help, should any issue arise.

4. Find out what further service the customer might need

When following-up with customers, try to look for opportunities where you might be of further service to them. For instance, your customer might be overjoyed about the fast recovery she got after you recommended Barole, Gaviskon double action and some probiotics when she complained of consistent stomach and chest discomfort. She later mentioned that some of her friends who are experiencing similar discomforts will be glad to be helped. By actively listening, you can take that opportunity to give her the pharmacy's contact line and ask them to call in especially if they do not stay close to the pharmacy so their cases can be addressed appropriately and delivery services can be maximized to reach out to her friends if medications are needed. The Customer will most likely take notice of how intently you're listening and how interested you are in being a continual source of help.

What impact does after-sales follow-up have?

Following up after a sale is not just an exercise in polite service, it is a tested and proven practice that has a measurable and profound impact on the experience your customers have with both you as a salesperson and your pharmacy.

1. Customers feel that they matter and that you care for their needs.

By going the extra mile to ensure your customers know that you are always there, always actively listening, and always ready to help, you make them feel cared for. With you, they do not feel like just another number — they feel like a valued customer that has found a quality source of help and information.

You can also keep in touch with your customers by sending personal messages on occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, holidays and festivals and regularly sharing informational articles. Although, one must avoid sending too many messages in a short period of time as it might end up frustrating your customers. So, it is wise to schedule the follow-up time and message and provide some additional value during every follow-up communication using different marketing tools.

2. Customers become more open to your suggestions.

By following up your customers, you communicate to them that you're actively interested and involved in ensuring that their needs have been met and that you have solved their problem. Once customers understand that you're genuinely interested in their well-being, they will look up to you for help and be receptive to your recommendations and suggestions for additional products or services.

3. Customers begin to trust you with more health issues and refer their friends to you.

When you invest in ethically serving your customers, you're not only building trust with them, you're building trust with their friends, family, and other connections who might be looking for someone like you to meet their needs. This translates to a happy and satisfied customer. With effective follow-up, you're opening the door to build new sales connections, service your customer by helping their friends and family, and continually demonstrating the quality of your solution,

your brand, and yourself as a salesperson.

“Happy customer is equal to more referrals”.

4. Opens up an avenue for continuous feedback

Building a relationship with the customers via timely follow-ups will give you an opportunity to hear their feedback and find out whether customers are having problems or if they are upset. It helps you know how your customers are feeling, what kind of issues they face with the product or service and what you can do to ensure that both your existing and potential customers can benefit more from what you have to offer. Remember, follow up is critical to your success as it has been rightly said “Out of Sight, Out of Mind”.

Important aspects of an effective after-sales follow-up strategy

While your pharmacy's sales processes might stipulate a specific follow-up method, or if you've honed your own specific steps for your follow-ups with customers, it's important to remember the key tenets that comprise effective after-sale follow-up communication.

1. Know your customer's preferred contact methods

Before setting out to contact your customer after a successful sale, find out how they wish to be contacted. Your customer might detest phone calls or emails, and violating their preferences can quickly begin to erode the trust they've placed in you as a salesperson.

2. Thank your customer

A heart of gratitude is the foundation of your follow-up. Above all else during your follow-up communication, your goal should be to make your customer feel valued and assured in their decision to choose your brand's product or service.

3. Ask questions and actively listen

Your follow-up is the perfect time to get

valuable feedback from your customer. Keep your questions brief and stay focused on their needs. Key questions could include:

- *“Do you have any questions or need any additional assistance?”*
- *“Were you happy with the product or service you received?”*
- *“How might the product or service be improved?”*

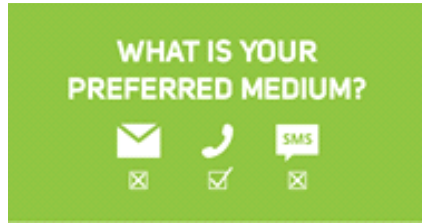
As your customer responds, be sure to make a record of their feedback. Did they comment on how delivery was delayed and the product's box was beat up? (This is for customers who requested to have their medications delivered to them). Did they have a terrible experience with a portion of your sales process? Was there difficulty understanding how to operate or use the product recommended?

All these points of feedback are extremely useful both to you and to others in your pharmacy who can take this valuable feedback and turn it into actionable insights that can be used in improving your brand's product or service.

4. Ask permission to send helpful information and resources

Your follow-up communication is a great opportunity to further enrich your customer's experience by offering them helpful information and resources. Whether online, on paper, or any medium in between, if your pharmacy offers content to help customers make more informed decisions about their health and supplements to take, the after-sales follow up is a golden opportunity to get that content into the hands of your customers.

Asking permission to do this, however, is crucial. Uninvited and intrusive communications can quickly degrade the foundation of trust you are building with your customer and can abruptly change their opinion of both you as a salesperson and the organization you represent.



How does after-sales follow-up help you as a salesperson?

Though designed to serve your customer first and foremost, thorough follow-up after a successful sale also positively impacts your career, your customer relationships, and your overall sales performance over time. Some of the advantages of follow up includes the following:

1. You gain valuable customer feedback.

From the questions you ask in your follow-up with your customer, you gain the rare opportunity to get feedback directly from someone who engaged with the entirety of your pharmacy's sales structure. With the records of your customer's feedback, you can ensure this valuable information is received by key decision makers in your company.

Over time, exhibiting such a high level of customer-first dedication and commitment to improving the customer experience can potentially present advancement opportunities within your company.

2. You strengthen your relationship with your customers.

By consistently placing the customer's needs as the chief focus of your sales efforts, your customers will feel valued, truly heard, and will begin to place their trust in you and your company. This helps with customer retention as satisfied customers are more loyal.

3. Boost sales.

Building trust-based relationships is key to optimal sales performance. Through your ethical sales techniques and customer

after sales follow-up, you instill a knowing within your customers that you are authentically dedicating to helping them first.

This level of trust creates not only repeat sales opportunities and long fruitful customer relationships but also opens the door to gain the business of your customers' friends, families and other business associates, as you've proven yourself a trustworthy source of information, support, and quality service. Happy customers are more likely to come back and buy more

4. Innovate

By listening to customers' needs and problems, you are gathering invaluable intelligence to create new products or services.

5. Differentiate

By following up, you're doing something most pharmacies don't bother with and that sets you apart from the herd.

