

Insight Brief

# Rise of Digital Opinion Leaders: Transforming the Influence Landscape in Life Sciences and MedTech



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Life sciences and medical technology companies have long recognized the value of identifying and establishing collaborative relationships with key opinion leaders (KOLs). It's well documented that having your brands, products and organization associated with and promoted by established health care professionals (HCPs) who are well-known, well-published and trusted in your therapeutic area positively impacts brand awareness, reputation, and ultimately product sales.

Because their influence derives from respected scientific credentials (e.g., successful clinical trials, volume of published articles and grants, board memberships, etc.), KOLs will likely always remain valuable effective influencers. However, another rapidly growing category of life sciences and MedTech industry influencer is arguably becoming more influential than traditional key opinion leaders. Enter the **digital opinion leaders**.

Powered by social media and other online channels like, websites, forums, blogs and podcasts, popular digital opinion leaders (DOLs) are capturing mindshare and growing follower groups consisting of not only HCPs,

but also patients, advocacy groups and any parties interested in the topics covered by a particular DOL.

In some cases, the two groups may overlap, as when KOLs have leveraged digital channels to become DOLs as well.

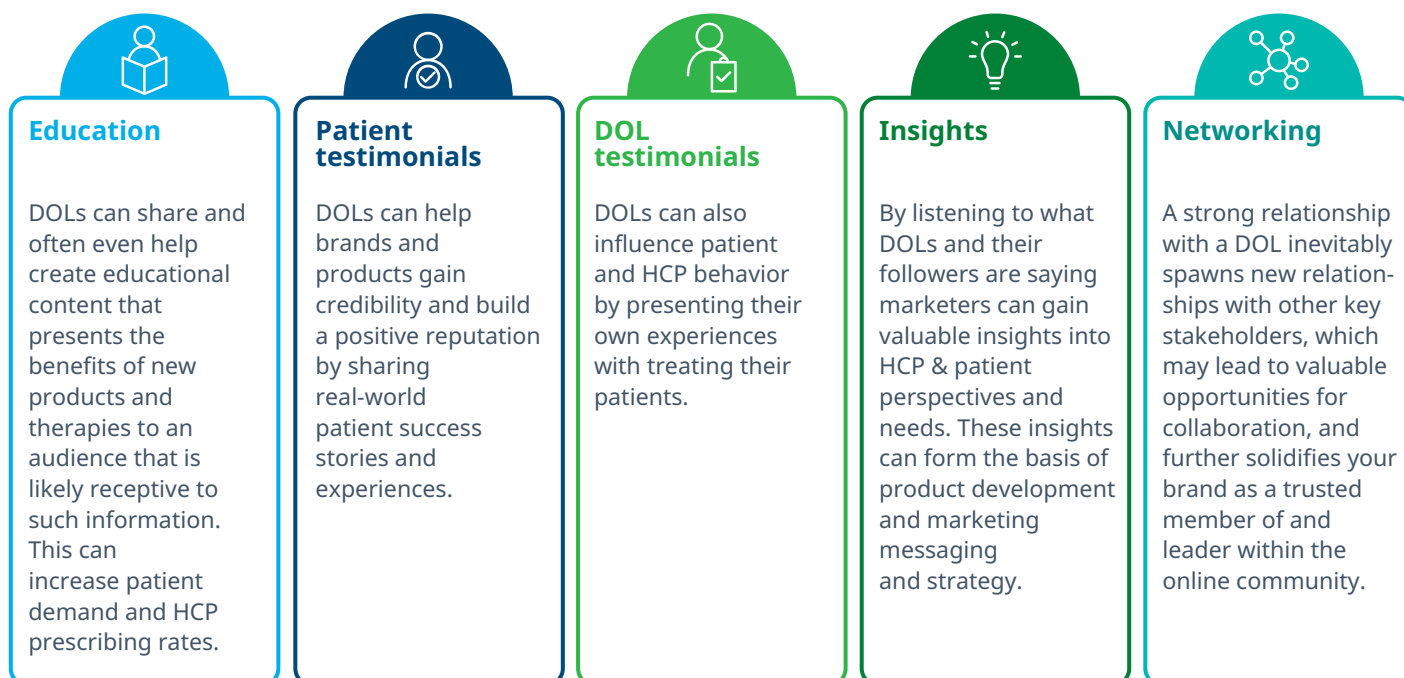
## Why you should engage with DOLs

Social media influencers and influencer marketing are not new concepts in many industries. And while life sciences and MedTech organizations use of influencer marketing through DOLs is increasing rapidly, many organizations have still not integrated the strategy into their marketing plans or have not learned how to identify and effectively engage with best-fit DOLs to gain maximum impact and awareness. Failure to creatively collaborate with your organization's ideal DOLs and implement a solid influencer strategy is a missed opportunity to give brands or devices positive exposure to a large and targeted audience. It is also a missed opportunity to maintain real-time awareness of:

- The most popular and current topics being discussed
- The opinions being expressed by various individuals and groups
- The latest research results
- The problems patients are experiencing and their desired outcomes
- The degree to which your brands and competitive brands have penetrated a particular online group

