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J&J Sees 'Enormous' Potential In Personalized And Digitally-Supported Self-Care

by [David Ridley](#)

J&J's senior director of medical affairs, EAME, Mark Watt, makes the case for the untapped potential of personalization through apps such as the company's Nicorette QuickMist SmartTrack product in this exclusive interview with HBW Insight.

"The potential of personalization is enormous," reflected J&J Consumer Healthcare's Mark Watt in an exclusive interview with HBW Insight.

"Personalized healthcare is going to be ever more prevalent and I think the expectation from consumers now is that they should be recognized as individuals and they expect individualized solutions," continued Watt, J&J's senior director of medical affairs, EAME.

"We are only just scratching the surface," he argued. "There's huge potential for tailored behavioral support that actually recognizes the kind of person you are, not just necessarily giving you the data which will help motivate you but presenting that in ways that will be compelling."



J&J'S SENIOR DIRECTOR MEDICAL AFFAIRS, EAME, MARK WATT

Watt pointed to J&J's Nicorette QuickMist SmartTrack product – which combines tailored smoking cessation support with the latest behavioral science, or “nudge,” techniques – as a good example.

“Rather than trying to climb the whole mountain of quitting smoking in one go, with the new Nicorette product you’ve got your NRT in your hand and an app that’s supporting you step-by-step through your quitting journey,” Watt said.

Tailored Plan

In creating the app, J&J spoke to over 10,000 smokers in seven countries – the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Australia and Russia – to try and understand what they were looking for from an NRT product, he explained.

The company also looked at the functional, emotional and support needs that people have, how smoking makes them feel, whether it gives them a feeling of relaxation or being in control and the kind of things that will help augment their “quit willpower,” he continued.



NICORETTE QUICKMIST SMARTTRACK

“We took all this and tried to weave it into tailoring a quit plan that, obviously within the license of the medication, gives consumers optimal support depending on where they are in terms of their confidence levels and their motivation,” Watt said.

“We allow smokers to choose their starting point and then we walk them through their journey from preparing to quit to reducing cigarettes, getting rid of smoking and then finally discounting use of the NRT as well,” he added.

Personalization is only one of four techniques the app leverages, however. The second thing the app does is show smokers their actual nicotine use and habits, which are often not in line with personal expectations, Watt noted.

“If you ask smokers how many cigarettes they smoke a day, it’s amazing how many get it wrong,” he said.

“Everyone thinks they smoke 20 a day and in reality, it can be massively different.”

The app tracks how many cigarettes people actually smoke, as well as the circumstances, places and times of day where the desire to smoke is triggered, he said. “And it works, we can see that it’s working,” he added.

Behavioral Science

Thirdly, the app uses motivational techniques such as nudges to solidify commitments made at the beginning of the quit process and take people all the way to the end, Watt continued.

“We try and make the quit journey very real by walking and talking people through the benefits of quitting, the timescales involved and incorporating these into the goal setting itself,” he said.

Nudges include things such as the potential financial savings that users are realizing from quitting smoking, how many days they’ve been smoke free, how many cigarettes

J&J’s Nicorette QuickMist SmartTrack – Getting Inside One Of 2020’s Biggest UK Launches

By [David Ridley](#)

they've actually not smoked, he pointed out.

Finally, the app helps quitters deal with relapse situations, “those moments when you would normally pick up a cigarette and smoke,” Watt explained.

Social cues, certain situations and boredom are all triggers that cause cravings and can potentially cause a quitter to relapse, he said.

“QuickMist SmartTrack helps people get to the other side of those moments with tips and strategies, routines, motivational techniques and other things so when people feel like reaching for a cigarette, they can pick up the app instead and find something to keep them on track,” he said.

Lockdown Habits

Having QuickMist SmartTrack’s in-your-pocket support has been even more valuable for consumers during the coronavirus pandemic, Watt pointed out.

Unfortunately, many became more reliant on tobacco products. “It was definitely a way for some people to cope or even just deal with the boredom of lockdown,” he said.

However, the last year has also brought home to many the health risks associated with smoking, especially with regards to respiratory conditions like COVID-19, he noted.

“Smokers get more lung infections,” Watt continued. “They tend to suffer from them more severely, and we’ve certainly seen that during the pandemic. Smokers that get COVID that end up in hospital, do less well.”

“But it’s not just your lungs,” he added, “smoking affects your blood pressure, and

24 Feb 2021

HBW Insight speaks to Johnson & Johnson's Bill Twomey and Sven Sjovald about how one of the biggest OTC launches of 2020 – Nicorette QuickMist SmartTrack – uses behavioral science techniques to help motivate consumers to quit smoking and overcome COVID-related supply chain difficulties to launch a much-needed digital smoking cessation aid in the middle of a pandemic.

[Read the full article here](#)

J&J Nicorette Survey: COVID-19 Drives A Quarter Of UK Smokers To Want To Quit

By [David Ridley](#)

26 Mar 2021

Research shows more and more UK consumers wanting to quit in the wake of the pandemic. J&J Consumer Health is looking to pharmacy as well as its new Nicorette QuickMist SmartTrack product to support smokers on

skin and oral health.”

“COVID has definitely focused the hearts and minds of smokers and smokers’ families about taking steps to avoid further risk in, what has obviously been, quite a perilous situation,” he argued.

their post-COVID quitting journey.

[Read the full article here](#)

Other Applications

While J&J is using behavioral support tools that they know to be effective in NRT, the company is also interested in seeing if these techniques are helpful in other situations where people are dealing with healthcare problems by themselves as well, Watt revealed.

“We’ve certainly got the in-house expertise and we’ve got the drive to explore these things further and not sit back and rest on this launch,” he insisted.

Watt said that the intention is also to continually revise the SmartTrack app and keep on improving it. “The nice thing about apps is that, as we learn more and more about how these interventions are effective, we can hone them even more for particular groups.”

Ultimately, the aim with digital apps like SmartTrack is to emulate the kind of traditional, face-to-face interactions between healthcare professionals like doctors and pharmacists that Watt said are the “gold standard” for personalization.

“The further you get into self-care where people are buying a product off a shelf to use then that becomes obviously much less personalized,” he noted.

“We know that personalized support helps,” he said. “What we’re trying to do is capture that and give it to people who can have it on demand, to try and fill that gap and help them to have coping strategies the rest of the time as well.”