

## AstraZeneca, Generic Firm Team Up for Toprol-XL Ad

In an unusual twist for a DTC print campaign, AstraZeneca and generic firm Par Pharmaceuticals teamed up in an effort to promote the blood-pressure drug Toprol-XL in consumer magazines and newspapers this summer. The ad's headline proclaimed in capital letters: "Come Back to Toprol XL and its Generic Equivalent (Metoprolol Succinate) for Once-Daily Blood Pressure Medicine."

Blair Hains, a spokesman at AstraZeneca, explained the back-story behind the ad this way: three generic versions of Toprol-XL hit the market in 2006, including the authorized generic from Par. In late 2008, the other two generics were removed from the market at the FDA's request, which created "a void in the marketplace and [AstraZeneca and Par] were the only [ones] still manufacturing the product," Hains said. Because millions of people regularly use the drug to treat high-blood pressure, AstraZeneca decided to ramp up production. Additionally, the drug has a black-box warning indicating that patients should not stop taking it abruptly.

AstraZeneca and Par wanted to inform patients that the product was available in both branded and generic form. The ad also marked "a good opportunity to continue the partnership between Par and AstraZeneca," Hains said.



## Rx Labels Should Compare Drugs, Say Researchers

Three professors at Stanford University's School of Medicine published an essay in this month's *New England Journal of Medicine* requesting that the FDA require drug companies to explain on the labeling how their product compares to competitors' products in the same drug class. They argue that the label should have a statement such as "Although this drug has been shown to lower blood pressure more effectively than placebo, it has not been shown to be more effective than other members of the same drug class," which would help produce better-informed consumers.

While the FDA requires drug companies to state how their product performs in relationship to a placebo, Dr. Randall Stafford, the lead author of the report, wants drug companies to compare their product with existing treatments, such as competitive brands. Dr. Stafford claims that by comparing a product with another, consumers and physicians might be less tempted to try the newest offering of the drug: "There's an inherent tendency for physicians and patients to want the newest thing and to assume that newer and more expensive means better, although this is often not the case," he said. The authors also believe that knowing how a product compares to another is just as significant as receiving risk information.

## ANA Survey: One-Third of Marketers Plan to Reduce Budgets by 20 Percent

A survey from The Association of National Advertisers (ANA) shows that marketing and advertising budgets are still being impacted by the economy, but not as intensely as indicated by an ANA survey six months ago. Nearly one-third of marketers (29 percent) are still planning to reduce budgets by more than 20 percent, compared with 37 percent of respondents in the Jan./Feb. 2009 study. The report stated "this indicates that the deepest cuts may already have been made."

While actual spending in the first six months of 2009 was below what marketers predicted in the preceding ANA survey, fewer marketers now believe their budgets will be reduced for the remainder of the year. Nearly one-half of marketers (49 percent) thought their

budgets would be reduced in the first half, while actually 62 percent suffered declines. Thirty-nine percent think that their budgets will be reduced in the residual months, versus 49 percent from the previous survey. Marketers are more hopeful when forecasting upcoming budgets. Eight percent thought their budgets would increase in the prior survey's results. However, updated results show that 17 percent of respondents are optimistic that their budgets will increase in the coming months.

Anticipated Amount of Reduction In Overall Marketing Budget (% of Respondents)			
Reduction (%)	Study Period		
	July/Aug 2008	Jan/Feb 2009	July/Aug 2009
1-5%	19.2%	15.1%	21.9%
6-10%	33.3%	22.7%	22.9%
11-20%	26.9%	25.2%	26.0%
21-30%	10.3%	17.6%	11.5%
> 30%	10.3%	19.3%	17.7%

Source: ANA Recession Survey, August 2009