In conclusion, ethically serving customers is the heart of follow-up
At its heart, after-sales follow-up is ensuring your customers have received the best care and attention possible and treating your customers as king.



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INTERVIEW WITH PHARM. (SIR) ANTHONY AKHIMIEN

FPSN, FPCpharm, MNI

Having held strategic leadership positions in several pharmacy associations both locally and internationally while running a very successful community pharmacy, one begins to wonder how Pharm Akhimien balances these roles excellently. The flourish team sat with Pharm (Sir) Anthony Akhimien, FPSN, FPCpharm, MNI a few weeks after his 65th birthday to discuss. Flourish crew reports.....



Can we meet you sir?

My name is Sir Anthony Akhimien. I graduated from the University of Benin in 1983. I did my internship at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital, and my National Youth Service at Kaduna state, where I started my career. I was Head of the NYSC health team during NYSC orientation and throughout the service year. After NYSC, the Kaduna state government offered me a job, I also got a job at my place of primary assignment. As a young man who was quite anxious to start a career, the company I was working with bought a brand-new car for me which was very inviting, so I chose the company

over the job offer from Kaduna state government. After two years of working for the company, I was transferred to the Lagos branch, where I worked for about seven years before I resigned.

After I resigned, I felt community pharmacy was the next thing. This led to the birth of **TEO NIGERIA LIMITED** in 1993.

That same year, the crisis of Abiola election came up and we shut down for some time. We later came back though it was very challenging.

While building Teo Pharmacy, I served as Ass General Secretary of PSN. I also had the opportunity to serve my colleagues as the National Chairman of NAGPP (National Association of General Practice Pharmacists) in year 2000. The name of the association was changed to ACPN (Association of Community Pharmacists) during my tenure in year 2000. I learnt from my predecessors that there was a need for change of name because when we go for international meetings and talk about NAGPP they had no idea who we were so, we had to oblige and changed our name to ACPN. After the ACPN chairmanship, I became the President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria and served between 2006 and 2009 after which I became the President of the African Region for FIP on the 100th year anniversary, in 2012. I was president for 5 years, and I handed over in 2017 to a Cameroonian. I am the current Chairman of the Faculty of Community Pharmacy, West African Postgraduate College of Pharmacists and two years ago, I was elected as the first Vice-president of the College.

I did quite a number of management courses, and the highest was at the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) in Jos. We were 60 in my class and I was the only one from the Health Sector in the class. The course was really engaging and very academic and I emerged the repertoire for the group.

What spurred you to take the NIPSS course in Kuru, Plateau state?

You do not send yourself to the course, I just saw my name. The PSN sponsored me, so PSN must have been asked to suggest some names because I wasn't prepared. When I finished my PSN presidency in 2009, I wanted to go for the course, but it did not work out. After that, I became the President of the African Region for FIP, I was busy and had forgotten about it, and one day I received a call saying, "you have been nominated to take this course."

I later received a letter sent to me concerning the same issue just after I celebrated my 60th birthday. I was sent the necessary documents, and I left for Jos to start the program. The course was quite interesting and very academic. Our project topic for that year was on Poverty alleviation in the country. When we were to present the report to the presidency, the Governor of the state involved was invited to hear what we had to say. We were also made to visit African countries for two weeks.

How were you able to manage running TEO Pharmacy along with the leadership positions?

I have always had the flair for service, and wherever I go, people always call on me to serve and so I felt like if God has given me the gift of leadership and service, why shouldn't I utilise it? When I moved from Kaduna to Lagos as a young medical rep, I served in PSN working committee, and I got my merit award from PSN in 1987 when Pharm JIMI AGBAJE was the Chairman of PSN, Lagos State. I had a colleague working with me at the pharmacy. Particularly, I got colleagues who were willing to grow the business, and that was how we grew TEO NIGERIA LIMITED. For me, it was always the people who worked with me that made this phase easy. Back then, there was no phone or fast means of communication, so there were limitations and it was not easy. Getting capable hands was a priority, which was also a problem, as when you get good human resources and you train them, some leave after training and stability, looking to start their own business

Apart from human resources that was quite a challenge, what other challenges have you faced in this business?

Being an avid traveller, and having seen a lot of things, one of the biggest challenges remains insufficient power supply, which has led to an alarming rate of expense on fuel. Other major challenges are security and product stocking.

Do you run a special care service for the elderly seeing you have a lot of senior citizens walking into the pharmacy?

When the COVID-19 crisis started, it became obvious that we must find a way to cater for the elderly, as there were some elderly people that had to refill their prescriptions and movement was restricted. It did not make any sense to me to deny their prescriptions. Now, we have dispatch riders for doorstep deliveries and sometimes, when our attention is needed, one or two of our pharmacists are sent to attend to their needs. For the elderly, we have home deliveries, refilling prescriptions, and referring them back to their doctors when they are not responding well to treatment. I believe in giving back to the community and rendering quality services to meet the needs and demands of the neighbourhood. As a result of the quality service we have rendered to the community over the years, they stood by me and spoke for me when I least expected and I can say I have really benefited from them.

What other skills outside Pharmacy have you had to acquire to run Teo Pharmacy?

I am a fellow of the Post-graduate College of Pharmacy, and I also teach there. The eagerness for knowledge cannot be limited for a Pharmacist because we say we are a life-long learning people. I have taken a lot of management courses, some at the College and while I was a sales rep in the industry. I find myself giving back to the college today, because I use those managerial skills to help develop and manage the College affairs. Over the years, I have also acquired professional skills and leadership skills. I tell my colleagues that as a leader, I have the privilege to see what others cannot, so when I speak, it is from a point of information either from government circle or the industry. It is really an honour to be asked to serve by your colleagues, because it shows that they trust you, and I believe I did not misuse that opportunity.

Pharmacists in Nigeria always seem to be fighting one battle or the other, what do you think is at the root of these perennial squabbles.

It is quite unfortunate as we are supposed to be a very dignified profession but because the ratio of Pharmacy to the population is very slim, everybody wants to practice pharmacy because they feel it is very profitable especially in this time of economic recession. This has become an issue because Pharmacy is a highly regulated profession, and if it is not regulated, there would be problems.

