Five Best Practices to Deliver Exceptional Multichannel Experiences

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Introduction

Over the years, the commercial landscape in life sciences has undergone a near-total transformation. Instead of engaging with physicians primarily through face-to-face interactions, companies now have to navigate new, complex networks of customers and an ever-expanding variety of ways to reach them. This means that life sciences companies have to work harder—and smarter—than ever, to make sure they're effectively communicating with customers.

Healthcare professionals (HCPs) now expect a highly personalized experience—the same real-time, relevant, and customized experience they have when they interact with their bank, their favorite store, or an airline. They want information and service on their terms, through the communication channel of their choice, anytime and anywhere. To accomplish this, life sciences companies don't just need more channels, they need channels to coordinate and enable the most meaningful interactions possible.

How did we get here?

In the past, life sciences companies relied on a simple engagement strategy. HCPs contacted a call center, where trained medical agents were on standby to answer questions. Out in the field, huge teams of sales reps called on customers door-to-door.

As the internet became a more integral part of business, life sciences companies started exploring new ways to reach their customers, including email, customer portals, and branded websites.

But as each new communication channel emerged, it was deployed standalone, disconnected, in part, because of the complexity of integrations and technical limitations. The result? A disjointed customer experience, and a separation between sales and marketing efforts.

This was acceptable when no company in any industry had the technology to create seamless integration across channels. But as technology evolved, life sciences companies found themselves falling behind other industries that were quicker to adopt newer integrated multichannel engagement models.

Life sciences took a gradual approach to implementing new digital channels. But there were other business challenges on the horizon: increasing regulations, stricter reimbursement policies, reduced physician access, and an expanding set of customers to serve including integrated delivery networks (IDNs) and accountable care organizations. These factors, combined with a customer base that was increasingly demanding more technologically advanced interaction, meant life sciences companies needed to step up their customer engagement game.

The five best practices for better customer engagement

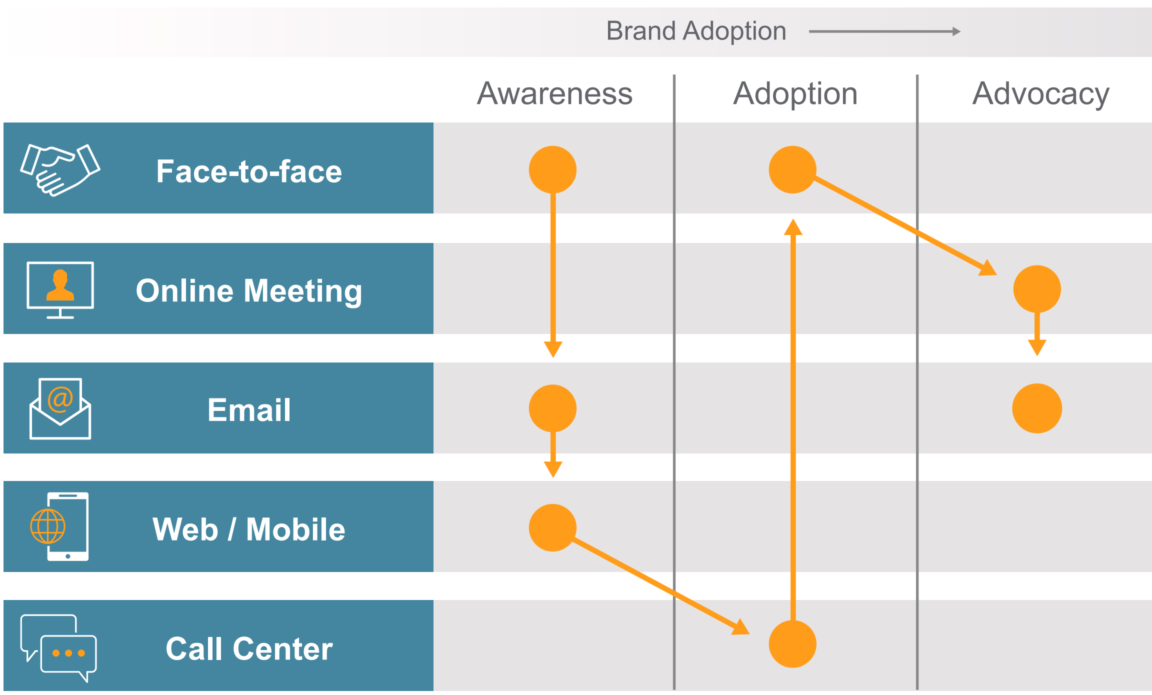
A one-size-fits-all customer journey no longer works. In the age of the consumer, the quality of the interaction is paramount. In this paper, we will discuss these five best practices for life science companies to deliver an effective multichannel customer experience:

1. Ensuring reliable customer data
2. Aligning communication channels
3. Creating a high-leverage content strategy
4. Personalizing the customer experience
5. Monitoring, measuring, and improving

First, let's look at a multichannel customer journey.

Journey of a Life Sciences Customer

The foundation of the customer journey rests on having accurate information—this data is the bedrock of all interactions. Based on the company's view of the customer, the field rep may initiate the journey by visiting a physician's office for a detailing call to present efficacy and safety data. Due to time limitations, the physician asks the rep to email further details, and the rep then sends her a compliant email with all the information and data she needs. While reading the email, she may be interested enough to click through to the brand website for more in-depth content, including video and interactive data. Now that she has the full picture of the product, she uses the website to order samples and request coupons. And while online, she also schedules a follow-up office visit from the rep.



Customer Interaction Touchpoints

Behind the scenes, the life sciences company is tracking all these interactions in a CRM system so it can understand the physician better, enabling more targeted and insight-based sales and marketing campaigns. With a wealth of customer information at their fingertips, reps are well-prepared to deliver the exact information the physician wants during follow-up visits, and help move her from "brand-aware" to "brand advocate."

This example shows that customer engagement is not a one-and-done contact; it is ongoing and builds on every previous interaction. Every subsequent touch is more relevant for a better experience and increased customer value.

So what's the best way to provide the desired customer experience when dealing with so many channels along the way?

Let's take a look at the five best practices.

#1 Ensure Reliable Customer Data

Correct, clean, updated customer data is the foundation of any customer relationship management strategy. And with increasingly constrained budgets, tighter regulations, and evolving channel preferences, an accurate and complete view of the customer has never been more crucial. But compiling accurate customer master data has been a persistent challenge for life sciences companies.

Delivering a personalized and relevant customer experience is only possible if companies know their customers well. You need information—names, addresses, phone numbers, emails, specialty, affiliations, and preferences—that is both accurate and comprehensive. Over time, HCPs may change office locations, practices, and affiliations. They may add more specialties—or give some up. Capturing accurate data is critical for correctly identifying and reaching the right customers, but building trust and solid relationships requires a greater level of insight into behavior and beliefs.

Deep information on ever-changing HCP preferences, associations, and influencer relationships is a prerequisite for creating a sound customer relationship strategy over the long term. Does the physician hold sway over his medical director? Can the physician influence the formulary position? What is the treatment protocol or preferred prescription? These questions cannot be answered with demographic data alone, but are important in knowing how customers think and predicting their behavior. And this data is needed in an actionable form that can be easily understood and utilized.

The absence of a master data strategy and solution leads companies to cobble together offerings from multiple vendors and a myriad of data providers, resulting in high upfront and ongoing costs and complicated integrations between systems. Despite all these intensive manual efforts, duplicate records, and incorrect customer data can remain.

Having a single source of up-to-date customer master data including licensing information, specialty, national provider identifier (NPI) number, and affiliations, enriched with complete customer interaction data across all channels, gives companies a complete and holistic customer profile. Armed with rich customer information, companies can create better and more meaningful interactions with their customers.

#2 Align Channels to the Customer Journey

Creating an effective multichannel customer experience requires developing an enterprise-wide strategy that starts with understanding the customer journey.

Create a map detailing your customer's current interactions with your company and then another to help determine how engagement with certain channels needs to change and which new channels you need. There may be some compliance considerations or logistical challenges to take into account. For example, online ordering of samples is not permitted for some products and geographies. Consider all such constraints while mapping the customer journey.

Research shows that 70 percent of HCPs prefer digital access to pharmaceutical information, and 40 percent report digital media offers the most personalized and relevant content.[1] A successful, integrated commercial strategy, therefore, provides the right information for the right channel and makes it easy for customers to access information any time, from any device. It's about providing customers the freedom and flexibility to choose from multiple channels, and designing their experience in a way that encourages their active use of preferred channels.

