

Take Advantage of Technology that Helps Pharma Reps Better Orchestrate Customer Engagement

Michael Townsend
Research Manager,
Life Sciences Commercial Strategies
IDC Health Insights



Life sciences companies are actively trying to break down silos of information built up over the last several decades, when pharmaceutical sales representatives were developed as the primary and key communication link with doctors and other providers about new and existing drug therapies. Simultaneously, specialized marketing groups created attractive and informative visual aids, with the watchful eye of federal regulators like the FDA defining the rules of the road for these communications.

Julia Z, Senior Field Representative for Advanced Pharma Products, coffee in hand, starts her car to make her calls for the day. The car's digital voice assistant greets her, "Good morning Julia!"

Today, digital technology is providing the opportunity and the challenge to customize how, where, and when healthcare providers (HCPs) get product and other information from life science companies. Today, we have the tools necessary to bring the right message and info to HCPs and patients economically while keeping interested stakeholders at life sciences companies informed of status, insights and suggested actions by their sales and marketing staffs.

In addition, outcome-based reimbursement, real-world evidence (RWE), patient engagement and medication adherence, as well as patient advocacy and social groups must be considered and combined with external and internal data and insights. The proliferation of sources of information and data available to life sciences companies points to a need for orchestration of the many possible touch points of engagement with customers—particularly HCPs, but also increasingly patients, payers, and other stakeholders. By turning the latest and most complete information into the most impactful and valued actions, while limiting the extraneous and repetitive communications, life science companies will demonstrate respect for time-starved HCPs and earn their increased trust.

"Good morning Julia! Dr. Mehta agreed to a sample of Numedzimab – should I send one for you? OK, you can sign for it at the express depot. Should I invite her for a visit by you on the arrival date? Great. 3 pm ok? By the way, it looks like Numedzimab outcome-based coupons are currently on track to be reduced due to improved RWE effectiveness ratings from November. Should I ask Medical Affairs to send the updated report to you and Dr. Mehta? Great – email ok for both of you? OK - have a nice day!"

Having come of age in a world of texting, social media, and powerful handheld devices, empowered customers will choose their own methods, medium, and time to learn about new therapies, indications, and frequently-updated RWE data. Life sciences companies will need to adapt to this new digital landscape by designing new roles that transcend and straddle prior silos of data and job responsibilities. Many "field" reps will spend more time viewing customer data and insights, and communicating electronically with HCPs according to their preferences. Orchestration of these varied and complex customer experiences will be facilitated by new platforms that span multiple functions and sources of data, while allowing the human touch to remain paramount.

Julia heads toward home. The familiar ringtone sounds. "Julia? Good afternoon. I thought you'd like to know your territory's Numedzimab prescriptions increased 26% from last month – congratulations! Can I send the invitations for Dr. Sawyer's webinar on October 5? We found 16 of your customers are already following his blogs. OK, you can call Dr. Mehta and Dr. Grossman personally. I'll put them on the attendee list for now. Have a great evening!"

Julia pulls into her driveway. *"I will,"* she replies.