

Technology Solutions

The Healthcare Communications Journey

Why Engagement with HCPs and Patients Must Evolve
and How to Build the Optimal Experience



Savvy marketers in life sciences today are learning to construct “communications journeys” in which the series of messages sent to healthcare professionals and patients are tailored and iteratively refined to be more effective. This form of insight-driven, automation-enabled marketing requires new skills and capabilities, but can be a path to competitive advantage.

Executive Summary

Effective healthcare marketing today requires coordinating your messages across all channels, tailoring them according to individual preferences, and making sure each builds upon the last.

Achieving that level of sophistication is not easy, but it is a path to competitive advantage. Many pharmaceutical brands have layered personal and non-personal promotion - sales calls, web visits, mobile marketing, direct mail and other offline channels - as separately managed initiatives. Instead of an integrated multichannel marketing strategy, they have a collection of channels broadcasting overlapping messages that recipients too often find overwhelming or confusing.

Instead of mass-market distribution of identical messages, savvy marketers are learning to construct “communications journeys” in which the series of messages sent to healthcare professionals and patients are tailored and iteratively refined to be more effective. This form of insight-driven, automation-enabled marketing requires knowing a great deal about each customer. This includes both stated preferences and observed behaviors. By testing alternative messages and channels to find those that are most effective, marketers can drive faster adoption of new products and better sustain sales of established brands.

This report outlines how you can manage complex communications campaigns across many customer segments, allowing for more effective marketing and better customer experience. We discuss best practices for developing high-value, customer-centric communications journeys in the healthcare industry, including:

- Integrating sales promotion with other channels to make representatives’ limited time with physicians more relevant
- Developing crisper, more effective marketing over time through iterative development of messaging
- Developing differentiated communication based on local regulations
- Creating and managing feedback loops that improve the journey with time and experience

Orchestrating Your Relationship with Customers

Healthcare customers, both consumer and professional, have rising expectations for communication from any brand – and there is also intense competition for their time and attention. To get through, your messages need to speak directly to them. You must understand customers and their needs as individually as possible. This means communicating with them respectfully, understanding the communications channels they respond to best and timing messages appropriately rather than flooding them with more than they can absorb.

The ‘communications journeys’ approach outlined in this paper is the means by which you can orchestrate your multichannel activities to accomplish this outcome. It requires good planning supported by highly targeted content and the right enabling technology.

However, the foundation for this approach rests in the same elements that underpin any solid pharmaceutical marketing plan. Specifically, you’ll want to make sure you have a firm understanding of your customers and strategic objectives by completing the following processes:

- **Analyze the Patient Journey.** The “patient journey” is a technique for understanding a patient’s complete experience with an illness and with the healthcare system.
- **Segment, target, and position.** Understand market segments, target those that best match your product strategy, and position your product as an appropriate solution. Then continually refine that strategy to get closer to an understanding of the individual customer.
- **Fully integrate customer data.** The better you can match records of customer interactions across all channels, online or in person, the more effective your overall communications strategy will be.

If you are at an early stage in your brand’s lifecycle and building this foundation – or if you still need to shore up your brand in one or more of these key areas to hone performance – these processes are explained in more detail in Appendix B.



277%

Increasing digital spend

The Top 30 Promoted Brands increased their digital spend by 277% from 2009–2014 (Ref: IMS Health Strategic Data, 2014)



44%

Journeys drive engagement

Well coordinated, personalized delivery increased engagement by 44% with target customers for key brands. (Ref: IMS Health Case Study, 2014)

Understanding How Communications Journeys Differ from the Traditional Approach

Once you’ve gained a solid understanding of your customers and goals, you can use that to engage them with well-coordinated experiences we call ‘communications journeys.’ Like a patient journey, a communications journey tells the story of how each step in the process adds up to an overall experience. You want to understand the sequence of communications that will be most useful and engaging for your audience, delivering them at the right time and at the right pace to achieve your marketing goals.