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1 Capgemini, "Digital Dynamic: Changing the Pharma-Physician Interaction," by Hala Quanadilo, November 7, 2013. http://www.capgemini-consulting.com/blog/accelerating-life-sciences-transformation/2013/11/the-digital-dynamic-changing-the-pharma

Look at each channel from your customers' point of view. Consider ease of access, the specific service required, type of content, and expected speed of response. The effectiveness of any channel hinges on a deep, nuanced understanding of customer behavior and preferences. For instance, you may direct customers to a website, but if they don't find the right information or services there, you're forcing them to take unintended action—like making a phone call—so they may just abandon the interaction at that point.

The key to managing the customer journey successfully is a robust multichannel CRM system that includes historical interaction data across channels and continuously updated customer profiles. This level of visibility enables companies to move the customer up the brand adoption continuum from the awareness stage to advocacy. As you track your customers' interactions, you can progressively deliver them relevant brand messages that are personalized to where they are at any given point on their customer journey. HCPs benefit from getting the exact information they need, swiftly and seamlessly. So, for example, when an HCP contacts a call center following a rep's visit, her previous interaction with the rep (and its outcome) is already recorded in the CRM system and she won't have to explain the request again. She will immediately receive information relevant to her interests and position on the continuum of brand adoption.

This type of sophisticated channel integration and coordination will help ensure you're delivering an experience that your HCP customers have come to expect as consumers, and one that they're now demanding from life sciences.

#3 Create a High-leverage Content Strategy

In multichannel, content is king. Many times, content is developed tactically; companies may create pieces specific to particular campaigns, for instance. But to achieve true multichannel excellence and get greater leverage, take a more strategic approach to content creation and reuse. Create a library of modular, reusable content that is easily customized for different customer segments so that the HCP gets consistent information from field reps, online, and via a call center—ensuring it's not only tailored to the channel, but also to customer profile. By maintaining a single source of truth for content across all channels and developing reusable content pieces and templates, you'll ensure consistency of the message and free up resources—both dollars and people. Also, when you distribute content across multiple channels, you'll want to make sure that any changes, updates, or withdrawals of content are propagated to all the channels to avoid any risk of regulatory non-compliance.

With a comprehensive content management system where all content is reviewed, approved, stored, and distributed, there is no need to recreate the wheel for every campaign. So rather than crafting new materials from scratch for each segment, channel, or interaction, you will only need to determine whether you need to adjust existing content for a different device, type of interaction, or customer need. For example, you can create one presentation on a new therapy and customize it for various customer types—using the piece in its entirety as a new product showcase during a medical conference, or shortening it to serve as educational content for a face-to-face call.

Content should evolve with business and customer needs, so updating content twice a year aligned with plan of action cycles may not be sufficient. Leading organizations are updating content more frequently in response to CLM feedback and data from other channels. These companies are able to move quickly, leveraging agility provided by commercial solutions built specifically for the life sciences industry. The ability to gauge content's effectiveness in real time and to withdraw or update the content quickly helps life sciences companies regularly deliver customers the most current, compliant information.

#4 Offer a Personalized Experience

Physicians are more likely to respond to messages that are personalized and directly relevant to their interests and specialties, making it critical to continuously gather customer insights and design customer experiences that meet their specific—and always evolving—needs.

In order to foster strong, ongoing relationships with customers and avoid channel fatigue, refresh the information contained in each channel on a regular basis, and commit resources to tuning your outreach to fit the customer. Use multichannel CRM to make sure your brand's message resonates well with the desired sector of the medical community.

To determine which key messages are most relevant, such as formulary access specific to the practice, pinpoint their interests, and personalize messages based upon previous interactions. The goal is to never miss an opportunity to make content more relevant. If you send the customer an email, make sure the content is tailored. And if the customer clicks a link from the email, be certain the online content you send them to gives them the information they need and encourage continued interaction.

#5 Monitor, Measure, Improve

Improving the customer experience requires the identification and continuous measurement of key performance metrics. The resulting insights can then be used to improve both channel and content effectiveness.

The volume of data you can capture today is almost limitless. But data collection alone isn't the end goal. The aim is to use the data to improve the business and deliver the right customer experience. And it starts with monitoring the key metrics. What metrics are most important to your business? Do you want to improve customer satisfaction and content ratings? Is your goal to maximize the number of visitors to brand.com sites or other portals? Or are you working toward improved email open rates?