Also, the health team comprises of Doctors, Nurses, Pharmacists, Lab Scientists and there is this feeling that one is encroaching into the other one's area of specialisation. This is not the case overseas, where there is collaboration among health workers but in Nigeria, the winners take all sometimes, it becomes an issue of contention. I think we are gradually coming to the point where we recognise and realise the need for each other, as one person cannot do it all. I believe in us working together because there is gain in collaboration. Our colleagues in the United States have come over to work with us and they proposed to unite us and work with us, so I can see this permeating into the group. I believe everyone should get credit for what they do.

What would you say are the top three skills needed to succeed in community practice?

Managerial skills, Professional skills, and Leadership skills. As a person in this line of profession, you must live by example, this shows a good sense of leadership. Professionalism entails knowing when to segregate patients, when to refer to the doctor, putting things in the order they should be, not giving drugs close to the expiration date, just because it is expensive. As a manager, you should know when to source for funds, asking the big questions like: "in five years where will I be?".

What has been the most satisfying moment for you, as an entrepreneur and a leader?

When patients come back to say thank you, when patients get well and respond to treatment. My most satisfying moment as an entrepreneur is seeing TEO PHARMACY have its own building. I feel fulfilled knowing that TEO PHARMACY has an identity of its own. Twenty-seven years has not been a joke. God has been kind to me and has kept me in good health all along, and He is keeping me. So, I am really satisfied.

Who are your role models in the industry?

When I was in school, my first role model was the then Managing Director of Edo Welfare Chemists. For me, in Lagos here, my biggest role model is Prince Julius Adelusi Adeluyi. He has imparted so much in me, he assisted me so much and gave me advice, and I wanted to be like him.

When I was getting married, he was the Chairman at my wedding, when I celebrated my 50th birthday, he was also the Chairman and he also came to commission the building where TEO PHARMACY currently stands. Another role model of mine is Chief Nwaka, who handed over to me as National Chairman of ACPN.

Despite your busy schedule, how do you manage to refresh and unwind?

I have four children, and we hangout whenever I have the time. I enjoy spending time with them because they bother that I am always busy, so, I try to make out time for them. A retail pharmacist is not a very romantic person. I say this because we put in too much commitment to our jobs, so much time, effort, and everything. When I am less busy, and I am not with my children, I switch off my phone and try to get some sleep. This is non-negotiable for me.

If you did not study Pharmacy, what profession would you have studied?

I speak Pharmacy, I breathe Pharmacy and I live for Pharmacy. Pharmacy is one industry that serves humanity. Another industry that serves humanity and deserves respect and recognition, is the Law Industry. They defend the defenseless and for me, that would have been an option if I did not study Pharmacy. However, Pharmacy is what I love, and even in my next life, I will still study Pharmacy.

Teo pharmacy is 27 years, what is next for the business?

Teo Pharmacy needed an identity, and it has started carving that niche, so there is need to replicate what TEO PHARMACY has started. God willing, we should be able to replicate this quality of service to other places where there is scarcity of pharmacy services. I am looking at opening branches in villages where they hardly would see good Pharmacies, and I am planning to partner with some colleagues. This is a time where everyone wants to live in the city and abandon the villages, and that is not possible, so this has been a burning desire in my mind, and I think we can achieve it.

What advice do you have for Pharmacists who are willing to venture into community practice?

The first thing is to have a good location, secondly, be ready to carry out feasibility studies, including cost and budget at hand, because it is expensive to start a standard community pharmacy. The third one is the human resource. You must be careful, and you should not get tired of recruiting people. Some people may walk away after two months and so on, so continue to recruit if you want to run a successful business.



Fourthly, you must have stock. The major concern of your customers is to get the products they want when they want it. It is pertinent that the Pharmacy should be properly stocked.

You should not mind the costs of the product, as there will be losses sometimes, because this is a service-oriented business and not just profit-oriented. If you are not doing inventory, then it is a waste of time, because you can't decide which products to stock, which not to stock, which expires quickly, and the missing products. My advice to the young pharmacists is to be careful, truthful to their plans and to be professional.

Now that your children work in the pharmacy, is there a transition process in place?

I did not design having two pharmacists in the family, it just happened by stroke of luck. For me, if they decide not to work with me, I have no issue, and I do not want to limit their career. So, I am still running my business, irrespective of them. My greatest joy is that I am leaving all these for them, and I am confident that with all they have learnt from me, they would be able to replicate it and manage the business well.

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Vitamin D

ARE WE MISSING OUT ON THE SUNSHINE VITAMIN?



The human body produces vitamin D as a response to sun exposure. The human body makes it from cholesterol when the skin is exposed to sunlight. Despite its name, vitamin D is not a vitamin but a prohormone, or precursor of a hormone and every single cell in the body has a receptor for it. Vitamin D is a secosteroid with an endocrine mechanism of action which is sequentially synthesized in humans in the skin, liver and kidneys and is responsible for several biological processes.

The active hormone, 1-alpha 25-dihydrocholecalciferol [1,25(OH)2D3], is often considered only in terms of its role in controlling calcium and phosphorus homeostasis.

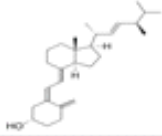
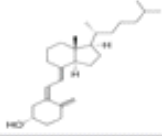
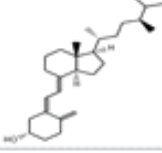
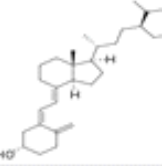
Types of Vitamin D

There are different types of Vitamin D. These are listed in the table below

Functions of Vitamin D

Vitamin D is one of the many vitamins the body needs to stay healthy. This vitamin has many functions, including:

- Responsible for intestinal absorption of vital nutrients including magnesium, phosphate and calcium.
- Responsible for calcium homeostasis and metabolism and therefore the health of the bones, teeth, muscles and joints.
- Plays a significant role in boosting the immune system.
- Vitamin D receptors are present in most tissues and cells and regulate over 200 human genes.
- Promoting healthy bones and teeth
- Regulating insulin levels and supporting diabetes management
- Supporting lung function and cardiovascular health
- Improves glycaemic control
- Aids weight loss by reducing the PTH
- Regulates appetite by increasing leptin
- Helps reduce abdominal fat by lowering cortisol

Name	Chemical composition	Structure
Vitamin D₁	Mixture of molecular compounds of ergocalciferol with lumisterol , 1:1	
Vitamin D₂	ergocalciferol (made from ergosterol)	
Vitamin D₃	cholecalciferol (made from 7-dehydrocholesterol in the skin).	
Vitamin D₄	22-dihydroergocalciferol	
Vitamin D₅	sitocalciferol (made from 7-dehydrositosterol)	

Is Vitamin D deficiency a major public health problem?