The list of subjects that can be learned by tuning into relevant online communities goes on and on. If you decline to monitor and engage with these communities and their particular DOLs, you run the risk of missing out on a wealth of information and opportunities to take an active and visible role in the ongoing exchange of ideas.

A mutually beneficial relationship with your chosen key DOLs can be an extremely valuable asset. Here are some of the ways a DOL partnership can be leveraged:



## Identifying the best DOLs to connect with

Once your organization has agreed that DOL influencer marketing is important enough to add to your omnichannel marketing mix, the next step is to identify the online communities in which you'd like to insert your brand, and the most influential DOLs in your selected communities. The first attribute to consider when identifying an effective DOL influencer is the topics they

cover and how well the content they produce is aligned with your objectives and attracts your target audience. You will also want to consider the number of followers a DOL has amassed on their given digital platforms, and assess how widely their content is consumed, shared, referenced, and discussed.

There are a variety of choices in data technology solutions that could help you locate your optimum DOLs. Ideally, you would want to find the easiest, fastest and most precise way to pinpoint the digital communities



and DOLs that are likely to have the greatest impact for your business. What if you could leverage a comprehensive, multi-layered, global data technology solution designed to crawl the web and monitor, analyze, organize, and update every piece of content related to healthcare industries?

You can actually do just that using IQVIA's OneKey Accelerated Insights. Accelerated Insights is by far the largest, most comprehensive data source of its kind in the world, with three times the amount of digital profile and real-life behavior data than any other solution. Life sciences and MedTech companies can locate best-fit DOLs in a matter of minutes with Accelerated Insight's massive global data sets. All specialties and therapeutic areas are covered, and the latest data is collected in real time. In fact, 24 million digital content items are collected daily from global and local sources including:



Once you've flagged potential DOLs, you can take a deep dive into their digital footprint and activities both past and present. Select an individual to reveal a variety of insights including:

- Audience size and activities on all social media channels
- Networks of influence and scientific collaborations
- Relevant word clouds based on search specifics
- Earned social mentions and sharing metrics for published content

