

By Robin Robinson

The Launch Pad

Preparing for PRODUCT LAUNCH

Marketing teams are evolving their strategies to win in today's challenging marketing landscape.

Among the many challenges facing marketers, the first one that must be met is a willingness to recognize that launching a product today requires a new set of strategies.

"The single biggest challenge right now is everyone knows an evolution needs to take place, but no one has been given the permission to stop doing things the old way and start doing things in a new way," says John Marchese, managing director, Sudler NY. "A launch strategy is no longer just telling a doctor about a new brand and the medication is prescribed. The entire ecosystem of stakeholders and what the brand can stand for during the launch phase need to be considered today."

Today, marketers not only need to understand what motivates physicians, but also patients and payers, as these groups have a much larger stake in healthcare decision-making today. The development of more rare disease treatments is also changing launch strategies, as targeting for rare diseases requires a solid knowledge of smaller groups of patients who suffer from very unique conditions.

"The biggest challenges today are finding ways to not follow yesterday's playbook," says Jamie Sidore, VP, managed markets, QuintilesIMS. "Brand leaders all talk about 'doing it differently' and adapting to the realities of 201X, but when crunch time comes with an FDA approval, often different thinking goes out the window and the one-size-fits-all launch plan from 2005 gets dusted off and implemented because it's just easier that way."

Doing it the old way may be easier, but not more effective. The challenges facing marketers today make every element of the launch critical, and reverting backward will not posi-

Launching a pharmaceutical product has never been easy, but in years past it was certainly simpler. The days of focusing singularly on high-decile prescribing docs and sending out an army of sales reps are a distant memory. Today's marketers must establish a value story for physicians, patients, and payer stakeholders, and communicate that value effectively. There are more channels, more data, and less physician accessibility, all of which bring more challenges and complications to the launch pad.

Our experts discuss the overall challenges of launching a product in today's complex marketing landscape, as well as calling out the specific challenges behind today's necessary focus on payers and rare disease audiences.

According to a recent McKinsey's report, launch teams need to invest significant time with patients and caregivers early in the launch process to understand their journey and the barriers they might face in accessing treatment. For example, setting up a social media platform can prove valuable to patients who are geographically scattered, enabling them to share experiences and create a sense of solidarity.

The entire ecosystem of stakeholders and what the brand can stand for during the launch phase need to be considered today.

JOHN MARCHESE
Sudler NY



tion the product in the best competitive light for launch. Silos need to be dissolved, planning needs to occur early and cross-functionally, and stakeholders on all sides are the driving force of the message.

Today, it is impossible to launch well without an integrated commercial approach that goes far beyond a well-trained salesforce and a basic marketing mix, says Tim Wohlgemut, senior VP, TGaS Insights. Payers, medical, hub, trade, reimbursement, patient support, multiple field teams and multichannel marketing all need to work together as a cohesive commercial model. The relative importance of each of these elements shifts from asset to asset, so there are a wide variety of commercial models today, and marketers need to understand them all well to be effective, he says.

Much of the advice pharma marketers receive when contemplating a new launch strategy that works in today's ecosystem includes: be disruptive, be patient-centric, explore the value of population health on the reimbursement groups, and create a digital plan to engage patients. All these elements are very critical to the success of the product launch and, yet, both McKinsey and Bain report that more than 50% of product launches fail to meet expectations, says Joy Morrell, president, JMorrellGroup. What are companies failing to see?

"Simply stated, good planning leads to the right results," Ms. Morrell says. "There's no secret sauce, just strategic thinking around connecting the dots between pertinent data points."

Launch teams that can integrate the pieces together will be closer to a winning strategy than those who do not. (Editor's Note: For

more information on the important elements needed in a winning strategy, see our digital bonus content.)

Collaboration between the commercial/marketing teams and medical/scientific teams is also a critical ongoing process when preparing for launch and is something that is often lacking, especially in companies that are launching their first product.

"In those cases, the organizations themselves are undergoing transitions from being science-only companies to commercial ones," says Jeanne Martel, president and partner, ClinicalMind LLC. "A strong, integrated message and plan will make for the most impactful launch."

When both the commercial and the scientific groups feel the product story needs to be told from their point of view, it can be difficult to come to a common version of the brand story.

"The communication and debate regarding how to tell the corporate story, as well as deliver the product's scientific story, must begin in the early stages of planning," Ms. Martel says. "Creating cross-team buy-in on this process and mapping out the scientific data available to support the messaging will go a long way toward supporting the tactics that come later."