Vitamin D deficiency is incredibly common and most people are unaware of it. It's estimated that about 1 billion people worldwide have low levels of the vitamin in their blood . According to a 2011 study, 41.6% of adults in the US are deficient. This number goes up to 69.2% in Hispanics and 82.1% in African-American.

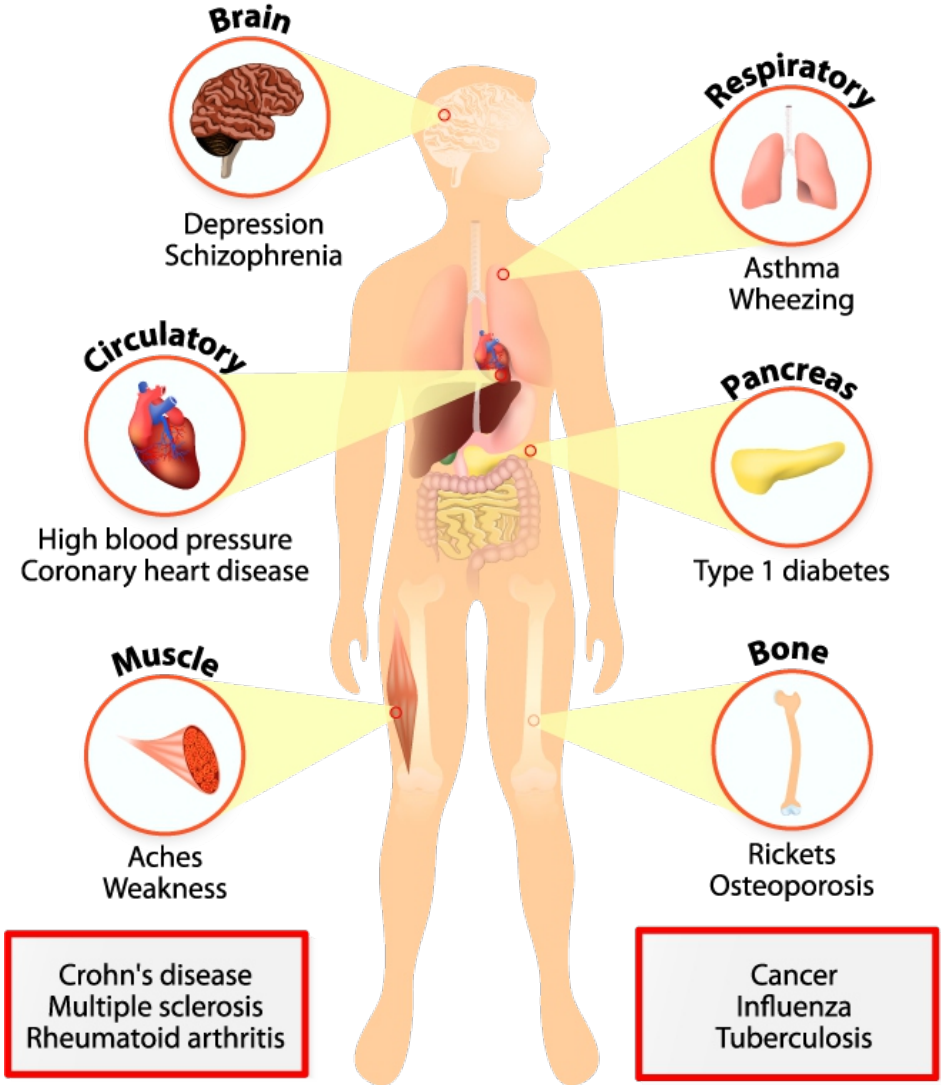
In Africa, the overall prevalence of severe low vitamin D status was 18.46% (<30 nmol/L) and 59.54% below optimum levels of 75 nmol/L. Source: Reagan et al, 2019

Here are 7 common risk factors for vitamin D deficiency:

- Having dark skin.
- Low vitamin D status common in all age groups but prevalent in elderly.
- Being overweight or obese.
- Girls and women in the Middle east
- Babies from women in Purdah
- Living far from the equator where there is little sun year-round.
- Always using sunscreen when going out.
- Staying indoors.
- People with osteoporosis
- People with chronic kidney or liver disease.

Most people don't realize that they're deficient, as symptoms are generally subtle.

VITAMIN D deficiency



A recent study on the relationship between Vitamin D and Covid 19 by Ali et al in Chicago reported a risk of 17.3% among patients with severe vitamin D deficiency and 14.6% in those with normal levels. This effect was attributed to the adaptive ability of vitamin D to regulate cytokine levels (cytokine storm).

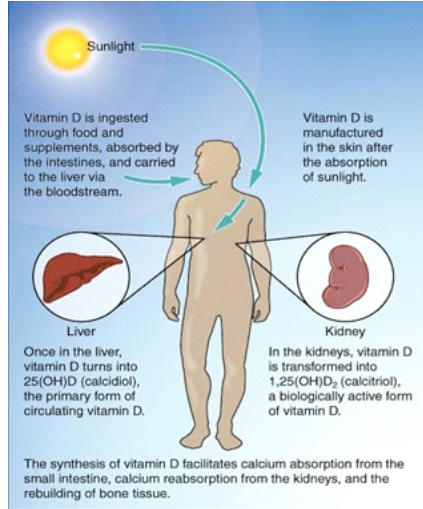
- **Study Outcomes**
- Serum level of inflammatory markers was higher in vitamin D deficient COVID-19 patients.
- Fatality rate was high in the vitamin D deficient patients (21% vs 3.1%).
- Recommendation: Mass administration of vitamin D supplementation to population at risk.

Vitamin D Supplementation

Your body does not make vitamin D. You have to get it from the sun, food, and supplements. So, it's important to maintain the proper level. Overdosing on vitamin D will not help reduce inflammation more so it can have an adverse effect, actually inducing an inflammation response in your body. Therefore, always maintain the level and don't go above and beyond it.

Many studies say that vitamin D plays an essential role in controlling the immune and inflammatory response to viruses and diseases. However, vitamin D supplementation and Covid-19 require further evaluation, especially with comorbidity. The important thing is getting enough vitamin D to have an appropriate, effective, and efficient response to pathogens like Covid-19, diseased or not.

