

Roche Diagnostics' Approach to Omnichannel Marketing Excellence

Andreas Schneider, Head of Global Digital Marketing at Roche Diagnostics Solutions, shares his perspectives for increasing personalization and delivering more relevant content to patients

The last few years have forced medtech field teams to embrace remote engagement. Add on the increasingly complex regulatory environment which has made it critical for companies to be very careful about content and engagement strategies.

Many companies use a hybrid engagement model that combines in-person marketing, remote engagement, and email to connect with key contacts and patients. This approach requires them to create and develop vast amounts of personalized content and deliver it dynamically to healthcare professionals. In this environment of digital overload companies are finding it ever more difficult to reach patients and physicians in a meaningful way.

Veeva MedTech recently hosted a webinar featuring Andreas Schneider, Head of Global Digital Marketing at Roche Diagnostics Solutions, who shared how the organisation has implemented a new global marketing function focusing on relevance and striving to provide content that their audience needs and wants to stand out in an era of always-on messaging and cluttered inboxes.

Roche Diagnostics' journey to omnichannel excellence

Roche Diagnostics provides in vitro diagnostics solutions in more than 100 countries. The company runs on a decentralized structure, operating as affiliates across the globe. This operating model proved to be a major advantage during the pandemic because each company could easily adapt to the specific needs of its local healthcare system—but that model complicates marketing efforts. Not only does Roche Diagnostics have more than 100 local marketing groups, but the company also has seven global marketing groups that focus on major product lines.

Seeking to prevent clashes between its many marketing groups while allowing affiliates to maintain their marketing autonomy, Roche Diagnostics brought all marketing units together into one global function. Rather than imposing a central marketing model, the organisation simply harmonized the efforts of its local teams. The new global marketing function focuses on relevance, striving to provide content that their audience needs and wants to stand out in an era of always-on messaging and cluttered inboxes.

This approach represents a major shift in mindset, explained Andreas Schneider. “When I’m doing email marketing, I need to ask myself, how is the email I’m sending different from the other millions that are being sent out? Why will my email even be of interest to the recipient? Why should they open it? As a marketer, do we try to tell our customers what they should think is good or interesting, or do we let the customers decide what they think is good and interesting?”

To support this new mindset, Roche Diagnostics launched a Context and Strategies group that researches what most interests their customers—regardless of whether that includes Roche products and services. The company strives to be a true partner to its customers during the transformation that’s underway in the global healthcare system. This means putting less emphasis on increasing the amount of content in each of its channels and more emphasis on targeting content to people’s specific needs in the channels they prefer.

“The secret is not to push all of our content via the classic channels, but rather understanding what preference each individual has and how we can provide relevant messages about what the person is actually interested in,” explained Schneider. “What are that person’s goals? What are their win messages? What values do they have?”

Roche Diagnostics thinks about customer journeys and the overall customer experience. But the company also realizes that its audience is vast and highly complex. No two customers have identical needs and interests. In the end, Roche Diagnostics is far more interested in achieving engagement than in simply delivering a carefully curated customer experience.

To answer questions like these, Roche Diagnostics conducts extensive customer interviews. These sessions have revealed customers’ motivation for accessing certain types of information through specific channels. Armed with this information, the company can then deliver the most relevant pieces in a convenient format while performing A/B testing to drive continuous improvement.



Streamlining approvals on a global scale

With dozens of regional marketing groups around the globe, handling approvals can be a big challenge. Roche Diagnostics implemented a “global to local” approval process in which content produced by the global marketing group is shared across the organization. Leveraging Veeva Vault PromoMats, Roche now has content and processes in a central cloud solution so that content can easily be reused in other regions and across channels without further approval. These policies make things easier, but they don’t eliminate the need for Roche Diagnostics to stay on the lookout for potential compliance issues.

“We provide a lot of highly complicated content online, which brings compliance to the forefront,” explained Schneider. “If we depict content in a certain context, our question is always whether we’re changing the statement by taking it out of this context and distributing it in other channels. If we’re combining content from various content packages, is there a risk that we’ll make a statement that’s entirely different from the one we planned? This is why it’s difficult for medtech companies to be as flexible with content as most B2C companies.”

For Schneider, tackling this challenge means going back to Roche Diagnostics’ overriding marketing goal: to provide more relevant content, not simply more content. Marketers considering combining content in new ways can ask themselves whether the piece they’re delivering will have unique value to the audience or whether it’s simply an opportunity to achieve another marketing touch.

Preventing technology overload

Roche Diagnostics leans heavily on marketing automation technology as it strives to deliver a personalized omnichannel customer experience at scale. But the company doesn’t believe in adding platforms simply to add platforms. Instead, Roche Diagnostics strives for clean integration between its essential platforms while generating the analytics and insights it needs to drive continuous improvement.

“We collect data in a GDPR-compliant manner to help us understand whether we’ve chosen the right channel to talk to a customer about each topic,” said Schneider. “Since we can’t always interview every customer, analytics are a big help to us.”

“Sometimes less is more,” Schneider explained. “For example, you don’t want to become too infatuated with stuffing more data into a dashboard but then fail to make any use of that information. Instead, focus on delivering the data you need most to help you interact with your target audience. It’s essential to generate knowledge from this data and use it to determine whether your marketing content has been relevant for this target group in this channel. If it’s not relevant, it’s time to change your content strategy, test something else, or do more research.”

With reporting from Vault PromoMats, the Roche Diagnostics marketing team is able to draw insights based on content engagement and market feedback to optimize the content development and delivery strategy. The central solution also streamlines processes to get compliant content to the market faster.

Three takeaways for medtech

Even with a well-conceived global marketing function in place, Roche Diagnostics' marketers fight a common temptation: overcommunication. Schneider encourages the company's marketing groups to lean the other way.

"We as marketers want to tell lots of stories and produce lots of new content," Schneider remarked. "But we're developing the discipline to do less and make it more targeted. It helps to remember why we're here: to serve patients by providing the best information in the best way."

Schneider concluded the webinar by offering three areas of focus for medtech companies that aim to achieve omnichannel excellence:

1. **Organization.** Achieve collaboration among marketing teams around the globe—whether that means adopting a decentralized model like Roche Diagnostics or an entirely different approach.
2. **Processes.** Make it clear which team is responsible for completing which tasks, especially during the approval cycle.
3. **Mindset.** Unite the entire organization in working towards a single purpose, such as Roche Diagnostics' goal to deliver more relevant information to patients.

For more information, [watch the full playback](#) of the webinar (in German), visit the [Veeva MedTech website](#), or [contact us](#).