

Making Connections for High Science Brands

► The growth of high-science brands has changed the life sciences landscape, and with it the strategies companies need to develop to market their products must also undergo a significant shift.

Cancer immunotherapies as well as other high-science brands will account for \$34 billion in sales by 2024, according to GlobalData. Furthermore, it's been estimated that around 73% of cancer drugs are likely to be tailored to a person's genetic profile.

In this high-science, high-stakes environment, the success of these products will depend on their clinical and commercial positioning and the ability to reach the right target patient populations.

But the way a company markets its high-science brands is very different from the old blockbuster model. The marketing messages with these more complex therapies need to be concise and at the same time adequately explain science.

The skill lies in making the complex compelling by creating marketing messages that resonate with prescribers, patients and their caregivers, and payers.

It's also important to recognize that many high-science brands dramatically change the treatment protocol. Healthcare professionals need to be supported through these changes and given assistance with how they educate their patients. The marketing message is also more likely to be directed at specialty physicians and their patients, so the information shared needs to be more precise and disease specific.

Getting the Message Across Effectively

It has been estimated that around two-thirds of drugs don't meet expectations during their first year on the market. As more high-cost, high-science products come to market, it's vital for companies' bottom lines that they take steps to ensure their products' commercial success. That means understanding the patient journey and being able to answer the questions and concerns of HCPs and their patients.

For example, consider patients who have traditionally been treated with inexpensive general medicines to control their symptoms. When introducing a new, high-science product with the objective of pinpointing that pa-

tient's condition, an important consideration is cost. To that end, the company needs to invest in powerful and science-driven messaging to educate patients and physicians about the real value of that new therapy.

A strategic approach is vital when dealing with high-science brands or rare disease therapies. According to marketing experts, successful companies adopt several key approaches:

► **They work collaboratively with the rare disease community.** Working with

the patient community and therapeutic area experts gives companies awareness about the disease and the challenges the patient has faced, including time to diagnosis, how many treatment centers have been visited, etc. These collaborative approaches can include providing a social media platform for patients, which helps to unite patients who are geographically dispersed.

► **They find ways to ensure patient access to therapies.** To help patients access

EXECUTIVE VIEWPOINTS



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Set Bias Aside

Having strong biases for your science is the first common mistake. Then believing the high science alone will sell the brand and forgetting to connect on a human level to make the high science meaningful. Articulating the need as a human problem is necessary to capture attention on the scientific solution, no matter how beautiful, complex, and elegant the science may be.

What's In It For Them?

It's important to speak to your audience segment with authentic language that is relevant to their motivators. While there is well-established scientific knowledge behind every new medicine or technology, each audience — clinicians, researchers, and patients — needs to dig further to know what's in it for them. How does it solve a current need or

provide new ways to approach disease management?



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Providing Meaning to Data

Context is key. While the science often takes precedence in developing high-science messages, what matters is our ability to provide meaning to the data or science. Think MOA — while it might be scientifically differentiating for the brand, most clinicians want to know what the relevance is to them in their clinical practice. When messaging a high-science brand, it's very easy to over-explain a topic. Marketers need to get to the point and quickly deliver a meaningful message or risk losing the audience in the details. On my first high-science brand my medical director told me that a scientific message usually has three key components — why the data/research are important, what's needed to realize their potential, and why

key rare disease therapies and strengthen the brand, leading companies develop early access programs to study patients for a period of time before the therapy is granted approval. These companies also remove the obstacles to getting patients from diagnosis to treatment, for example managing the paperwork to apply for treatment fees. And they often work with partners, including governments and donors, to close funding gaps.

- ▶ **They provide ongoing support to patients and their caregivers.** These services might include nursing support to educate patients on drug administration and

managing side effects. It can also include educational support to help patients learn more about their disease and treatment.

Who is Best Equipped to Drive These New Engagements?

The rise of high-science brands requires a different kind of representative in discussions with healthcare professionals and payers. Today, that role is falling more and more to medical science liaisons (MSLs), who have

become key to bridging the communication gap between clinical development and commercialization.

It is the MSL's role to educate HCPs on clinical evidence concerning the therapy and how it should be used, and once being used the MSL supports the brand by answering practitioners' questions. With rapidly evolving medical developments, HCPs are challenged to keep up with developments. MSLs provide practitioners with the scientific insights they need to best treat their patients. Equally, the MSL conveys information from practitioners to the company, including real-world evidence from the treatment of patients, which can help to enhance decision making.

However, traditional marketers also play an important role in delivering messages around high-science brands. The key here is for those individuals to surround themselves with people who understand the science more deeply. In so doing, the brand team is able to communicate a deeper message about the condition and the product in a creative, memorable, and impactful way.

The other critical piece is the voice of the patient. One way this can be achieved is through the adoption of patient advisory boards and patient panels to ensure that while the science is accurately conveyed, so too is the story about how the product makes a difference in patients' lives.

The way the message is conveyed is also important. Aside from engagement with MSLs and patients, experts say e-detailing is a key component in this marketplace as is having unbranded websites to share scientific information that will help to inform the HCP. Social media is another important forum for helping HCPs understand the latest scientific information and therapeutic advances.

Across all types of products, there's growing awareness that multi-channel connections that demonstrate value are key to good marketing. That's even more critical for high-science brands.

Marketers need to tell compelling but honest stories that their audience can connect with to encourage and inspire physicians to hear more about the brand. These messages should reach the audience in the ways in which they like to engage, such as videos, blogs, email, and so on, and should encompass actionable insights drawn from clinical and/or real-world data. **PV**

the outcome is valuable. I use this as a guide when reviewing scientific messages.

Provide Context

When creating a story for high-science brands, start with a strategic purpose and think about the optimal story that you want to tell. Don't get caught up in how you're going to execute the story, or you'll find yourself in the land of "I can't say that." Think about how the story will end, and then prioritize what messages are needed to get your audience to the conclusion. Know and respect the data, and always provide context and insight where you can.



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Talk the Talk

It's no longer enough to just be able to define an audience and customize a message to specific stakeholders. The key now is to speak their language — literally.

When it comes to deep, research-driven information, each group has its own lexicon, making language itself the glue that can bind technical scientific concepts to real-world results. Often, when talking about science, it's tempting to showcase every element of a breakthrough technology, under the assumption that it's the complexity itself that will impress audiences. Too often, though, this confuses more than clarifies. Instead, we often encourage our clients to go for broke on a narrower aspect of the science, showing HCPs and other key audiences — as simply and elegantly as possible — only the parts of the story that they need to know.

It's All About the Patients

I've been in the industry long enough to see absolutely brilliant innovations fail in the marketplace because they didn't clearly articulate their benefit for patients, so the most critical element of any brand story is the "so what" for patients — not scientists. The goal must be to create an emotional connection between the science, the providers, and the individuals they are caring for.