Traditional Approach	Communications Journeys Approach
Limited segmentation of campaigns	Microsegmentation based on data
Mass distribution of common message	Differentiated messaging by segment
Fragmented tactical execution	Centralized orchestration across channels
Static, one-way delivery	Flexible, iterative delivery based on behavior
Basic campaign flows	Sophisticated branching and business logic

Communications Journey Approach



Microsegmentation – rather than applying the same tactic to everyone or breaking a campaign into fixed streams for two to three basic segments, this approach involves creating more personalized experiences based on the mix of data points you have on each customer. This can include classic demographic and psychographic segmentation elements along with other data points such as channel preference and past campaign response. Representing an extension of (and enhancement to) traditional market segmentation strategies, these microsegments are iteratively refined and improved based on new data as a campaign is executed.



Differentiated messaging – creating a range of messages that can be deployed to address the microsegments you’ve created rather than a “one-size-fits-all” approach.

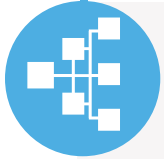


Orchestration across channels – centralized management of all the touch points a customer receives so they fit together into a coherent experience, expressed in one voice from the company.

Communications Journey Approach *continued*

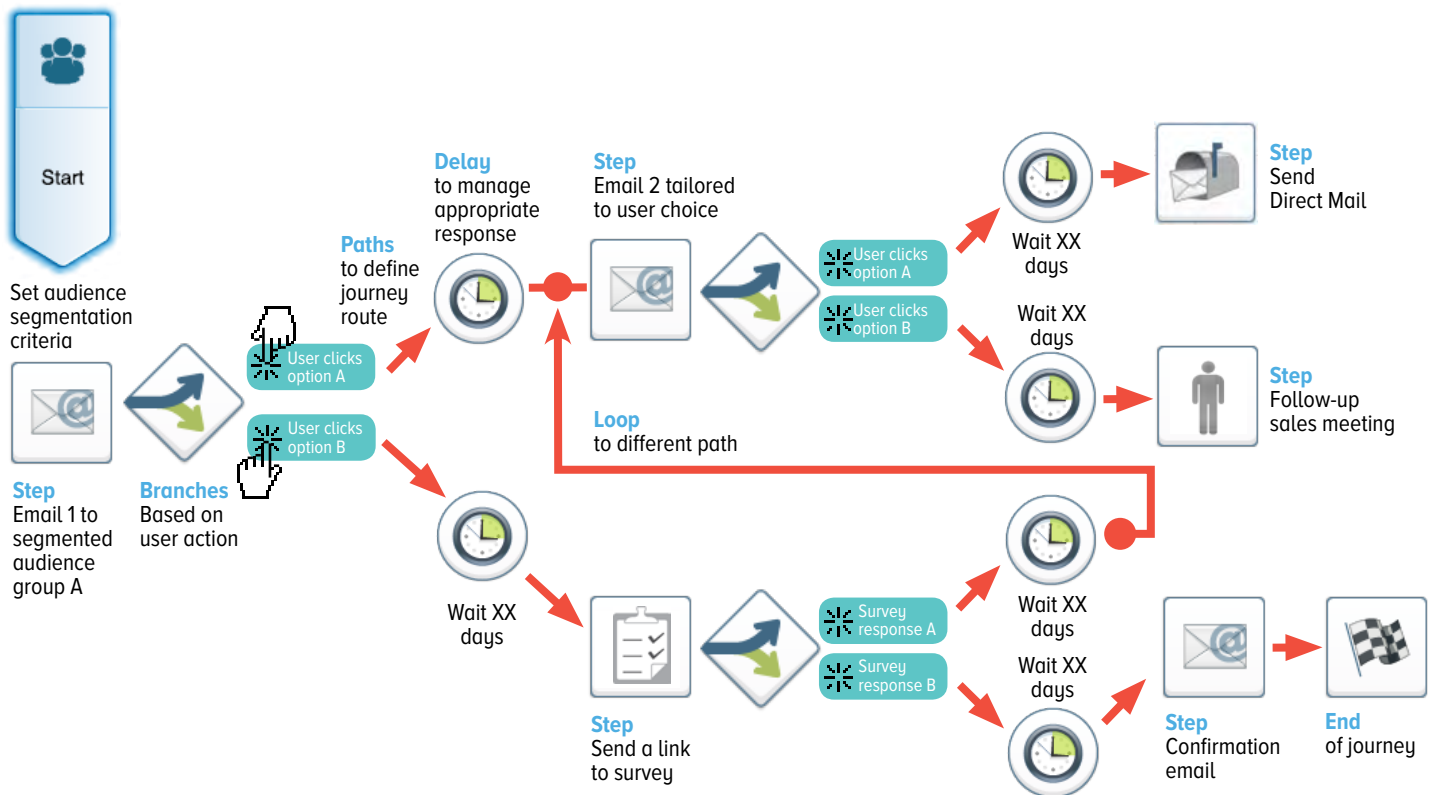


