

Using 'mystery shopping' to inform service redesign in the NHS

Background

- Sutton and Merton PCT need to deliver 1,220 '4 week quitters' in 2008
- The stop smoking service - GPs, pharmacists, advisors - offers a free 6 week programme
- 1,300 smokers used the service annually
 - 48% stop smoking
 - 25-30% still not smoking one year later
- Smokers are 4 times more likely to quit when using NHS stop smoking services
- DFI appointed to provide social marketing support and build capacity within the PCT

The 'mystery shopping' approach

- Secondary research identified a need to reach more smokers from routine and manual groups
- 'Mystery shopping' approach recommended to inform strategy
- Smokers from the target group recruited to:
 - Try to quit using the service
 - Keep a diary
 - Participate in a focus group before the quit attempt
 - Participate in a focus group after the quit attempt

Findings (1)

- Lack of awareness of the service and the range of support provided

“I think people need to be made more aware - there is a lot more around than I think any of us know about”

- Once inside the service, participants were positive and impressed by the range of support available

“..... there is so much help out there that you’re not really aware of and it wasn’t until I came to this...”

Findings (2)

- Many who rang the telephone line expected to speak to someone immediately and were disappointed when they got through to an answerphone

*“They said you could leave your number but
I’m not very prone to leaving numbers”*

*“ If this is a hotline, I want someone to be there.
[I want it] to be manned when it says it will!”*

- Many people thought the promotional materials lacked impact and should make it clearer that the services are free

Findings (3)

- Participants wanted a flexible service that meets their needs and “comes to them”. They want a choice of appointments – dates, times, locations - and they want some services outside of working hours.

*“If you’re working nine till five, five days a week,
I mean, you haven’t got a lot of choice”*

- Some participants were disappointed with the service received from community pharmacists

Recommendations (1)

- Do more to promote the service
 - Make sure people know what services are available and how effective they are
 - Highlight that services are free
 - Promote in non-health settings
 - Increase impact of promotional materials
- Make it easy for people to access services and welcome them in
 - If immediate appointments can't be made, direct them to the website or send materials in the post
 - Provide some services outside of working hours
 - Take the service to the people

Recommendations (2)

- Improve access via the telephone line
 - Whenever possible, answer calls in person
 - Ensure the answerphone message is as helpful and welcoming as possible
- Ensure that services live up to what is being advertised
 - Make sure that advertised services are manned at least from 9-5
 - Ensure that participating pharmacists set aside time and space for quitters. Agree a code of conduct so that they know what is expected of them.

Action taken by the PCT (1)

- Set-up a social marketing project board to develop strategy and review progress
- Activity to build awareness and reputation of the service
- Review of communication strategy and materials
- Consistent use of Smokefree branding
- New answerphone message

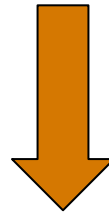
Action taken by the PCT (2)

- Introduction of SMS texting
- Strengthening of promotional roadshows
- Sourcing new venues and workplaces for outreach services
- Working with individual pharmacies to ensure they meet contract specifications

Conclusions

'Mystery shopping' approach:

- Greater understanding of target audience
- In-depth feedback on the service
- Changes required to meet their needs



Satisfied customers!