- **Reasons for Vitamin D Supplementation**
- Many individuals do not derive adequate sunlight that is sufficient to produce vitamin D.
- Factors reducing production include cloudy days, shades, dark coloured skin, sunscreen, clothing, obesity, increasing age, malabsorption disorders, kidney dysfunction.
- Very few foods naturally contain vitamin D (fatty fish, beef, liver, cheese, egg yolks,



- mushrooms).
- Fortified foods: cereals, margarine, juices, beverages.

Indications for higher dosing

- Vitamin D resistant rickets: Vit D3 10,000 - 50,000 I.U daily.
- Hypoparathyroidism: Vit D 50,000 - 200,000 I.U for 8 weeks or till corrected.
- Inadequate sun exposure or elderly: Vit D 50,000 I.U once in two weeks for 8 weeks or till corrected. Same for deficiency in pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.
- Maintenance dose: 50,000 I.U/month
- Malabsorption syndromes: Vit D 50,000 daily for 8 weeks or till corrected. Maintenance dose is 50,000 I.U/week.
- 50,000 I.U is equivalent to 1.25 mg.

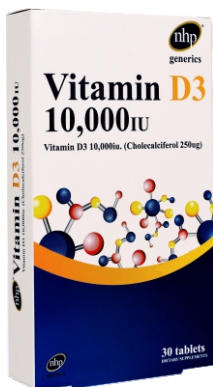
Activated vitamin D is one of the most potent inhibitors of cancer cell growth.”- (Micheal F. Holick, PhD, Head of Vitamin D, Skin and Bone Research, Boston University School of Medicine)

An excerpt from the presentation of Dr Ore Makinde at ACPN Lagos Continuing Education Programme

Vitamins



BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY

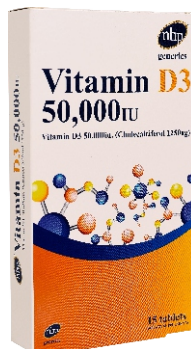


Vitamin D3 10,000IU

- High potency Vitamin D supplement providing 10000IU of Vitamin D3 per tablet
- One tablet once or twice weekly for supplementation

Vitamin D3 50,000IU

- High potency Vitamin D supplement providing 50000IU of Vitamin D3 per tablet
- One tablet every 2 weeks for the management of Osteoporosis in senior citizens
- One tablet daily for 8 weeks for the treatment of malabsorption syndromes




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50,000IU**
Vitamin D3 50,000IU, (Cholecalciferol 1250ug)
15 tablets

PHARMALLIANCE

INTERVIEW.

Running successful community pharmacies in locations with different socioeconomic strata of Lagos, Pharm Bunmi Olugbeja of Primeah pharmacy makes us understand why Pharmalliance represents the future of Pharmacy Practice in Nigeria. Flourish Crew Reports



Please tell us about yourself and your journey into retail?

My name is Olubunmi Olugbeja. I'm from a family of entrepreneurs, my father is a business man, not very active anymore but still engaged in the business and my mother is also a business woman. Interestingly, she wanted to be a teacher, but my father convinced her to do business, so I have always been into business and I used to as far back as internship year when I started a clothing business.

Retail pharmacy started as a side hustle. I grew up in Ajegunle and my dad used to go all the way to JayKay Pharmacy, Apapa to buy medications because we didn't find pharmacies in the area that we were comfortable with in terms of standard. When I graduated from pharmacy school, I knew that I wanted to start a retail pharmacy in the area at the right time. I opened my first outlet while working as a sales representative in one of the multinationals which I wasn't sure was a good thing. When the company started to talk about conflict of interest and declaring and all of that, I knew it was time to go. Unfortunately at the time, I had a bit of management issues with my up line; that coupled with the conflict of interest made me know that it was time to leave.

I resigned then went fully into community practise

What work experiences have contributed to the running of your own business?

Growing up, we usually resume at my mums business once we close from School. In between writing WAEC and JAMB, I worked as a sales girl in my mums store; manage money, manage inventory etc. I always say that my parents are my first MBA lesson providers because I learnt so many things from them which have been

instrumental to running my business today. At some point, I did my MBA and I was privileged to also get the Women X Scholarship that also helped me as well in business. People say you actually don't get so much from MBA in the Nigerian university but I do not agree. I think they teach a lot of things and you can pick things that are relevant to you.

What personal character or trait will you say has given you an edge in running your own practice?

I would say my ability to never give up. My resilience is a major trait that has kept me going. At a point in my life, the different buildings my two stores were located were up for sale at the same time. It was a defining moment for me as I had to pause and ask myself some hard questions. Also, my faith in God. I see God as a father who doesn't fail. I have a very good relationship with my earthly father who goes all out for me and God, my heavenly father has so much more. So, my resilience, coupled with my belief in the fact that God has got my back made me know that whatever I want; if I can set my mind to it; if I think it, I can see it then I can do it. That for me is major.

What skills have you had to acquire to run your premises outside the content of your B.Pharm?

First, the business acumen I got from my parents watching them run businesses; I learnt how to manage scarcity with my mum. So, I would say, the entrepreneurship lessons from my parents, the MBA programme, the Women X programme and staying in pharmalliance. All these have equipped me with the knowledge needed to run my business

What was your motivation for joining pharmalliance?

I went to shop at New Heights Pharmaceuticals and I walked into Adeshina Opanubi, we call him ST.

I had known him from school and he just spoke with me about what they were doing. Interestingly, I haven't heard about pharmalliance before that time. I also didn't know majority of the foundation members of the group. I had spoken with Pharm Mrs Lawal of Victory drugs when I wanted to start the business. ST actually linked me up with her. So, he spoke to me about pharmalliance and what he was trying to do. I have always believed that the group of people that you work with goes a long way in how you would reach your destiny. I liked that idea of the network of people. That's one of the things that has kept me in pharmalliance. I would also say being in a network like pharmalliance, is very helpful for me. This is not just because this interview is with you, there is something about being in the group of people that know and do, and you are challenged by the day. No man is an island; with the little that you think you know by yourself, if you're not careful, you'll downgrade, you'll decline. When you're in the midst of active people who are doing things, you are challenged. That's what Pharmalliance has offered me.

How has your membership at pharmalliance affected your business and its running?