Two-way, iterative delivery – A communications journey also breaks from the pattern of communications flowing one way only – from the marketing and sales professionals out to their customers. The customer journey is created as an initial framework, a plan designed to accommodate change based on bi-directional communications. By systematically gathering customer feedback and observing customer behavior, you can make course corrections as your understanding of the market and the individuals within it improves. For example, you might have initially planned an email campaign but your data shows customers with certain characteristics respond better to text messages.



Use of branching and business logic – campaigns that involve many segments, messages and channels are by definition much more complex than traditional campaigns. Managing these more individualized customer journeys requires using business rules that control the cadence of messages across channels over time and adapt what the customer receives next, based on how they respond. The software to support this process must provide both an accessible user interface for defining and refining the business rules, plus a robust business rules engine to execute those rules reliably during a campaign.

Modeling a Journey Simplified Structure



Here are examples of how IMS Health customers have designed communications experiences for better results.

Case Study 1

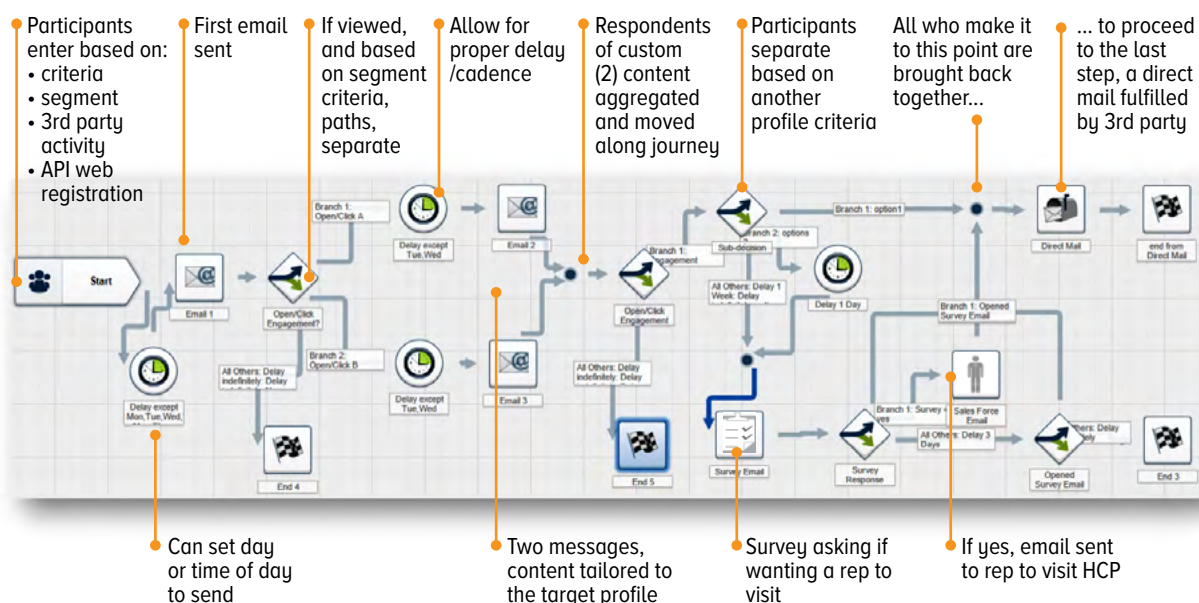
Driving provider adoption with a well coordinated brand journey

