

# Leveraging Scientific Insights for Better Healthcare Engagement



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## Summary

As the scientific face of a pharmaceutical organization, medical affairs is uniquely positioned to effectively develop and maintain external relationships, building credibility and partnerships with critical healthcare decision makers. In today's complex environment, organizations are developing more strategic approaches to generating actionable scientific insights which can translate into future opportunities. This paper explores new concepts for identifying and engaging key stakeholders, leveraging opportunities learned through scientific engagement, and increasing the strategic value of medical affairs.

## MSLs as the Driver of Pharma Value

Elite academic institutions are more likely to restrict access to pharmaceutical sales representatives, according to industry research. This trend holds consistent with physicians from highly specialized concentrations, including oncology and nephrology.<sup>1</sup>

As life sciences' pipelines continue to shift from small molecules to ones with greater focus on rare diseases, it is critical to understand and engage thought leaders to support scientific exchange leading to improved patient outcomes. However, while rep accessibility has declined, this trend is reversed when it comes to medical affairs. This increased complexity of pipelines, coupled with the greater accessibility of medical information by patients, means healthcare providers (HCPs) need deeper support from their medical science liaisons (MSLs). Because of their scientific expertise, MSLs have the unique opportunity to engage the most critical decision makers in meaningful peer exchange, bringing the voice of the HCP back to their organizations.

Developing insight from these engagements, and serving as life sciences' strategic partner to healthcare, is challenging today. Along with the expansion of stakeholder networks to include payers, patients, and policy makers, the volume of data captured today is staggering. Recognizing that the technology employed by MSL teams often mirrors that of their commercial counterparts, medical teams may lack the ability to align various sources of insights for a full understanding of healthcare. Information from online interactions, face-to-face engagement, and medical congresses may be captured in disparate systems and never accurately harmonized. In turn, the manner in which this intelligence is shared organizationally may be firewalled, limiting the potential to inform better product development and commercialization.

For years, medical has taken various approaches to distill HCP interaction data into actionable organizational intelligence: the function's fundamental strategic value in driving objectives. According to a global survey of MSL teams, more than half see the collection of scientific insights as medical affairs' core responsibility.<sup>2</sup> These include economic insights from payers, trial design/labeling insights from regulators, real-world evidence from patient advocates, and HCP insights across all communication channels.

To achieve this, a structure is required make the collection and interpretation of data meaningful. What is a scientific insight, and how can medical affairs navigate the complexity and volume of available data to capture and use them?

1 ZS Associates, *The End of "Spray and Pray,"* 2015.

2 "Exciting Trends in Medical Affairs," *Cutting Edge Information,* 2016.

## What is a Scientific Insight?

Across the medical affairs function, the definition of an “insight” is inconsistent. A scientific insight can take many forms, including data points, sentiment, individual perceptions, and trends within healthcare. The strategic advantage an MSL team provides is the ability to build important relationships that grow progressively deeper from year to year. This improves the quality and potential impact an insight may provide over time.

Traditionally, medical affairs has taken a tactical view of the scientific landscape, focusing on engaging a cohort of the top global thought leaders aligned with the company’s scientific positioning. Today, engaging a narrow tier of global thought leaders with existing brand affinity is no longer sufficient for acquiring critical intelligence. The evolving KOL landscape is deeper and more nuanced, including payers, patients, and HCPs with varying levels of geographic reach and clinical adoption.

MSLs should consider engaging a wider range of stakeholders to derive relevant insights. Specialists with regional influence help companies identify patients for both trials and treatment, and local leaders are often the first to prescribe the product and provide real world feedback to boost outcomes research. These opinion leaders may also have connections with a wide-ranging network of peers, or with niche patient groups, particularly in rare or orphan disease communities.

Further, MSL teams can uncover valuable insights by extending engagement efforts to unaligned stakeholders at every level. Engaging stakeholders with a neutral or even negative position relative to a company’s therapy can help reveal barriers to clinical adoption, and where positioning may need to be bolstered with additional data or real-world evidence.

