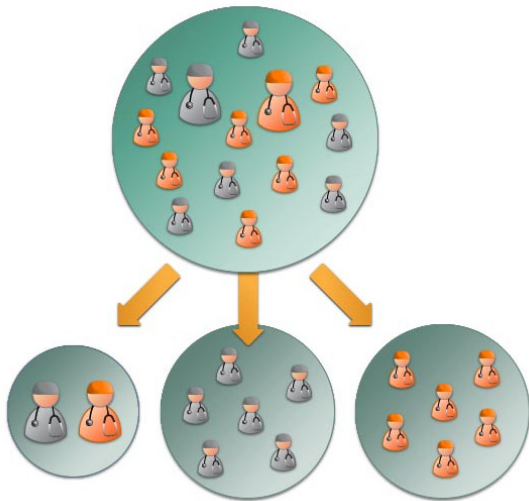


Targeting High Priority Oncologists by their “Softer” Humanistic Tendencies

Observant LLC consultants were commissioned by a leading pharmaceutical company to conduct a multi-phase segmentation of the breast cancer management market for a mature product approaching patent expiration. Critical objectives included identifying a set of targeted and reachable oncologist segments that varied in the volume opportunity they presented to the client’s medication.



One critical challenge in segmenting highly specialized physicians is the relative homogeneity among them. In this case the population of oncologists is relatively homogenous in terms of their backgrounds, patient populations and general treatment strategies for breast cancer. Observant LLC needed to identify high opportunity subgroups that were different from the rest of the population in ways that were relevant for the purpose of crafting unique communication approaches. This required eliciting attitudes and behaviors that extended beyond past prescribing behaviors and therapy perceptions to get at underlying attitudinal and behavioral factors.

In Phase I of this research, qualitative in-person interviews suggested a number of attitudinal dimensions that could be linked to treatment strategies and

prescribing decisions. Dimensions included highly meta-level constructs not usually addressed in segmentations, for example their personal value judgments about why they became oncologists and their belief systems around “saving lives”. These values influence their willingness to rely on clinical and personal experience versus trial data in developing a treatment philosophy, etc.

In Phase II of this research, the dimensions identified in Phase I were included in a quantitative online survey of 250 oncologists. A number of other critical practice-related, behavioral, and targeting variables were also included. All of these dimensions were then included as driver variables in a latent class segmentation model. An iterative modeling process ultimately yielded a four-segment solution, identifying three high opportunity segments. Segments varied along key therapeutic dimensions – such as patient volume and loyalty to the client’s medication. Importantly, segments also varied meaningfully in the degree to which they were patient-centric physicians versus being more “by-the-book.”

The client was able to adopt customized approaches to targeting each of the three high opportunity segments, using the physicians’ patient-orientations plus information on their ‘softer’ patient-centric attitudes. These communication strategies enhanced the abilities of their sales representatives to connect with these physicians in meaningful ways, ultimately leading to more positive impressions of the medication and the company.

For more information about Observant LLC’s capabilities in the oncology market, or our methodologies in segmentation and quantitative science, please contact info@observant.biz.