This campaign started on the web, with follow up by email, a different coupon sent based on the email response, then an online survey, and follow up by either direct mail or (if requested by the recipient) a visit by a representative. The initial outreach, a promotion on a major physician portal, produced hundreds of healthcare provider leads with valid email addresses. To make the decision to prescribe easier, the core brand message was augmented by an offer of savings for the patient. Depending on the mix of insurance companies in the provider's patient population, the offer was either a coupon covering the patient copay or a savings card from the pharmaceutical company. After a preprogrammed delay, the providers who requested the coupon or the savings card were sent a follow up survey by email, which included an offer to send further patient education information either by email or with a visit from a sales representative. Clicking on the option to request a visit from a sales representative triggered an automatic notification to the representative for that territory to pay a visit as soon as possible.

In this first test, nearly half of the recipients opened the patient education message and half of those requested further information, which was delivered electronically. There were no requests for a sales representative visit, but the option was there – and as long as it satisfied the need, electronic delivery was very efficient and inexpensive. Email response rates for the campaign were strong, with no unsubscribes following the initial email, and open rates increased substantially for the follow up messages with the more engaged providers.

Brand Journey

Automation Logic/Triggers and Channel Integration



Case Study 2

Growing brand revenue through marketing targeted to segmented physicians.

A leading European pharmaceutical faced a sales force reduction at the same time that requirements among physicians were increasing (e.g., pricing, reimbursement). The client needed to extend HCP engagement beyond personal interactions through marketing channels.

The company's business objective for its medication was to increase revenue while maintaining costs. A key strategy to accomplish this was to segment HCPs based on a combination of field coverage and sales opportunity, then target each segment with different messages. For instance, general practitioners received very little sales force coverage but represented significant business opportunity. A Journey was created for this HCP segment to explain how to diagnose the condition and begin treatment immediately (i.e. without awaiting a referring to a specialist).

Journeys were developed for several other HCP specialties, enabling the client to reach a greater audience; increase contact frequency; and educate about important clinical topics such as diagnosis, dosing, and risk. The Journeys were also integrated with sales force engagement. That is, certain sales rep activities during customer visits triggered digital follow-up with personalized signatures by reps, and physicians that responded to surveys and emails in Journeys received subsequent visits from sales reps.

The implementation of automated, personalized journeys has become more refined with each campaign. The company now has a replicable, extendable model, for instance leveraging a library of common marketing elements. Furthermore, marketing ROI is measured by analyzing sales data along with MCM activity data.

Target Groups

Maintaining and Growing Audience Groups

Specialty 1

- Approx 75% covered by reps
- Main source of business
- Priority for contact

MAINTAIN

Specialty 2

- Approx 50% covered by reps
- More competitors
- Less stable/deep relations

Specialty 3

- Less than 10% covered by reps
- Rotating target to increase coverage
- Need to find treatment initiators

GROW

Specialty 4

- Less than 5% covered by reps
- VIP targets by nature of specialty
- Need to educate and support

Overcoming Challenges

Although creating a communications journey for a product offers great promise, you must be willing to confront and overcome the common challenge associated with every business process improvement: resistance to change.