First, I will say the people. The fact that the people are few and they are gingered and focused. Sometimes, if you have excellent ideas, you'll think you are the only one doing something. I used to think I had a bit of standard, until I got into pharmalliance. For example, I met people like the owners of Silverline and Victory Drugs who would run Medication Therapy Management for every person who walks in. I literally walked into a midst of people whose standards were textbook standards, if I would say. For me, that helps to keep me focused clinically. The business lessons we receive from ST and the amazing trainers he brings in every time has also helped because pharmacy business is a right mix of the clinical and the business. So, I get all of that from pharmalliance and that I would say has been very good.



What would you recommend is the catch in pharmalliance; what about it should draw other pharmacists?

I believe so much in the power of network. You can have ideas, things you want to do by yourself, but you can just wake up one day and just encourage yourself and say “oh I’m okay where I am, I am comfortable”. When you are within people who aren’t gingered, that make it seem as if ‘I am firing by myself’. But the people I am seeing, the things I am seeing, they make me want to do some more

Secondly, we are a product of our network. I’d be honest and say that our association of community pharmacist does not necessarily provide the network. It’s just a mix of people in your zone.

That should not be the only basis for affinity. The basis for affinity should be people who are likeminded, who are going to where you want to be, stay with them and watch yourself fly.

Do you get value for your investment in pharmalliance?

Absolutely, I have said it for long, it’s the network. If I am staying with people who are helping me think, it is value.

What do you like most about pharmalliance?

It’s the network. That’s why even if I don’t come for 10 meetings, I would still pay.

What would you say to a room full of retail pharmacists running their own premises, if you had the opportunity?

Make a difference. Remember that your business is the right mix of clinical and business. Run it profitably and surround yourself with people that will help you achieve your dreams for the business.

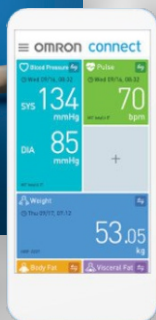
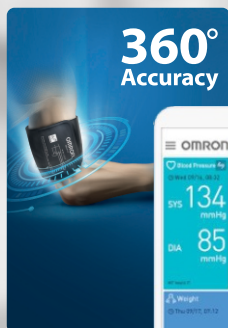
If you weren’t a pharmacist, what would you be?

If you had asked me this question 5 years ago, I would have said I would probably have a fashion store with whatever first degree that I had; but that has evolved over the years

Right now, I would say I will be a trained motivational speaker.

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MUSINGS

OF A VILLAGE PHARMACIST

TimeyinOgunbe



I wish I had not kept Mr Jo's HIV status confidential...

2 years ago...

"Aunty Pharmacist, I no know wetin dey do me", said Mr Jo, as he rolled up his sleeve. "Some people dey say na spiritual attack. I don drink antibiotics tire. He dey pain me ehn! I no fit sleep sef. Na somebody direct me to you." He stretched out his right arm.

This was Herpes Zoster! No mistake. No wonder antibiotics weren't helping. Herpes Zoster is a viral infection. Only antiviral medicines would work. Now because of the link between Herpes and HIV, I asked him more questions. His response made me suspicious. I couldn't bring myself to tell him what I thought.

"Oga, you go need to go General Hospital". I brought out my referral notepad. "Na wetin dey happen? Tell me now" "No worry yourself. When you get there they go do some test for you. Na free. If you do am for private, the money go too much" I reasoned that telling him about free service would motivate him. "Ok o". He took the referral note and left

"Hello sir, how far? You don go General?"

A pause

"One nurse look am. She say na 'Staph' dey do me. She say na stubborn one say I need strong antibiotics injection. I say make I try that one first"

I was irate! So he preferred to believe an ignorant nurse over me. Some people just like to be deceived.

"The thing why dey do you don pass to dey use antibiotics. I don tell you true"

Should I just tell him what I was suspecting?

Ever since Mama C's incidence, I have become cautious of openly suggesting a client goes for an HIV test. I would just simply fill the referral form and send them the the nearest HIV clinic.

The experience was not palatable...

2008...

The girl looked very sick. According to her mom (Mama C), she had been having frequent bouts of diarrhoea. On observation, I found lesions on her skin. Her mouth was covered with sores and white patches. The mom said her 3 year old had been having these issues for the past 6 months. Just fresh from my HIV/STDs training (powered by Howard University), my radar was on. I told her some tests were needed. I scribbled XYZ and referred her to the lab, (at that time, the code XYZ wasn't widely known so I got away with it. Now XYZ is no longer a secret)

Now here I was, holding a report with a positive XYZ. I opened up and told her this was a test for HIV.

"We go need to confirm the test. I go send you go the clinic wey dem go repeat the test and know whether she get am true true."

"God forbid! My pikin no fit get am", she shouted. *"So na yeye test you send me go waste my money do"*. She hissed and left. Mama C never came back to my pharmacy. I wonder what became of the child.

Back to Mr Jo.....

"How many days the nurse don dey treat you?" I tried to keep my cool. I admit, part of my anger was the fact that an unschooled auxillary nurse's judgment was preferred over mine.

"Today make am 3 days when I start treatment. She say I go take injection for 10 days"

"Okay o". I replied and hung up. There was no point forcing my will on him. Time will tell.

2 weeks later Mr Jo came back to the Pharmacy. I almost did not recognize him.

"Aunty Pharmacy, I no well o. This tin never leave me" he said as he rolled up his sleeve. *"The tin dey pain me well well. I no fit sleep for night. You no see say I don dry like Bonga fish? I dey purge too much"* This time I came out clean. Now I was almost sure.

"You need to go General Hospital go do that test wey I say make you go do. I dey suspect say the tin wey dey do you na HIV. But na test go tell us if na him dey worry you"

"Oya, I don ready. Abeg write another paper for me. The other one don lost, no vex" I scribbled another referral.

"Aunty Pharmacy, God bless you". This was Mr Jo, 2 months later. He looked much better. The lesions had cleared. He had added some *weight*.

"E don tey. I no see you since", I replied *"Aunty no vex say I no come since."* *"No wahala",* I responded.

"Na dat tin wey you talk dey worry me true true. Chai! I don spend money die. I even sell half of my land when money no dey. If to say I hear you dat first time, I for no spend money like dis."

"Thank God say you don get yourself." I was so happy. *"You don dey take the medicine?"* I asked him

"Yes o. Na from the hospital I just dey come now. Dem dey give me the medicine for free"

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"Abeg o, no use your medicine play o. Take am everyday, even if you dey fine. Na d medicine dey make the virus no disturb you. If you stop eh, na wahala be that" I warned

"Yes ma. I no go stop" He assured me. Then it occurred to me!

