

# Create brand sustainability with softgel technology

Gone are the days when medical consumers would settle for just one formulation of a medication. With so many choices readily available for all kinds of consumer products today, people expect—even demand—having choices in prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications. Some want caplets, others prefer chewables and many prefer softgels. Indeed, smart medication brand managers know that today, there is no one “typical customer” for their product, says Kaspar van den Dries, PhD, Science & Innovation Senior Director, Softgels, at Thermo Fisher Scientific.

The good news is that currently available dosage form technologies mean that many drugs can be offered in several formats, meeting the diverse personal preferences of a wide variety of consumers.

Brand managers who want to meet those diverse consumer preferences—and potentially extend the lifecycle of their products—would be wise to keep an eye on some emerging trends that are shaping society and the pharmaceutical industry, advises van den Dries.

## Brand loyalty is under threat

Consumers want more dose formula choices in their prescription and OTC drugs, and they won't hesitate to switch to a different brand if it offers what they want.

And consumers do have many choices now. While in years past a drug might have been available only as a large tablet, many are now available as chewable tablets, softgel capsules, chewable gels and many other forms. Other new formulations incorporate enteric properties in the gelatin shells, ensuring the drug is released in the small intestine, minimizing the risk of gastric irritation. Smart brand managers are racing to take advantage of these new technologies, to meet the diverse needs and desires of all their current and potential customers.

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“Brand managers who can offer their products in a variety of options are more likely to stand out in the market, retain their current customers and attract new customers,” says Tony van Bijleveld, Vice President, Sales at Thermo Fisher Scientific. “They can significantly increase their product’s lifecycle.”

#### Innovation rules

The drugs that are growing the most in market share are those that incorporate some type of innovation, says van Bijleveld. Medications that use Patheon pharma services’ patented chewable gel formulation are a good example. New to the market, Chewels® can be formulated with various sensory properties and are attractive to both older people and children who have trouble swallowing.

Another emerging innovation: formulations that deter abuse. In the midst of the global opioid crisis, having available abuse deterrent softgel technologies would ensure medication cannot be broken open and ingested incorrectly.

“Too often, brand managers are not aware of the advantages of softgels,” says van Bijleveld. These formulations offer improved bioavailability, significant load capacity and precise control of drug release, he says. Softgels can also mask the unpleasant taste and odor posed by some medications.

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“We encourage brand managers to talk with us about new softgel options for their drugs,” says van Bijleveld. “We thrive on open brainstorming and developing partnerships that can increase your market exposure and significantly extend the life cycle of

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**Learn more about how Patheon pharma services’ dose formulations, including a variety of softgel options, could extend the lifecycle of your drug.**