Organizational integration can be at least as big of a hurdle as getting databases and applications to work together. Sales and marketing leaders need to coordinate the messages delivered online, in print, or in person. Within the marketing organization, managers who have established silos of responsibility around running seminars, email marketing, or direct mail must learn to treat their efforts as part of a greater whole. IT and analytics partners accustomed to building walls around proprietary data must be persuaded to make it available to cloud-based systems that give more direct access to marketers and their agencies.

Making communications customer-centric means that every customer contact, through whatever channel, should build on the last contact and deepen the relationship. You may not be able to achieve that ideal every time, but with a concerted effort you can come a lot closer.

Making communications customer-centric means that every customer contact should build on the last contact and deepen the relationship.

You embark on a communications journey with the understanding that you cannot know every twist and turn that lies ahead. In a more traditional approach, the marketing campaign for the rollout of a new product is planned from beginning to end before the first message is sent. The messages and channels are predetermined, and marketing and sales efforts may not be well integrated. The sales force may feel they are the primary “owner” of the customer relationship, and marketing may send a series of messages through other channels without any input or awareness from the sales team. The key to making this relationship work is to coordinate between all functions. The sales team needs to know that having richer, individualized, and timelier messages sent about a product’s basic information allows a more meaningful, in-depth conversation in-person down the road. This leads to quicker adoption rates for the product. The sales team is also a communications “channel” and needs to be part of the integrated multichannel plan.

Another critical factor is timing communications to capture a customer’s attention but without sending so many messages as to be annoying. Software tools let you send the right response to the right customer at the right time based on that particular customer’s engagement in the process.

While automation is an essential ingredient for managing sophisticated campaigns, organizational alignment is just as important as the technical integration when it comes to achieving effective customer engagement.

Managing Effective Communications Journeys

Once you have committed to using a communication journey approach to marketing your product, your success depends on your focus in several key areas.

- 1. Establish a clear vision of your starting point.** Although you will most likely further adapt your message and channels of communication based on feedback and customer data, you must start with a clear message and direction for your product, then rigorously test your plan.
- 2. Select and implement a marketing technology platform.** Due to the complexity of channels, timing and messaging, which can differ based on factors such as type of physician (e.g., a primary care physician versus a specialist) or time of initial contact, using technology to manage your plan is essential. Critical features to look for in your marketing technology solution include:
 - Marketing and customer data fully integrated and directly accessible to marketers and/or their designated partners. It should enable direct 24x7 access via the cloud (e.g., through a web browser) and not require logging a request to IT or a third party to see relevant data on their customers or campaigns.
 - The ability to ‘drag and drop’ to combine any and all attributes in the database to segment customers into discrete groups to target for campaigns. Examples: “endocrinologists and other diabetes specialists in the Northeastern U.S. known to have prescribed a competing medication and who have attended one of our sponsored symposia” or, in a direct-to-consumer scenario “diabetics between 25–50 years old opted-in to our program who have failed on competitive treatments and who have expressed interest in mobile communications.”
 - A centralized “hub” from which you can execute tactics across multiple channels, including email, direct mail, mobile, surveys, call centers, and sales reps.
 - Graphical tools that simplify the process of creating and modifying communications journeys.
 - A robust business rules engine that handles the complexity of messaging sequence and timing and that allows automatic branching based on specific responses from customers.
 - Real-time reporting on campaigns that allow you to adjust campaigns while they are ‘in-flight’ in order to optimize performance.
- 3. Establish clear communication channels across product team, vendor partners, and operations.** Tight coordination across all these groups is critical for the success of a communications journey. You must put in place marketing operations to collect clear campaign requirements from brand and agency partners, then as the campaign rolls out, report back on the activity to those partners.

Conclusion

Moving from a preplanned, linear campaign approach with a series of static, one-way messages to a dynamic, customer-focused campaign requires more than just purchasing and training on a software suite. To be successful, you must rethink the process from people (e.g. bridging the gap between marketing and sales), to what the message might be to different customers, to when that message should be delivered and over what specific channel. Effective planning up front, combined with the right technology infrastructure, allows you to make small changes over time to optimize your campaign's results.

