



---

## What is the Role of a Pharmaceutical Sales Representative

Just like their job title infers, pharmaceutical sales reps sometimes known as drug reps, are responsible for selling drugs; but in reality, their job includes more than just pushing drug sales. They act as a vital source of information to physicians for the latest drugs in the market. They will usually provide samples for the physician to try out for free before they can start to pay for the drugs. The sales reps also serve as an important point of industry feedback for pharmaceutical companies and other organizations interested in the vital statistics in the health industry. One such form of information is the quantity of drugs sold in a certain area including any trends such as sharp increases in the sales of certain medication during particular times of the year.

Usually, a pharmaceutical sales representative would sell the drugs from a particular company. But more often, many sales reps involved in selling pharmaceuticals actually specialize in one type of drug for instance cancer medication, drugs for cardiovascular disease or medicine for respiratory illnesses. That way, they build expertise in that area and becoming an authority as opposed to handling many types of drugs and not having depth in the knowledge of how each works. As a pharmaceutical sales rep, your job would then be to make appointments with doctors who specialize in the particular niche to which you are selling pharmaceuticals. For instance, if you are selling medication for treating heartburn, you would make appointments with gastroenterologists.

Pharmaceutical sales representatives have more independence than many other vocations including other sales jobs. You can work from home and make use of a company car to move from place to place. Some may work out of a local or regional office where they would report to occasionally or daily. Whichever base you work from, most of your time as a rep will be spent on the road meeting doctors whether you are selling to new clients or just meeting old clients to keep the relationship alive. So if you are considering selling pharmaceuticals as a career, you must be prepared to spend many hours each week travelling.

As a sales rep, there will be need for you to attend sales meetings, training courses as well as join conference calls or actual meetings with the management team from time to time. You must be prepared to make persuasive but factual presentations to doctors and other staff in the medical industry. This means you must be armed about all aspects of the drugs that you are selling from the nature, benefits and side-effects.

In terms of your educational requirements prior to in order for you to sell pharmaceuticals, most pharmaceutical sales companies prefer that their reps have a bachelor's degree and not necessarily in the medical field though it would help. In addition to having a degree, you will need



---

to present yourself as a professional that can project a good image company on its client base. Good organization skills are essential as you need to manage your time and the territory assigned to you for maximum effect. You must be prepared to set aside time to study current and emerging terminologies and trends in the medical world. A pharmaceutical **sales job**, as with any sales position, is quite demanding since you must balance client appointments with achieving sales targets.

The remuneration on pharmaceutical sales jobs is usually higher when compared to other **sales jobs** of a similar cadre. The benefits will often include not just the usual health insurance and pension but also a company car. But there are challenges too with selling pharmaceuticals. Certain factors such as wide availability of drugs of cheaper variety as well as a crowded market thanks to the many sales reps today, have made it difficult to sell. get to speak to physicians on a regular basis. Also, getting an appointment to speak to doctor is never easy. Doctors are always some of the most in demand service providers anywhere and getting them to meet you will require patience and persistence.

If you are looking to advance into a management role, there are a number of career paths you can take up. For instance, a sales representative can become a city or county manager and even progress to vice-president level.