



The Art and Science of Innovative Digital Strategy

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Eprints](#)[Download article
as PDF](#)**James Brown**

James Brown is Vice President and General Manager of Commercial Content at Veeva Systems. James spent nine years at Merck & Co in sales and marketing roles before leaving in 2001 to start Zinc Ahead. Under his guidance, Zinc Ahead's flagship product, Zinc MAPS was implemented by the world's top 20 pharmaceutical companies for promotional materials management. The solution became established with more than 50,000 users in more than 160 countries, leading to the acquisition by Veeva in 2015.

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Hitting the New Accelerated Pace of Digital Asset Management

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Panorama by James Brown on February 26th, 2016

Everyone seems to be a runner these days—regardless of their speed, people of all abilities are lacing up and hitting the streets, participating in races. Thankfully, race organizers employ pacers to help runners maintain a steady stride. More advanced racers often use these pacesetters to push faster, and to help them stay on track with their goals through to the finish line. In the life sciences industry, digital technologies have set a new, accelerated pace in the race to bring commercial content to market. But keeping up this new tempo is increasingly difficult while simultaneously maintaining one's compliance footing. We need a pacer to help hit our ambitious goals.

An avalanche of new clinical data, new channels, and new regulatory requirements combine to challenge even the most experienced companies. Keeping track of each commercial asset at each stage in its lifecycle, while maintaining compliance across all channels, has become nearly unmanageable.

New channels have changed the way the public engages with the medical world around them, while driving expectations on how the life sciences industry must respond and deliver their communications. The cadence of messaging is faster, too, with digital channels that allow for a continuous flow of communications.

This explosion in digital marketing is further coupled with a growing demand for global brand alignment and cost savings achieved through content re-use across the digital supply chain. Increasingly, campaigns are now global, requiring marketing assets to be shared, distributed and re-purposed widely across international locations, each with a unique regulatory backdrop that may slow approval and time to market.

Every step forward—from content creation to review, approval, and distribution—comes with the potential for detours, such as hiccups during medical/legal/regulatory review, regulatory impediments, or other unexpected delays. And, as the digital world demands fast-tracked timelines, many companies are still held back by inefficient processes and multiple, discrete systems that limit visibility, collaboration, and sharing across the digital supply chain.

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Despite this rapid new pace, many companies have not yet migrated to fully digital methods for managing commercial content. In fact, 41% of life sciences companies are still using paper-based processes and 60% are using email to manage at least some steps along the commercial content digital supply chain. These are two of the key findings from the *Veeva 2015 Life Sciences Commercial Content Management Survey*.

Erik Dalton
Customized Physician Education

E.M. (Mick) Kolassa, PhD
Pricing and Reimbursement

Additionally, the 2015 Veeva survey found that 89% of companies are using multiple systems and processes to manage commercial content, suggesting serious break points in existing processes that breed inefficiency. Many companies are dissatisfied with such a multi-system, patchwork approach, both in terms of speed to market and compliance.

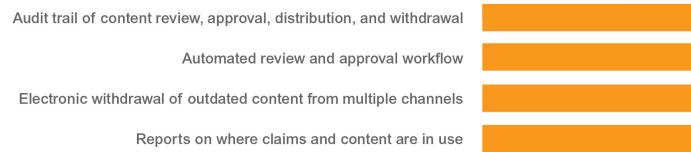
While roughly half (52%) of respondents in the study have automated review and approval, many identified capabilities they are lacking that would improve speed to market. For instance, 85% of respondents lack the ability to report on content status and process bottlenecks, while 75% report missing a global digital asset management system. Meanwhile, 60% said they cannot simultaneously distribute content electronically to multiple channels. The vast majority of respondents (85%) feel the ability to automate review and approval would help increase speed to market.

Commercial Content Management System Capabilities that Would Improve Speed to Market



Respondents also report they are lacking key capabilities for compliance, including visibility into where claims and content are in use (81%), and an audit trail to manage commercial content throughout its lifecycle (49%). And 83% feel such an audit trail would improve their ability to remain compliant.

Commercial Content Management System Capabilities that Would Improve C



Why Are Companies Hanging On To Old Ways?

As marketing campaigns have evolved considerably over the last 15 years, product marketers have had to shift the way they think and engage with their audience while managing three key challenges: Quality control in a dynamic environment, compliance accuracy across global regulatory bodies, and faster delivery to market time frames. Technology can help here but existing processes, challenges with multiple legacy systems, and regional silos often delay implementation of a technology solution to better manage commercial content review, approval, and asset reuse.