Take action

To get a benchmark for your readiness and capabilities for executing a journeys-based approach, take our maturity diagnostic in Appendix A.

Then contact us at Nexxus@imshealth.com to identify what steps you can take to move yourself to the next level in your efforts.



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Appendix A

Communications Journeys - Maturity Self Assessment

Please rate your organization's maturity on a scale of 1 (Emerging) to 5 (Mature) and tick the relevant boxes below:



1. Organizational readiness (overall organizational capacity to support 'communications journeys' approach):

Strong executive support/sponsorship for creating cohesive multichannel experiences for customers



Clear organizational vision and roadmap for multichannel engagement



Sufficient skill sets for data-driven MCM campaign planning and delivery (including internal staff and current vendors)



Organizational culture that drives close coordination and integration of all customer engagement activities



2. Strategic Foundation (your current understanding of your customers and goals):

Have completed robust customer journey analysis



Have well defined customer segments



Customer data/profiles are fully consolidated



Have clearly defined key performance indicators (KPIs) and analytics strategy for optimization of campaigns



3. Customer Experience (your approach to managing customer programs):

Depth of understanding of target customers' communications preferences



Degree of coordination/integration of personal and non-personal promotion activities



Extent to which you effectively incorporate digital channels (including mobile) into marketing mix



Use of campaign automation and business rules to manage customer experience



Appendix A *continued*

Communications Journeys - Maturity Self Assessment

Please rate your organization’s maturity on a scale of 1 (Emerging) to 5 (Mature) and tick the relevant boxes below:



4. **Tools and Infrastructure** (technology available to support commercial teams):

	1	2	3	4	5
Implementation of marketing automation/campaign management tools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implementation of analytics and reporting solutions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Integration of marketing and sales technology systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease with which systems allow adding new data sources and channels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. **Process and Operations** (processes and operations to support campaign delivery):

	1	2	3	4	5
Clear definition of roles and responsibilities and effective organizational structure for multi-channel delivery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical/regulatory/legal teams well equipped to review sophisticated & personalized customer programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Well-established process for working across internal and external partners to plan and implement campaigns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dedicated operations resources in place (internal or external) to manage the set up and execution of MCM campaigns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What’s your total score?	<input type="text"/>
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Appendix B

As highlighted on page 2, there are several foundational elements that support a strong brand strategy that will also help you be more effective when adopting the ‘communications journeys’ approach. These are described in more detail below.

Analyzing the Patient Journey

You need to understand where your product fits into the patient experience and how to make it a positive part of that experience. Even outside of direct-to-consumer marketing, the patient is always the ultimate customer, making it important to understand every step in the process from diagnosis to prescribing and compliance with doctor’s orders. At critical steps in this process, the right intervention can make a difference in whether your product is prescribed and, once prescribed, whether the patient adheres to the recommended dosing and frequency. The communications component could include everything from awareness-boosting broadcast or online marketing to the consumer (in markets where allowed), physician education on when your product is appropriate and what to tell patients about it, printed product literature distributed by physicians, or an offer for patients to get text message reminders delivered to their phones to help with compliance.

If your patient journey analysis shows that 50% of patients who are prescribed a weight loss product stop taking it after one month, that suggests the ideal time to intervene with a reminder on the product’s long-term benefits or suggestions on coping with side effects might be after three or four weeks. The tactics for acting on that strategy will differ depending on whether you can communicate directly with the patient or must depend on health care provider intermediaries. Still, the first hurdle is understanding your goals.

Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning

Targeting customers as individuals is achievable, once you collect data on their past behavior, attitudes and preferences. Yet a sound market segmentation analysis is fundamental to getting their attention in the first place. By identifying groups of potential customers with common characteristics, you can design campaigns more likely to appeal to them. For example, a message for a product that treats a skin condition might differ depending on whether one targets dermatologists or general practitioners, understanding that the latter might require more education on the nature of the condition and the treatment options.