### Engaging Stakeholders at Every Level Enables Better Product Adoption



*Along with the top academic KOLs, local HCPs can also be a huge source of insight. And across the board, it’s important to engage physicians with different scientific positioning. Engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders reveals how science is being successfully applied clinically—and potential barriers to successful adoption.*

As medical teams generate more and more information, they must establish clear processes and systems to collect, collate, and synthesize insights from different stakeholders, and leverage these insights by collaborating across functions. More than half of MSLs—60%—have become active at the registration or launch of a drug, for example, according to a report from Cutting Edge Information.<sup>3</sup> Developing a harmonized point of view related to decision maker profiling is a critical step in building long-term successful relationships with key stakeholders. This approach allows an organization to engage in a consistent and informed manner. These profiles should consider shared data points that are critical to each function to understand whether research, commercial, or medical should engage. This fosters appropriate collaboration both internally and externally.

Teams involved in customer engagement should be able to see the breadth of an organization's interactions with an HCP, while respecting the need for meaningful separation between medical and commercial activities. Simply knowing that an interaction took place, without revealing sensitive information around the discussion's content, goes a long way toward ensuring organizational resources are properly aligned around the customer.

For one top 10 pharma, HCP frustration around the fragmented communication between divisions of the same company drove a new approach to planning and information sharing. Medical, commercial, R&D, and IT leaders partnered to align on a core set of shared information, including a demographic profile information, the expert's medical tier, activity data, and the date and time of engagement. Because both teams leveraged the shared CRM platform, they were able to visualize fundamental engagement information across all channels—including online, events, and face-to-face conversations—and ensure that each team had control over interaction details and content.

With a single hub that centralizes insights from all scientific engagements, medical teams provide critical information driving an organization's strategic goals by:

- Relaying insights for early lifecycle planning
- Utilizing insights from physician interactions to ensure that brand strategy maximizes the medical benefits for patients
- Conducting real-world evidence analyses to identify strategies to improve treatments
- Ensuring cost-effectiveness and comparative efficacy data enable payers and physicians to choose wisely among class interventions

 The traditional model, governed by a single gatekeeper—the prescribing physician—is being replaced by a village of interconnected parties. This ecosystem includes payers, access teams, patients, and more, all of whom maintain important roles in ensuring that products are accepted and prescribed. As the medical function expands, companies are taking a critical look at the foundation in place internally for delivering on industry imperatives. 

—Robert Groebel, **Vice President, Global Medical Strategy, Veeva**  
*How Medical Affairs Can Bridge Pharma and the Evolving Stakeholder Network*

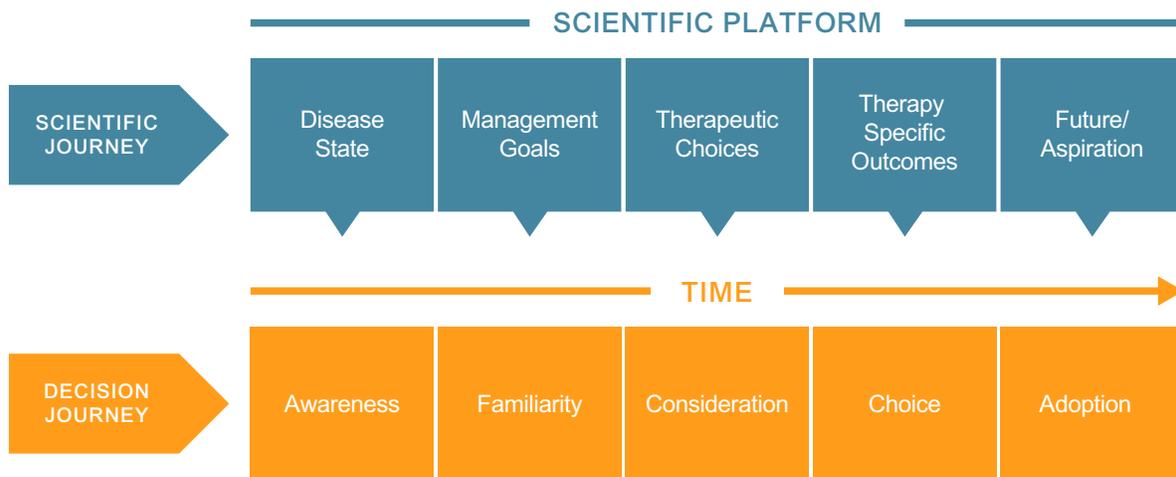
<sup>3</sup> “Pharma Companies, Now Marketing High-Science Drugs, Rely More on Medical Affairs,” *Medical Marketing & Media*, August 2017.

