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**How are challenges in the pharma market leading toward future engagement models?**

# Introduction

The whys, whens, and hows of customer engagement are changing rapidly across the pharmaceutical industry. As customers get savvier about their needs and options while demanding more personalized relationships, major technology companies are repositioning themselves to stay one step ahead of the changes.

With Salesforce and Veeva's CRM platforms parting ways, enabling each to focus on unique offerings to meet growing unmet needs in customer engagement, pharmaceutical companies will have some weighty choices to make about how they will approach the future of engagement from both a technical and an operational viewpoint.

[Read more: Deloitte's Case for Change](#)

They will need to tackle a tricky environment filled with challenges, including marked dissatisfaction with traditional engagement strategies and increased pressure from pharma competitors that have already cracked the code on delivering authentic, tailored experiences to partners all along the care continuum.

To gain additional insight into the trends affecting customer engagement, Deloitte has gathered data from across the industry, including quantitative surveys and qualitative discussion groups with health care providers and top pharmaceutical company leaders.

We have found that the environment is poised to undergo a transformative shift, characterized by the urgent need for integration, personalization, and automation of customer engagement efforts to deliver a truly meaningful, high-value experience to a growing number of customer types.

Success in this new era will require pharma companies to deeply understand both their internal goals and external outreach efforts, adopting new customer engagement models that merge the best of in-person relationships with the efficiency and intelligence of automated strategies.

# A market in transition: Exploring the need for change

Customer satisfaction is a primary metric of success for pharmaceutical companies, and many feel like they are doing well in this area. Yet according to customers themselves, pharma appears to be falling short of the mark.

A recent survey by Deloitte found that while 80% of pharma executives are satisfied with their current customer engagement strategies, only 35% of health care providers (HCPs) felt that pharma's customer-facing resources met their needs effectively.

These perception gaps persist across several areas, with 47% of HCPs stating they find representatives' communications ineffective conveying scientific evidence and consider them inauthentic. As a result, HCPs prefer to receive information from non-pharma company channels, such as peer-reviewed medical journals, 67% of the time.

Instead of this unsatisfactory status quo, HCPs are looking for more coordinated, integrated, and relevant engagement from the life sciences industries. In conversations with Deloitte, stakeholders have expressed their desire for clearer communication and more trusted interactions that deliver the right information at the right time for informed decision-making.

## Integrated engagement

Stakeholders desire coordinated, integrated interactions with their life sciences partners, with 65% of HCPs participating in a recent Deloitte survey confirming that strong partnerships with life sciences companies would be ideal. However, HCPs and customers have shared that they are often bombarded with engagements that can be repetitious and clearly indicate a lack of internal communication. For example, some customers get multiple visits from reps from the same company within a week and report a lack of awareness among these reps about the activities of their colleagues. This creates frustration among customers but also among the reps themselves.

Pharma companies will need to invest in technologies and strategies that create a full 360-degree customer view that includes data on all account interactions, leaving customers feeling heard and creating a positive company reputation in the market.

## Personalized relationships

Leaders across the life sciences community have shared with Deloitte that they are collecting customer data, but it is highly dispersed across their technology ecosystem. This siloed data cannot be used effectively to create high-quality, personalized content that resonates with customers, resulting in lost opportunities to educate and engage relevant partners.

At the same time, pharma companies are being asked to engage with a larger number and broader range of stakeholder personas, such as nurse practitioners, within a single organization as they shift to account-based selling models.

Since **80% of customers** are more likely to do business with a company that offers personalized experiences, it is imperative for pharma companies to figure out how to leverage their data more effectively. Choosing a CRM platform that meets the company's needs will be an important step toward creating hyper-specific customer segments, comprehensive customer journeys, and tailored omnichannel content delivered at specific times to create "moments that matter" across the journey.

### Automated interactions

Business and technology leaders understand that HCPs want to easily and intuitively access information when and where they need it, but admit their organizations feel stuck using human-driven processes and content creation methods that limit their efforts to uncover, synthesize, and convey important messaging for their audiences. When organizations struggle to connect with the right audiences when it matters, HCPs feel unheard and undervalued.

Engagement efforts must be driven by real-time insights, which require advanced automation to gather, analyze, and surface to key decision-makers. Field reps will need access to real-time dashboards that update frequently—daily or even hourly—to help showcase HCP data and prioritize messaging. Meanwhile, adopting tools to automate content creation and distribution at scale will be essential for increasing efficiency and personalization.

