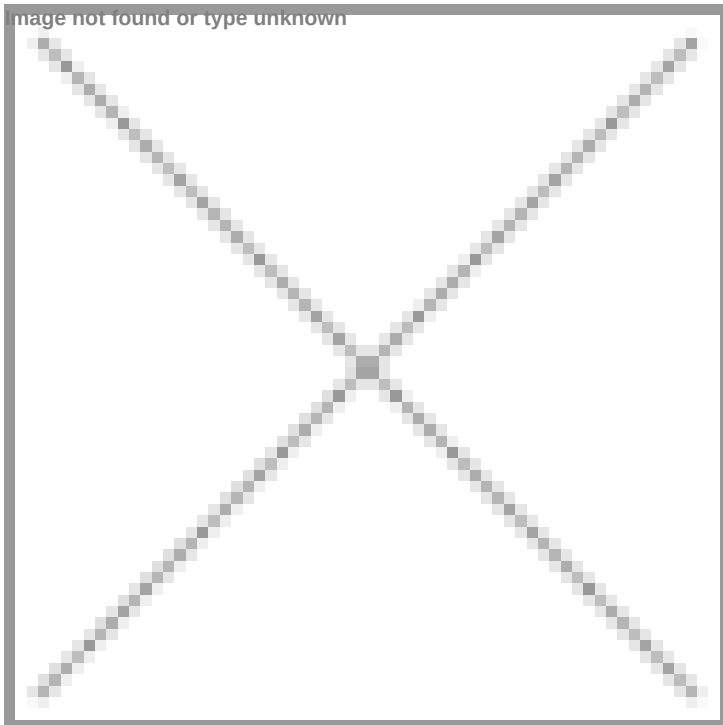


Navigating Digital Evolution: Transforming HCP-Pharma Interactions for the Future

07 December 2023 | Views | By Sumanth Kambhammettu, Commercial Growth Strategy Lead at Veeva APAC

Dedicated video platforms for innovative one-on-one communication with healthcare professionals have emerged



The biopharmaceutical industry is constantly transforming in the digital age, driven by the need for innovation, rising healthcare costs, and changing disease patterns.

Disease burden has also evolved and grown across the globe, delivering a paralleled impact in India, as it has in developed countries. The landscape has witnessed a significant shift from infectious diseases to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), leaving a twin effect on the focus of biopharma companies.

Such evolution necessitates changes in the product portfolio of life sciences organizations, from mass-market medications to more speciality medications and innovative drugs. Simultaneously, domestic players face unique challenges as they expand their geographical reach into rural markets, making it difficult to track physical activities without the aid of digital platforms. The industry has become more competitive as a result, necessitating more innovative brand launches at speed for life sciences companies.

Changing norms for HCP engagement

The way life sciences companies engage with customers has changed significantly in the new normal. The seismic shift towards digital communication has now become status quo in recent years, due to the considerable challenges associated with in-person engagement. Healthcare professionals (HCPs) have started seeing value in using digital channels for communication, and we have witnessed steady progress within the industry pertaining to the growth of hybrid ways of communication.

While face-to-face communication remains vital for building relationships and setting the context for communication, digital channels have augmented this significantly. Veeva's Pulse Field Trends Report in the APAC region showcased that digitally enabled sales reps use HCP time more effectively than those who use only in-person interactions. Engagements via digital channels also gained approximately 67%^[1] more HCP meetings for representatives, resulting in longer meeting durations, illustrating that leveraging digital communications has enabled access to HCPs on a greater scale.

Taking India's digital engagement to greater heights

Multichannel strategies have been proven to increase touchpoints for HCP engagement, but taking an omnichannel approach to engagement has shown that seamless two-way communication and resultant analytics through one platform can provide immense insights to marketing teams.

However, despite growing global conversation around the omnichannel approach to engaging with HCPs, many companies are still unsure of the benefits, or lacking the infrastructure and organization-wide strategy to facilitate such an approach.

Making the transition from multichannel to omnichannel also involves several considerations. One crucial aspect to keep in mind is ensuring that HCPs are not inundated with too much content when expanding touchpoints, and instead delivering meaningful and effective engagement at every opportunity. Engagement should also move away from the traditional one-sided "push" and shift to a conversational approach that empowers HCPs to access required information at their most convenient time and through a channel of their choice.

Once the engagement channels are in place, Digital Asset Management - a system for storing, organizing, retrieving, and managing digital assets in a centralized and efficient manner, will remain a key differentiator between pharma companies to improve speed, consistency, efficiency, and value to HCPs. Hence, better operating models are required to deliver compliant content and achieve better collaboration between sales, medical, marketing, and legal teams.

Equipping life sciences organisations with the tools to succeed

There have been interesting developments in the digital engagement space in the last several years, engineered to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving industry. Among them, dedicated video platforms for innovative one-on-one communication with HCPs have emerged.

However, the emergence of multiple vendors and providers may pose several challenges. With HCPs looking for efficient, high-value solutions that can equip them with the information they need, using multiple platforms and growing content volume can make it challenging to effectively engage with pharmaceutical companies. As more life sciences companies enter the scene, the need for balance becomes apparent, further driving the need for personalised solutions.

There is also a growing need to provide branded content that caters to on-demand queries without long lead times. In a recent industry study^[2], 83% of HCPs stated that they believe the content they received post-pandemic is more relevant to their needs than before. With effective content management solutions, creating a digital asset management module can help standardise and optimise medical and legal approval of assets, reducing content creation costs.

In a price-sensitive nation like India, where cost considerations often play a paramount role in decision-making, choosing cost-effective channels is the norm. Compliance, adherence, and regulatory checklists may often take a backseat. However, as the industry evolves to meet changing demands, factors such as compliance, and regulatory hurdles will become critical to biopharmaceutical organizations, and the immense value of investing in a platform offering comprehensive access to data across target regions will become apparent.

Making strategic investments in digital solutions that balance an HCP-centric approach and pragmatic considerations will be critical in the coming years if life sciences companies want to continue to meet the evolving needs of their customers, patients and populations.

[1] [Press Release: Veeva Pulse Shows Digitally Enabled Field Teams are Using HCP Time More Effectively in Asia Pacific](#)

[2]<https://www.fiercepharma.com/marketing/hcps-want-less-clutter-more-relevance-from-pharma-marketers-survey-shows>

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