Engagement channels should be unified with content management to ensure a seamless flow of information. End-to-end medical content management that streamlines the distribution of scientific evidence ensures that medical information is consistent and informed by the most accurate data available.

The advent of new channels such as medical-specific multichannel CRM, eMSL, MSL on-demand, and virtual meetings and events, gives medical affairs the opportunity to develop new avenues to collaborate externally and drive impact. Teams can gauge the stakeholders’ scientific need and interest by tagging and reporting on what evidence is being consumed and how this changes over time.

Strategic insight from HCPs’ consumption of evidence over time, across channels, can guide decisions on the cadence and focus of engagement to deepen relationships. This information should encompass a spectrum, from fundamental disease state education, to management goals, therapeutic choices, therapy-specific outcomes, and future goals. For instance, engagement with “awareness” level content can indicate a need for education or outreach around safety and efficacy. As engagement continues, HCPs’ scientific journey can be quantified and visualized. The progression along this spectrum maps to consumers’ decision journey, from awareness to familiarity, consideration, and finally adoption.

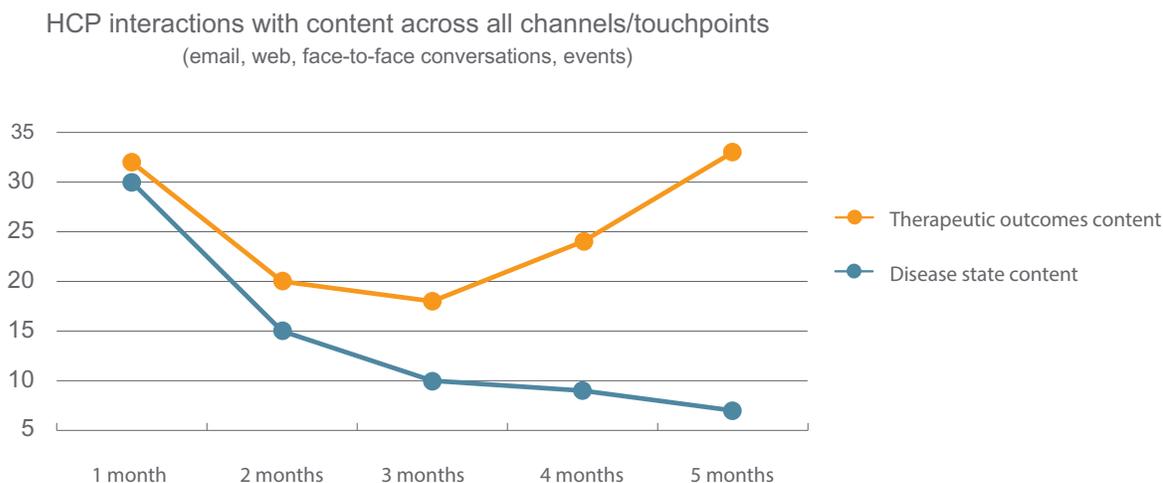
**INSIGHTS: SCIENTIFIC POSITION**



Medical affairs will need to have a more structured approach in planning for KOL engagements, as HCP time is limited and valuable. So leveraging HCP information captured in CRM, along with other external data, is crucial to tailoring communication.

—Jennifer Vernazza, **Director of Medical Operations, Sanofi Genzyme**  
*Three Ways to Reimagine KOL Engagement*

## Changes in Content Consumption Over Time



*Aligning content to the HCP journey shows the progression from scientific need to advocacy.*

Reporting on this information provides medical affairs a more visual way to assess channel and content impact. Resource allocation and cross-functional coordination is also easier, with the ability to define HCPs who are qualified candidates for deeper, more strategic collaborations with the organization. These experts may serve as scientific partners for co-authored publications, recipients of study grants, or provide advice and consultation.

Finally, to complement the richness of engagement data, medical affairs teams should consider and leverage their stakeholder data in new and novel ways.

## Industry Benchmarking and Competitive Analysis

To understand scientific share of voice, medical affairs teams should consider the therapeutic landscape and position themselves relative to the behaviors of key competitors. Fundamentally, scientific share of voice is based on a company's reach, and its relationships, both of which can be quantified and benchmarked against similar compounds or companies.