Seventy-one percent of HCPs say pharma engagement will drive high consumer awareness in an ideal state. Sixty-one percent of HCPs say pharma companies should be involved in disease awareness, and 54% say these campaigns are effective in boosting confidence in the company.

### Digital-first education

Clients report that customers are increasingly expecting omnichannel engagement with a focus on digital tools to create experiences that [match what they receive in other industries](#). Yet scaling up a fully human-powered outreach and engagement team in a highly constrained workforce environment isn't always possible—nor will it deliver the best results without being backed by robust digital capabilities.

With a new generation of digital-native pharma companies putting pressure on established players, life sciences companies must focus on developing low-cost, high-return methods of engaging customers digitally according to their preferences.

Increasingly, these preferences are leaning toward on-demand learning that fits into busy schedules and offers clear, concise information. HCPs are even becoming more comfortable with AI-generated content, with [close to 75% stating](#) in a Deloitte survey that they would be willing to interact with such resources as part of their ideal future state of pharma engagement.

### Outsourced relationships

Engagement models of the future are also driven by rising financial pressures in the market. The pharma industry is constantly on the search for ways to reduce costs and improve organizational margins—all while enhancing the quality of their relationships and continually improving their connections with HCPs and the consumer community.

For companies that are seeking creative ways to achieve both goals, outsourcing may be an option. This strategy offers a light, lean approach to driving margin and could be a good fit for product portfolios with simple, clear value propositions easily communicated by engagement partners.

Working with third parties in this manner can reduce costs while still driving toward deeper and more effective consumer relationships, especially since HCPs prefer to receive support and information from non-pharma channels 67% of the time, Deloitte survey results show.

Outsourcing creates a trusted bridge between pharma companies and their audiences while controlling in-house resource utilization so companies can maximize their capabilities while remaining connected to key partners in the market.

Pharma companies that want to shift to a forward-looking model of integrated, digitally driven engagement will need to explore new methods of combining leading-edge technologies with intelligent engagement strategies in a comprehensive and proactive manner.

# Deloitte's Five Customer Engagement Models of the Future

While integration, personalization, and automation must be at the core of customer engagement for all pharma companies in the new future, every organization will realize its goals in a different way.

Deloitte has developed five unique customer engagement models of the future to drive growth based on each organization's capabilities, business objectives, and market position. These models are designed as a starting point for building new approaches but can be blended or enhanced based on specific business factors, such as geography or portfolio.

## The Integrator

Use this model to enhance account-based marketing approaches in complex care environments so you can capitalize on opportunities to connect with keystone buyers and successfully sell products across brands or therapeutic areas.

## The Concierge

Choose this "white glove service" approach to mitigate access, education, or reimbursement barriers for products tailored to relatively small patient populations or competitive market segments.

## The Always-on Amplifier

Use this model for high-margin products geared toward treating common conditions or easily identifiable needs so you can organically engage consumers across multiple channels while differentiating your products from other options in the market.

## The Digital Driver

Consider this approach when educated customers need clear, concrete, on-demand data that can be communicated in a straightforward way, so you can limit spending on a leaner field force while still owning the relationship.

## The Outsourcer

Choose this strategy when products already have a clear value proposition and require less proactive promotion so you can still build and maintain relationships while focusing scarce in-house resources on other priority areas.



# Leveraging emerging customer engagement models to craft a new vision of the future

With seismic shifts in technology and strategy already affecting how pharma companies engage with their customers, forward-thinking leaders will need to chart a new path into a very different future.

Choosing one or more of Deloitte's customer engagement models to serve as a guide for short- and long-term customer engagement activities can help jump-start success by driving growth and fostering trust in the ever-evolving life sciences landscape.

Deloitte is ready and able to assist with understanding and managing the impact of changing consumer expectations and the new technologies available to help meet next-generation demands. We have a full range of offerings that span the breadth of the transformation journey, including a one-day Future of Customer Engagement lab, technology needs assessments, and experienced consultants to provide at-the-elbow support for future-state configuration and solution implementation.



# Continue the conversation

Interested in learning more about Deloitte's vision for the future of customer engagement? Or want to discuss which engagement model is best suited to unlock value for your organization? Reach out to us.

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