Within a specialty, you might identify one segment of physicians that values the efficacy of a medication above all and another segment that demonstrates a greater concern about side effects. Consider how you might alter your strategy when approaching the second group:

- If the product matches the efficacy of the competition but has fewer side effects, you emphasize that advantage.
- If the product is more effective but has more side effects, you emphasize strategies for mitigating those side effects (for example, if they can be avoided with a change in diet).
- Otherwise, you must work harder to make the case that the side effects are outweighed by other factors such as cost or convenience.

To position the product more effectively in the market, it is important to identify any unmet needs. For example, if physicians are frustrated with poor patient compliance with a competing product, the ideal message might focus on how a new product offers simpler dosing or administration, leading to better outcomes.

The challenge and the opportunity of marketing in the digital era is that segmentation and targeting can be much more dynamic – not just defined up front but refined on a continual basis. When launching a new product, you may be able to define a strategy based on past experience marketing similar products, but you ought to be able to refine it quickly. Your initial strategy is based on a hypothesis about the market, but in the next phase you make adjustments based on reality. This requires a combination of good technology and agile business processes. Data gathering technology provides the feedback and analytics to suggest needed changes. Business processes then must be malleable enough to act on that information. For example, you will be better positioned to react if you already have developed several alternate versions of your marketing message and lined up any required regulatory approvals for each of them.

Fully Integrating Customer Data

Healthcare marketers seeking to research demographic trends, analyze prescribing behavior, boost sales force effectiveness, or analyze the response to web and email marketing campaigns have no shortage of data to work with. Unfortunately, these tend to be islands of customer intelligence. That is a waste because each interaction should inform every future interaction. For example, the sales representative's visit to a physician ought to be informed by how that individual has reacted to the message as presented in email campaigns or at seminars – positively, negatively, or indifferently. Online campaigns ought to be informed by intelligence gathered in person. Both ought to take advantage of prescribing data for the physician and at the level of any hospital affiliations. For example, positioning ought to be different if the product has been prescribed by many of a physician's hospital peers – suggesting a high level of institutional awareness and approval – than it would be if the provider would be the first among his colleagues to prescribe the product.

Admittedly, some modes of customer-centric marketing are easier to pursue than others. Online marketers continue to perfect the art of sending out emails with alternate subject lines and testing which ones produce the best results, as measured by clicks that bring recipients to a specific landing page. However, data-driven marketing shouldn't stop there. A digital marketing message doesn't need to be delivered via email or a web site. It could just as easily be delivered by a sales representative armed with an iPad loaded with interactive marketing materials personalized for the physician he is visiting. To achieve the same kind of feedback loop, the data recorded in the CRM system after that visit should find its way back into a consolidated customer profile that also includes email interactions and other contacts.

With a 360-degree view of the customer, you can move beyond broad segments to an understanding of the individual.

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About IMS Health

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As a global leader in protecting individual patient privacy, IMS Health uses anonymous healthcare data to deliver critical, real-world disease and treatment insights. These insights help biotech and pharmaceutical companies, medical researchers, government agencies, payers and other healthcare stakeholders to identify unmet treatment needs and understand the effectiveness and value of pharmaceutical products in improving overall health outcomes. Additional information is available at **www.imshealth.com**

Nexus Commercial Application Suite

IMS Health's Nexus™ Commercial Application Suite, a cloud-based application for life sciences and healthcare, ensures that your messages are heard and relationships are developed by elevating your customer outreach from marketing 'campaigns' to ongoing conversations.

IMS Consulting Group

IMSCG is the leading global consulting firm focused exclusively on life sciences. Our evidenced-based consulting approach in multi-channel has helped our clients pioneer new approaches in customer engagement. Our privileged access to IMS Health data enables us to support distinctive analysis, provide global insights and implement recommendations that are unparalleled among our competition.

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