One can quantify reach in terms of a composite of all core scientific activities: publications, events, and trials. The strength of a relationship with the HCP community can be measured in terms of the number and depth of these collaborations. Key questions for determining reach and relationships include:

- Who are you collaborating with?
- Who is actively engaging with you in research or attending your events?
- Who are your competitors collaborating with?
- Are there areas to develop an exclusive relationship?
- Does your level of scientific activity meet industry averages?

While all of this data exists in the public domain, it needs to be structured to surface measures in a manner that is intuitive for decision making. Bringing together engagement data with external stakeholder information is the key to creating a comprehensive understanding of success and opportunity.

Sanofi Genzyme recently adopted a new approach to KOL engagement within their organization. “Medical affairs will need to have a more structured approach in planning for KOL engagements, as HCP time is limited and valuable,” said Jennifer Vernazza, director of medical operations. “So leveraging HCP information captured in CRM, along with other external data, is crucial to tailoring communication. For example, we are now leveraging stakeholder data to segment thought leaders in a new and different way so that ‘rising stars’ can be identified. This can lead to new relationships that possibly would have been missed entirely.”

### Stakeholder Data as Competitive Advantage

**Profile Summary: Bendell, Johanna**

- Scientific Reach: Global
- Specialty: HO
- Parent Account: St Charles Hospital
- Job Title: Associate Director
- Address: 250 25th Ave N Ste 100, Nashville, TN 37203
- Email: aaaja.verteeo@outlook.com

**Expertise**

- COLORECTAL CANCER: 10
- ONCOLOGY - DRUGS - SAFETY/EFFICACY: 10
- CRC - DRUGS - EFFICACY: 10
- BREAST CANCER - DRUGS - SAFETY: 10
- NSCLC - DRUGS - SAFETY: 10

**Indices**

Category	Average	Actual
Scientific Reach	~2.5	~4.0
Global Reach	~1.0	~1.0

**Activity**

- Affiliations
- Company Collaborations

**Publications and Documents**

DATE	TITLE	PUBLICATION TYPE	PUBMED URL	JOURNAL	AUTHORSHIP POSITION
2017-9-29	The development of differentiation agents for the treatment of prostate cancer.	Review	ncbi.nlm.nih...	Seminars in oncology	Last Author
2017-5-17	Phase I/II study to assess safety, pharmacokinetics, and efficacy of the oral MET/1/2 inhibitor GSK1120212 (GSK12) dosed in combination with the oral BRAF inhibitor GSK2118436 (GSK436).	Journal Article	ncbi.nlm.nih...	Journal of clinical oncology : official journal of the American Society of Clinical Oncology	Coauthor
2017-5-17	Phase I/II study to assess safety, pharmacokinetics, and efficacy of the oral MET/1/2 inhibitor GSK1120212 (GSK12) dosed in combination with the oral BRAF inhibitor GSK2118436 (GSK436).	Journal Article	ncbi.nlm.nih...	Journal of clinical oncology : official journal of the American Society of Clinical Oncology	Coauthor
2017-2-15	A Phase II Randomized Trial (G027827) of First-Line FOLFOLX Plus Bevacizumab with or Without the MET Inhibitor Onartuzumab in Patients with Metastatic	Journal Article	ncbi.nlm.nih...	The oncologist	Author

*Understanding scientific share of voice across KOL networks drives more strategic medical affairs engagement.*

## Conclusion

Deriving actionable insights from stakeholder engagement hinges on proactive planning and developing strategies unique to the scientific needs of each stakeholder. Simultaneously, companies must develop deep insights aligned to leveraging positive scientific support, and at times understanding or neutralizing negative sentiment. Best practices require precise matching between the stakeholder, the phase of the product lifecycle, and the preferred communication channel.

The number and variety of stakeholders requiring scientific information has blossomed—from prescribing doctors to a myriad of patients, health insurers, health system executives, health economists, and public policy makers. Each may demand a different tone, level of detail, and channel preference. Importantly, companies must keep abreast of each stakeholder's network of influence to maintain coverage of the full, global stakeholder landscape.

Companies need new stakeholder engagement approaches that will help them leverage data from each interaction to refine targeted engagement plans. Finally, the industry must leverage insights to establish meaningful outcomes for patients.



### 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](http://www.veeva.com).

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