"Ehen, come o, you don tell your wife? She know wetin dey happen?"

"Ehm... I go tell am"

"Ha! When you wan tell am? I hope say you dey use condom"

"Ehmm....."

Can you imagine? Dis man no try o!

I had known Mrs Jo for some years. I cannot forget the first day she came to my Pharmacy. Her face was so comical. As I write I can't help chuckling! It was as if her face had split in 2 from top to bottom. One part appeared normal, the other, very odd.

Check her blood pressure, my mind said. BP turned out to be very high! Thankfully, the **Omron Connect** pilot project organized by Newheights Pharmaceuticals was on at our Pharmacy and we were able to get her to see the cardiologist on the project. I later got to know she was experiencing Bell's pals. She was prescribed medications and eventually, after some weeks her BP and face normalized.

Then she stopped her medications. Because activity done with the patient on the **Omron Connect** program was documented, it was easy for me to track her adherence problem and treat accordingly

So you see, I know Mrs Jo very well...

I looked at Mr Jo. He couldn't look me in the eye.

"You dey touch your wife abi? You no use condom, abi? You never tell am wetin dey do you, abi?" Was I becoming judgemental?

"No worry, I go tell am", he promised

Some days later.....

"Good morning ma, please I want to see you"

I looked up to see boy at the pharmacy gate. It was a late Wednesday morning. I had sent the morning staff on an errand and was the only one present at the Pharmacy.

"Good morning dear. How can I help you?" I asked

"My father is very sick. He has been stooling for some days. Now he is so weak he cannot even walk. We are so confused. There is no money because my father has not gone to work since. Please can you sell me medicine on credit?"

Oh no! Not again. I'm tired of selling on credit. So many begging for help. How many people can I help?

"Please ma. I promise you that when my father is well he will bring the money"

I looked at the boy and my heart melted.

"Who is your dad, I asked?"

"Mr Jo, that Calabar man. You know my mother very well, she used to check her BP here"

Mr Jo again? Most likely, he has stopped his Anti-Retroviral medications. I figured out what could be wrong and gave his son some medications that I could afford to part away with, just in case he defaulted. I handed him the medications with the receipt.

"Thank you ma. God will surely bless you."

*"Tell your dad to try and see me today.
The ORS will give him strength"*

To my greatest surprise, Mr Jo himself reported to the Pharmacy to pay his debt that very evening!

*"Aunty Pharmacy, you try for me today o.
Thank you very much."*

"Thank God you are much better. So let's talk" I ushered him into my office

"Tell me the truth, you have stopped taking your medicine, abi"

"No be lie"

"Why na?"

"As I see say I don well, na him make me relax"

"Sebi dem warn you for hospital say make you no stop. I even warn you on top sef."

He hung his head. I shook my head. Husband and wife na the same thing.

"See, tomorrow like this, you go rush go hospital go report yourself. Them go shout for your head, no be small. Just beg them well well."

"Yes ma"

"Show dem the medicine wher I give you"

"Yes ma"

"You don tell your wife wetin dey do you?"

No answer

"And you still dey touch am?"

No answer

"This thing wey you dey do wicked o"

"I know. I go try tell am"

"Abeg, carry her go there make she go do her own test"

"Ok, I go carry her go"

Our training teaches confidentiality. Keep mute. Don't tell tales and I obeyed. Oh! It was a struggle in this case.

Mrs Jo kept coming for her refills and BP check. I will ask her about her husband.

"He dey fine. Aunty Pharmacy, God bless you well well. He don get himself well"

"Hmmm, thank God" I will respond.

One day I asked her if she had followed her husband to the hospital at any time.

"No ma. Why you ask?"

"Nothing". I quickly said.

I didn't see Mrs Jo after that day neither did I see Mr Jo. I dialed Mr Jo's number one day. It rang and rang. I redialed and redialed

Finally, he picked up my call

"Hello sir"

"Hello madam, I will call you later". He hung up before I could reply. Some months passed by. Then, one day Mrs Jo came to the Pharmacy.

What a transformation! Her complexion was markedly darker. She had lost so much weight. Oh my God!

"Madam, how are you?" I looked at her closely

"Fine", She was avoiding my eyes.

"Wetin happen na. You don change" I was curious, though I knew the reason for her demeanor.

She smiled. *"Na recession tins dey happen"*

Recession things my foot! *"Dis one pass recession tins madam. Your face don change and you no fat again"*

She sighed. *"Hmm, I don dey get myself now o. You for see me before. I sick no be small"*

"You go hospital?"

"Yes ma. Na there I dey since"

"Wetin them tell you say dey do you?"

"Them no really tell me"

Now I have had enough! I was really angry *"Madam, come make we talk"* I ushered her into my office.

"You need to do some test. The test dey important. Today today you go do am!"
"Your husband no tell you about the sickness wey do am that time?"

"No ma"

"Hmm. You see, you need to go do HIV test"
She broke down and started crying. *"I don do am"*

Seriously? I couldn't believe my ears!

"You mean say you don go lab do HIV test?"

She nodded

"When my sickness come dey serious and e wan be like say I wan die, I come dey suspect say na the same sickness do my oga that time. I tell am say he know wetin dey do me and he dey see say I dey die. Na that time my oga come write XYZ test for paper. He come send me go lab. When result come say I dey positive, he come carry me go the General Hospital wey dem they treat am"

I sighed.

"The thing wey pain me pass be say when him sick that first time. I follow am go hospital go do the test. You no believe say when them wan tell him the result, them say make I comot. I ask them why them no wan tell me. I tell them say I be him wife. Them no answer me and my oga no tell me. That man wicked!"

Tears welled up in my eyes...

"So you don dey take the medicine?" I asked
"Yes o. As I come start na that time I come dey get myself"

Every now and then she comes to the Pharmacy for her refills and BP check. She is doing much better now.

I can't help thinking if she would have avoided getting HIV if I had broken this confidentiality rule.

My Pharmacy is now an out-patient center for people living with HIV. One of the things we do when they come for their refills is to fill a questionnaire. One question there says *"Does your partner know your HIV status?"* I am so concerned about the many NO responses. Another question says, *"Do you use a condom during every encounter?"*

You can guess what the response is! No.