Strategic use of multichannel requires capturing and learning from interaction data and then making sure these insights are reflected in future campaigns. Use the new understanding to adjust your content and make your follow-up interactions with HCPs informed and relevant. With feedback and survey capabilities integrated in your closed loop marketing (CLM) presentations, you can capture HCP feedback or present peer summary results in real time, creating an interaction that is more useful and compelling to the customer. The data on HCP behavior produced during closed loop interactions also provides meaningful, in-context insight to marketing for improved planning.

To improve customer engagement, it is imperative to analyze metrics to determine which channels are most effective and why. With email, for example, metrics can help determine how customers respond on different days of the week and give you valuable information on open and click-through rates to optimize email usage. With digital channels, you can monitor how long HCPs spend on certain content, how they utilize your website, online services they most commonly utilize, and devices they use to access the content. With all of this information, you can make your channels more effective and more relevant.

Key Point

Strategic use of multichannel requires capturing and learning from interaction data and then making sure these insights are reflected in future campaigns.

Conclusion

Providing a rich and relevant customer experience is a key competitive advantage. To deliver the experience customers want, understanding their journey and designing a corresponding channel, content, and data strategy is important and must be continually evaluated and improved over time as business and customer needs change.

These key steps—defining business metrics, monitoring customer behavior, and integrating the insights into your content strategy—may seem simple, but bringing them all together requires well-defined multichannel strategy and technology to give you both broad visibility and great agility.

Veeva Commercial Cloud

Exceptional content and insightful customer engagement are at the heart of an outstanding customer experience. Veeva Commercial Cloud marries customer engagement with content to put your customer at the center.

Multichannel Veeva CRM

Veeva CRM is an end-to-end solution delivering life sciences-focused capabilities for the planning and coordination of all your resources, across all channels, including face-to-face, email, and web. Veeva CRM enables your commercial teams to deliver a seamless and smarter customer experience.

Veeva OpenData

Veeva OpenData delivers millions of detailed customer and opinion leader profiles with a new approach to customer data that's open, easy, and global. Best-in-class services worldwide provide quality professional services, data enhancements, and ongoing data stewardship—helping you continuously improve your data quality and giving you a complete understanding of your customers and stakeholders to improve engagement.

Veeva Align

Veeva Align delivers the right alignments faster. Fully integrated with Veeva CRM, Align seamlessly incorporates rep feedback so that you get the most accurate alignments. Align is the modern way to bridge your strategy with execution.

Veeva CRM Events Management

Veeva CRM Events Management is a single solution to plan and execute all events across the enterprise. It gives you seamless control and total visibility of all speakers, attendees, activities, and spend, for better events with greater compliance.

Veeva Network

Veeva Network makes it fast and easy to deliver trusted master data to the commercial organization. With seamless access to their data, field teams can get engaged quickly, and deliver the right messages across all contact channels.

Veeva Vault PromoMats

Veeva Vault PromoMats combines creation, review, and distribution capabilities with the only digital asset management (DAM) solution. Easy medical, legal, regulatory (MLR) review and approval, plus automated content distribution and withdrawal across all channels ensures you have complete visibility and control of your materials. A complete commercial content management solution, Vault PromoMats is built to enable asset reuse, increase speed to market, and enhance compliance.

By combining all of these products into one integrated solution, Veeva Commercial Cloud has become the premier cloud-based technology for multichannel sales and marketing execution for life sciences and eliminates the need for data integration projects and ongoing upgrade costs and issues. Now, life sciences companies can keep their focus on developing and distributing life-saving therapies, while Veeva delivers continuous innovation in multichannel CRM.

To learn more, visit www.veeva.com.

Key Point

To deliver the experience customers want, understanding their journey and designing a corresponding channel, content, and data strategy is important.

About Veeva Systems
Veeva Systems Inc. is a leader in cloud-based software for the global life sciences industry. Committed to innovation, product excellence, and customer success, Veeva has more than 550 customers, ranging from the world's largest pharmaceutical companies to emerging biotechs. Veeva is headquartered in the San Francisco Bay Area, with offices in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. For more information, visit **www.veeva.com**.

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