This concept extends to all groups within the cross-functional team, including agencies and other key partners.

The Stakeholders

There's no argument that payers have become an important stakeholder in the launch process, and pharma companies are adjusting their strategy to include them early and often.



It is impossible to launch a product well without an integrated commercial approach that goes far beyond a well-trained salesforce and a basic marketing mix.

TIM WOHLGEMUT
TGaS Insights

Payer relationship management accounts for an average of 26% of surveyed global pharmaceutical and medical device companies' total market access budget, according to a recent study by business intelligence provider Cutting Edge Information.

Surveyed pharmaceutical companies interact with payer groups before, during, and after product launch. Ideally, global market access teams may prefer to engage payers as early as 10 months ahead of a scheduled launch, the study found. Realistically, however, this timeline falls closer to five months prior to products' market entries.

The study found that surveyed pharmaceutical teams report making payer relationship activities a top priority among the many other market access responsibilities they undertake. These frequent interactions with payers help dedicated teams to understand payer perspectives, and according to the study, are beneficial both during and after products reach the marketplace.

Ahead of launch, ample communications with payer groups help companies increase their odds of ensuring product access in target markets. After launch, market access teams continue to nurture these important relation-



In rare disease, the patient story cannot be an afterthought or a separate initiative as their story is an essential part of bringing these treatments to market.

JEANNE MARTEL
ClinicalMind



There is no room for error during the launch phase — the customer's experience must be positive at all levels of engagement.

STEVEN MICHAELSON
Calcium



A successful launch requires strategic thinking and transformational design — good planning leads to the right results.

JOY MORRELL
JMorrrellGroup

ships, serving as an informational resource to help circumvent potential product challenges.

"If companies don't know how their product launch will be perceived by payers and how it helps or hurts payer objectives, then the company doesn't have a viable launch plan," Mr. Wohlgemut says. "To address this, many companies are hiring or involving payer expertise earlier than ever before in the launch planning stages."

TGaS has performed its own survey and discovered that point-in-time feedback isn't enough to keep the launch plan on track, be-

cause payer priorities and the options available to them can change quickly.

"Not only do companies need to know what payers think and how they would react today, they also need to know how to collect the data needed to ensure that when the landscape changes, they are aware of it," he says.

The constant shift of power from the prescriber to the payer and now more than ever to the provider — IDNs and ACOs — will require pharmaceutical companies to find new ways to work in increasingly restrictive payer environments and be prepared for discussions around value-based pricing, says Mark Stevens, chief strategy officer, Publicis.

"Prescribers have progressively lost their individual decision making power on use of launches, ceding influence to the payers and providers," he says. "However, there are small segments of specialists who are still influential to help with the launch trajectory and they need to be identified."

Mr. Stevens also suggests exploring pricing options that can be novel and sometimes unconventional that will translate clinical evidence into convincing arguments to support early decisions with P&T members and others in power. Using real-world data to create real-world evidence will help in protecting pricing value stories for the life of the product. Exploring companion diagnostics options showing fiscal responsibility in selective re-

sponsive disease management can also boost payer acceptance.

Payers and the resulting access environment are the most important variables to launch success, Mr. Sidore says. While pricing and clinical differentiation are influential in success of the launch, without access and affordability, the brand won't even get off the ground, he adds.

"Think about the three As of access, affordability, and actionability," Mr. Sidore says. "First, companies need to secure access so that they can communicate confidently and be sure that prescribers will be able to write the drug and have it approved."

Second, launch teams need to have a plan to make the drug affordable for patients, whether this means copay support, a patient assistance program, a coverage bridge program, trial vouchers, or multiple aspects of the various options.

The variation in access and affordability creates differential opportunities for actionability or pull-through. This is where marketers, Mr. Sidore says, need to determine where the payers combine for depth of coverage, and where the drug is largely blocked out. Another tough decision is determining which patients with access should be pursued and which ones might not be financially viable.

Most of all, the industry needs to link the knowledge of these factors back into the forecasting and goal setting for launch brands, Mr. Sidore says. While there is broad recognition of the three As, often the forecasts that drive incentives and planning are set using top-line assumptions, macro trends, and are highly divorced from the realities on the ground.