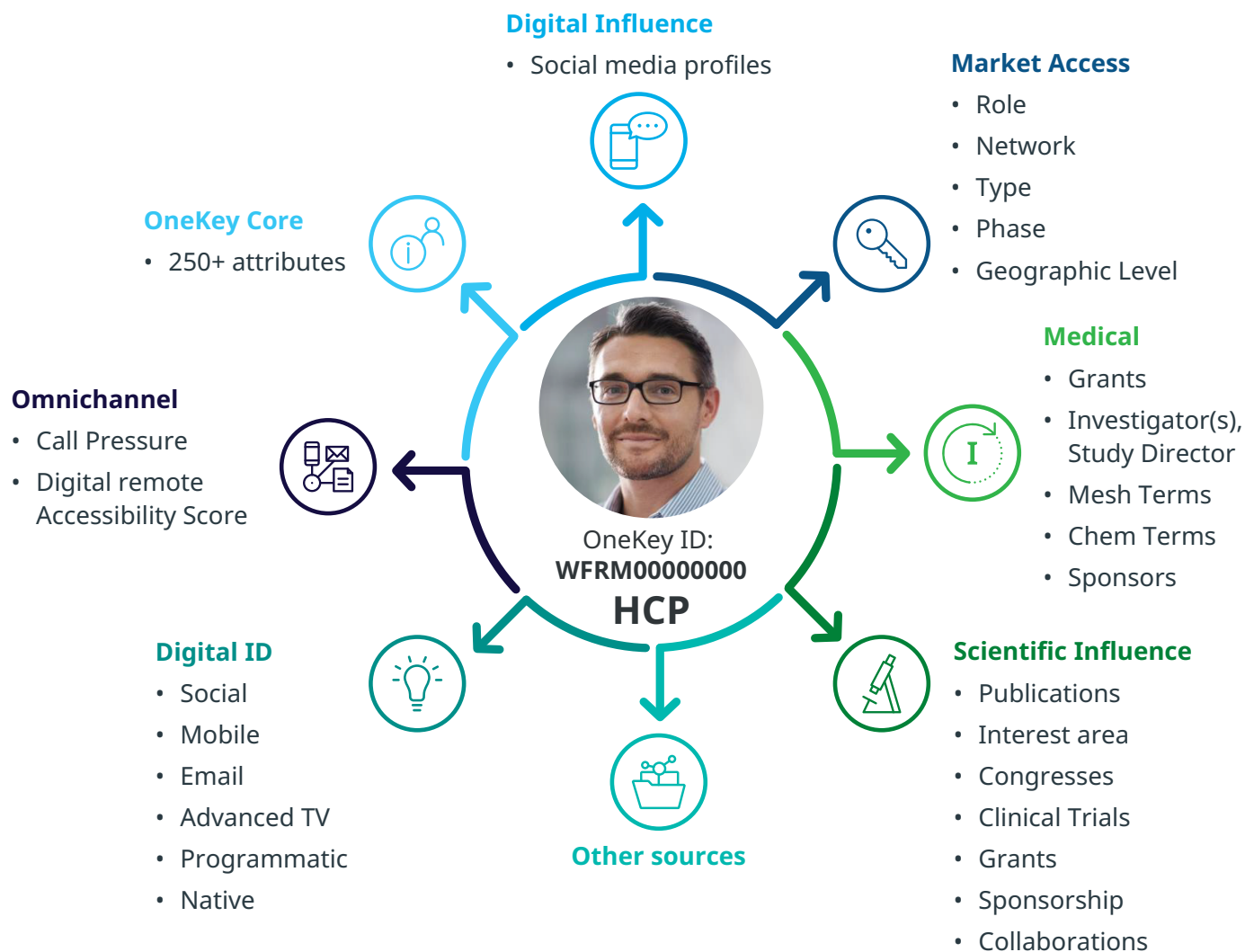
In addition to DOL identification, Accelerated Insights can also be used gather web and social media intelligence, which can be used to:

- Monitor and benchmark digital share of internal and competitive brands and products
- Stay on top of the latest market trends
- Rank the top digital channels and authors



# OneKey Accelerated insights enables HCP personalization

## Onekey Community Networks of Influence



## OneKey Accelerated Insights identifies KOLs, too

While the focus of this insight brief is on finding influential DOLs, it's important to mention that Accelerated Insights also includes the world's most comprehensive scientific profile data available to find relevant KOLs. Accelerated Insights scientific data includes valuable information such as:



## Summary

DOLs are increasingly perceived as credible and trustworthy sources of information. They often have a track record of providing valuable insights, evidence-based opinions, and up-to-date knowledge in their respective domains. When DOLs endorse or speak positively about a pharmaceutical or medical device product, it can have a substantial impact on the opinions and decisions of their audience. Leveraging the influence and credibility of DOLs can help organizations build trust and credibility for their products or initiatives. IQVIA's OneKey Accelerated Insights is a powerful tool that can be used to easily identify DOLs (and KOLs) that are proven influencers within specific therapeutic areas.

As life sciences and MedTech companies begin to develop omnichannel marketing strategies for the following year, they should consider making influencer marketing through DOL collaborations an integrated part of their plan to increase reach and awareness on an accelerated scale.

**To learn more about how IQVIA's OneKey Accelerated Insights can help you identify and engage Digital Opinion Leaders, contact us at [iqvia.com/onekey](https://iqvia.com/onekey)**



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