



# Improving healthcare professional engagement: Why quality customer data is key

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**As the life sciences industry seeks to drive better customer engagement and deliver personalised multichannel communications, the need for quality data is greater than ever.**

Reliable customer data has long been integral to effective commercial execution within life sciences. For field teams, access to accurate and up-to-date customer data ensures they remain compliant and productive. For reps, successful calls rest on their ability to access complete healthcare professional (HCP) information, such as demographics and specialty.

Yet across the industry, customer data quality is a widespread concern. In fact, 87% of companies surveyed in the 2016 Veeva European Customer Data Survey say they face customer data-quality challenges. Sales reps often have wrong addresses, don't know which HCPs to contact, or have outdated data about specialties.

## **Outdated and inaccurate**

Outdated or inaccurate customer data means companies do not have a complete, real-time view of the customer, which can compromise regulatory compliance. Less than half of respondents say they are satisfied their customer data provides a complete and real-time view of the customer, according to the survey. And with the Global Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on the horizon, life sciences companies will need to critically evaluate their approaches to customer data.

## **Data quality**

Data quality is a serious issue – and one that is being taken seriously by

the industry. Today, nearly three-quarters of life sciences companies either have customer data-quality initiatives in place or will within the next two years. Quality customer data is now widely recognised as the key to effective commercial execution, so the need to improve customer data quality has climbed in priority on the corporate agenda.

### Personalised treatment

As life sciences companies seek to improve engagement with HCPs through more personalised interactions, the need for detailed, up-to-date customer data is crucial. Delivering relevant content in a timely manner via the right communications channel is the new imperative. For that to happen, the right customer data needs to be in the right people's hands at the right times. But getting that customer data right in the first place is no easy task.

For years, the industry has had access to customer data from a range of sources, both internal and external. However, it's often quickly outdated. Physicians frequently move practices or hospitals, and these changes are difficult to keep current. Today it takes around 10 days for a data-change request to be processed; however, the majority of companies say four days would be acceptable. More than two-thirds want customer data-change requests actioned within one day.

### In-house data collection?

Many life sciences companies still rely on a variety of methods to source and manage their customer data. Just less than half of organisations solely source and manage their customer data in-house, while just over one-third rely on a blend of in-house and third-party sources. But the complexity of maintaining current and accurate customer data puts a burden on organisations to manage customer data themselves. The industry trend is more towards outsourcing customer data, as 57% of life sciences companies now rely on third-party vendors to supply their customer data.

The current infrastructure to manage customer data is often a patchwork of disparate data systems and siloed organisational structures – and it's clear why maintaining complete and accurate customer data is such an issue. With multiple systems working in isolation, the most recent information and intelligence are not evenly shared across the company. There is no single version of the "truth" about the customer.

### Brand fatigue

From a customer engagement perspective, that's no recipe for success. Without complete, up-to-date customer data accessible from one source, different departments of the same company might inadvertently contact a customer several times, leading to brand fatigue at best and damage to the company's reputation at worst. For sales and marketing to be truly effective, it is vital to precisely coordinate outreach and determine what message to send, when, and through what channel to each individual HCP.

Quality data must be quickly accessible. This is where the industry is demanding that customer data is seamlessly integrated into CRM systems so reps can focus on what matters the most: productive engagement with HCPs. In fact, 68% of respondents say integration of customer data with current systems, including CRM, is a key factor in selecting a third-party data vendor. With real-time access to accurate,



up-to-date customer data, reps are more likely to use their CRM systems.

### Harnessing digital communication

And as companies seek to leverage the power of digital communications channels, the need for ever-more powerful and more granular customer data is only increasing. Digital engagement means life sciences companies can increase reach and deliver more relevant, tailored information. But that, of course, relies on more detailed customer and email data. Currently, less than half of life sciences companies can uniquely identify customers across systems and geographies, more than two-thirds of respondents say they need greater segmentation in the future, and more than half cite customer email data as a key future requirement.

### Quality customer data

Across the industry, the drive is on to improve customer data quality. While the desire is to improve customer engagement through multichannel communication, there is still a gap between where the industry is and where it wants to be. More life sciences companies realise their approaches to customer data must change if they wish to increase personalised multichannel communication with HCPs. Life sciences may well be in the process of digital transformation, but customer data still lags behind. 🌐



As Director of Strategy for Veeva OpenData in Europe, **Guillaume Roussel** brings with him more than 15 years of experience within the life sciences industry, and the perspective born of a truly international career. With his unique experience spanning life sciences, information technology, business development and healthcare compliance, Guillaume is set to drive the industry towards greater transparency, agility and global harmonisation by delivering a world-class master-data solution to the cloud.