They say the goal is to achieve ZERO new cases. Can this really happen?

Just thinking out loud

I remain Aunty Pharmacist

Pharm Timehin Ogungbe is the owner and Superintendent Pharmacist at Elbeth Pharmacy, Iyana Ishasi, Ojoo, Lagos



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BOOSTS IMMUNITY

Paracetamol



TOUGH ON fever

THE LAW OF RECOVERY



When I got the call that day a few years ago, I knew there was trouble. Big trouble. My wife called that a caregiver had broken the leg of a baby at the crèche. Was it an accident? I asked her to rush down to the school and take charge of the situation. She was actually on her way for a course she registered for. When she got to the school, she played back the CCTV with the parents of the child in attendance. She didn't believe the initial story she was told about the child falling down because all the floors were heavily padded. The child's leg was already in plaster-of-paris.

During the playback, the two caregivers in that particular class were caught on camera hitting the kneecaps of the poor girl. That was enough as the parents screamed in agony. My wife requested for the two care-givers, put them in the school bus and drove them to the police station. After writing her statements, the caregivers were detained.

When she called me, I knew I had to rush back to Lagos

I got to Lagos about 10pm and we both headed to the home of the parents. We spent an hour at their gate before they opened. They were livid and rightly so. It was a night I won't forget in a hurry. We were told the child had been dropped with her grandparents in Owerri. That night, my wife bought 3 tickets to Owerri and early the next morning, my wife, daughter and I were on a plane to Owerri.

We had collected the number of the grandparents but we had no assurance that they would be willing to see us. When we got to Owerri, a vehicle I had arranged picked us up. I asked the driver to take me to the best supermarket in Owerri and he took us to one not far from the airport where I bought a choice wine and my wife got a big toy for the child. I also got some kolanuts in line with Igbo tradition. The parents of the child are Igbo.

I put a call to Grandpa, introduced myself and told him I was already in

Owerri to see him. I pleaded that he should tell me his address. I still remember clearly that it rained that morning. After some back and forth, Grandpa reluctantly told our chauffeur his address. It was my wife's first time in Owerri and I remember how she prayed right from our flight to Grandpa's place.

When we got there, I presented the wine and kolanuts and asked for forgiveness. My wife was on her knees as she accepted full responsibility for what happened. Grandpa and Grandma brought out the girl and we saw one of her legs in POP. My wife was in tears. I presented the toy we brought and held the girl in my arms. We informed the grandparents of the actions we have taken including charging the caregivers to court. We could see that the grandparents were impressed and even surprised that we came from Lagos to Owerri. Before we left, Grandpa went into his farm to harvest cucumbers for us. That was when we felt some relief. We left around 3pm and headed back on our return flight to Lagos.

When we got back to Lagos, we headed back to the parents house to give them feedback. Of course, the grandparents already informed them of what transpired. Then we now made an offer to defray all the medical expenses of their daughter. My wife also offered to reimburse them for their travel expenses to drop the girl with the grandparents. Finally, she offered the parents free tuition if they consider bringing the girl back to school. This was after we informed them that the caregivers had been charged to court and the CCTV video presented as evidence. That was a very tough period for my wife as she had to go to court for the trial. It turned out one of the caregivers wanted to start her own crèche and she tried to sabotage the school so there can be a scandal- unfortunately for her, she was caught on camera.

A while later, the parents called my wife. They told her they want to bring the girl back to her school as they were very impressed with the way the matter was handled. I was pleasantly surprised when I heard the news. The baby started attending tuition free but after some time, the parents paid of their own volition. But it didn't stop there.

The mother had a baby and she brought the new baby to the crèche also. They have since relocated abroad but my wife is still in touch with them and they remain great fans of her school. It was a beautiful service recovery that could have ended otherwise.

Sometimes we mess up. Yes, we all do. A lot of times inadvertently but then our customers become dissatisfied. We drop the ball or displease customers in such a way that they are outraged with our products or services. At that point, we think we have lost their patronage. A few of them can even begin to 'bad-mouth' our business with their negative testimonials. I believe there are certain things we can do to quickly recover the customer or patronage.

1. Show empathy

This is beyond showing sympathy. Empathy is active and not passive. It starts with acknowledging the issue and not trying to either explain it away or sweep it under the carpet. Never gloss over the pain points of a customer. Listen to the customer. Put yourself in their shoes. Show that you can understand their emotions. Don't get angry if they are angry. Be sincere with your apologies.

2. Own up and take responsibility

Don't pass the buck if it belongs to you. Don't play the blame game. Own up. Take responsibility- that's the first law of crisis management. Closure is easier when responsibility is not deferred.

I agree it's not easy but it shortens the merry-go-round and puts everything in perspective. Taking responsibility not only eases the pain of the customer but it also brings quick healing and recovery. Accept if it's your fault. You will earn respect this way even if you lose in the short-term.

3. Restitute if you can

I believe Nigerian businesses should start going beyond saying sorry alone to clients. Offer to retribute in case of damages or poor service. Offer rebates and discounts on next purchases. Give free deliveries over a period. Do the installation for free. Restitution is a means of compensating the customer for a loss. It could be loss of a product, service or even time.

4. Take immediate action to the satisfaction of your client

You need to demonstrate that you have the best interests of your customer at heart- and not just interested in how your business can make profits. So you must take action immediately. In the case I cited above, the required action was to charge the caregivers to court. You may need to discipline or even fire a staff where the matter has been aggravated. Don't prevaricate. Show that you're firm.

5. Set clear performance standards

Your company must have clear performance standards and provide service guarantees. These minimum expectations will keep you on your toes and ensure you keep your customers satisfied. It will help you avoid a situation where you have to embark on service recovery.

Sometimes, after you have done your best and put in service-recovery strategies to win back the customer, the customer remains unsatisfied and unperturbed. Learn your lessons, ensure you avoid a repeat of the issues that led to that situation and move on.

Culled from Bayo Adeyinkas @greaterbayo Twitter page (A finance and leadership enthusiast)

PHARMALLIANCE IN PICTURE END OF THE YEAR GET TOGETHER



Team Bonding activity



Yes, we won



Mrs Bridget Eleshin (a LIFEKOACH) taking a session on striking a work-life balance



Cross section of members at the event



Pharm Lere Baale taking a session on Emotional intelligence



Time for some chitchat featuring Pharm Omaruaye of NHP and Pharm Kenny of Dhub Pharmacy

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