For instance, many life sciences companies still have processes designed for pre-global and pre-digital campaigns. The opportunities for them to drive efficiencies into their processes are significant, but in many cases, companies still haven't prioritized this area of their business. Truly integrated, end-to-end solutions that could connect regions and better integrate digital methods are still relatively new in the market. It now takes a lot longer for marketers to verify a website or mobile app via the necessary review and approval lifecycles than a traditional eDetail aid. As such, it is essential that companies re-engineer their processes to address this shift and embrace a new infrastructure that enables more relevant customer conversations and that allows for efficient collaboration to deliver tactics to various web, social, mobile, and print channels.

Despite the obvious need, only a small fraction of those surveyed (6%) maintain a modern infrastructure to manage commercial content that supports the full digital supply chain. Nevertheless, this group reported overall better satisfaction with speed to market and compliance capabilities, and also reported use of fewer systems overall, reducing handoffs and break points. Here are three case studies of companies that replaced their paper and multi-system solutions with a single, complete cloud-based solution that now manages their commercial content through the full digital supply chain:

From Paper to Increased Productivity

Depomed, a specialty pharmaceutical company focused on developing and commercializing products to treat pain and other central nervous system conditions, was mired in paper until it replaced its paper-based spreadsheet system. The company needed to bring commercial materials to market faster, especially as its portfolio of products started rapidly expanding so it adopted an electronic, end-to-end solution to manage content efficiently across the entire digital supply chain. Depomed's new solution brings all parties together in the

cloud for better collaboration and speeds the review, approval, and distribution of promotional materials. In fact, Depomed has been able to reduce its number of face-to-face medical, legal, and regulatory (MLR) reviews by at least 50% to 70%.

"We previously reviewed all pieces of content in face-to-face meetings," explains Kathleen Bennett, Senior Manager of Regulatory Affairs at Depomed. "By allowing multiple people to review content simultaneously via the cloud, there are fewer time-consuming, in-person sessions. Now our existing staff can get through an increasing volume of content more quickly, so we're accomplishing more."

Depomed's commercial content is also now easily accessible to all contributors and provides role-based visibility to both internal groups and external partners. Depomed management teams can monitor progress and identify bottlenecks early and rectify potential issues before they have a chance to impact progress.

"Workflows are more transparent and efficient," says Shay Bujanover, Senior Director of Medical Affairs at Depomed. "We are able to see the full history of each document at a glance, and all reviewers can easily view each other's comments and respond in real time."

When "Built Here" isn't Built-to-Last

A top 10 global pharmaceutical company, operating in 160 countries, saw the need for a specialized commercial content solution early on and developed one in-house. But the internal system had become slow and cumbersome, and the company was looking for a partner to implement a solution easily accessible worldwide. The company selected a life sciences specific solution that provided full capabilities, ranging from powerful workflow management to cross-referencing analysis, full project lifecycle management, and state-of-the-art reporting tools. The company was particularly interested in being able to automatically generate FDA Form-2253.

The initial implementation included multiple brands across several therapeutic areas and 900 users initially, and has since expanded to 4,000. This client was able to standardize approval processes around the globe, enabling a streamlined process, collaborative planning, and increased efficiency for document review and approvals. Materials and references are now shared throughout the company with many jobs being reviewed across multiple countries with ease and without delays. The organization is also now able to run metrics on a global scale to see the productivity of its entire business.

Improving Collaboration Across Geographies

The maker of several globally recognized consumer healthcare brands was using manual, paper-based processes to manage promotional content in its UK affiliate. For instance, individual commercial claims were tracked in Excel spreadsheets. Brand managers struggled to collaborate across the organization and with outside agencies. Multiple handoffs among stakeholders resulted in bottlenecks, as duplications and omissions showed up in revised versions. Medical, legal, and regulatory reviews took as long as 40 days, on average. The company decided to act when an impending office move would physically separate the team, making it impossible to keep up this paper-based process.

Within six weeks, both the internal team, and partners at eight creative agencies, were up and running on the new system. The company cited improved collaboration, global accessibility, better visibility, and easier compliance as some of the benefits derived from employing an end-to-end solution that manages

commercial content throughout its lifecycle.

Faster. In Control. Winning the Race.

To keep up with the accelerated pace of digital multichannel marketing, life sciences companies need solutions which will clear obstacles from the path, help speed content to market, and carefully control distribution and withdrawal of content from the public domain to optimize compliance. The solution should manage each task along the digital supply chain and give the company visibility across channels and geographies.

To win the race, life sciences companies must fully align digital marketing with their global business goals, and ensure that accelerated review and compliance capabilities are embedded at the heart of digital customer engagement and outreach programs from the outset. By doing so, companies can manage to seamlessly integrate digital asset management into their workflows. This will, in turn, dramatically reduce the time to develop, approve, and disseminate digital content globally.



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