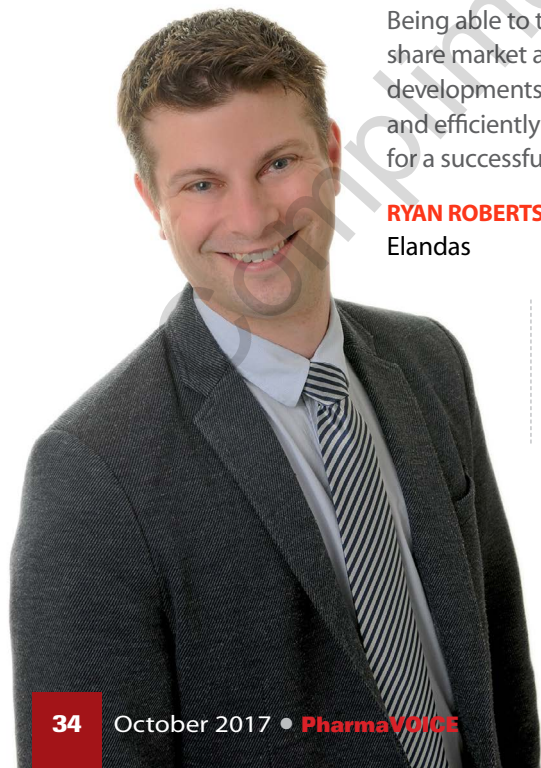
"Having a bottom-up forecast for launch, built off market access, affordability, and pull-through actions, helps prevent huge disconnects between what gets budgeted and what gets achieved," he says.

When the barriers to accessing a drug are too high, it may not get to the patients who really need it, says Ryan Roberts, CEO, Elandas. Payers have expectations that a new drug will improve outcomes, efficacy, safety, and pharmacoeconomics, and that manufacturers will have robust clinical studies and economic models to prove the value. Because of this, understanding and meeting payer expectations should be at the forefront of the strategy and should start as early as the prelaunch phase.

"It is important to consider individual expectations of key payers and to capture and share insights internally around their expectations and their response to key messaging," Mr. Roberts says. "By sharing these payer insights with the right stakeholders internally, account strategies can be adapted to help gain access for the drug."

Being able to track and share market access developments quickly and efficiently is a must for a successful launch.

RYAN ROBERTS
Elandas



Capturing this key intelligence using a configurable technology solution can provide the launch strategy with ongoing reporting of what level of coverage might be available and how quickly payers are going to review the new brand.

“The more you know about the collective and individual expectations of payers, the better chance you have of meeting them,” he adds.

The solution is to facilitate communication between all commercial teams, Mr. Roberts says.

“All customer-facing teams play a huge role in sharing customer and competitive insights to help the launch team understand what’s working and what’s not,” he says. “This affords marketers the opportunity to make tactical adjustments, by learning details that might impact uptake, such as common objections, competitor angling, message impact, and the accuracy of access and forecasting assumptions.”

Having access to day-to-day intelligence to enable agility is important at launch. Waiting on third party data to become available to uncover issues can be detrimental to the launch. Plus, data spreads without context or detail makes it pretty hard to know, he adds.

Focus on Sales

Sales teams also need insights from each other and marketers to execute on strategies that can move the needle. For instance, field

sales teams need to be alerted when access changes affect their territories.

“The last thing they want is to get doctors excited about their drug and not have access,” Mr. Roberts says.

In an environment where more than 50% of physicians restrict rep access, 60% of doctors are part of an IDN, and 25% of all physician interactions are digital, it is clearly time to reimagine the value of the sales representative, says Deborah Schnell, VP, managing director, Taylor Strategy Partners.

“The healthcare landscape has changed

dramatically in the last five years and will continue to evolve,” she says. “We cannot expect the sales tools of the past to deliver the talent of the future.”

For today’s sales rep, product knowledge and in-territory HCP relationships are no longer sufficient qualifiers for success. In today’s changing environment, effective sales reps need to make the “total” office call often educating on rare or complex diseases, providing service and/or direction on how patients can get the therapy, assisting the practice in navigating reimbursement, and supporting

What’s exciting about advances in measurement and technology is that brands can now focus on measuring the outcomes that matter, such as adherence and adoption.

KATHERINE CALVERT
Outcome Health



Pharmaceutical companies need to find new ways to work in increasingly restrictive reimbursement environments.

MARK STEVENS
Publicis

(c) PharmaLinx LLC. Rights do not include promotional use. For distribution or printing rights, contact mwals@pharmavoices.com

Rare Disease Launch Strategy

As the industry focuses on developing products for rare disease indications, product launch strategies are shifting to align with this particular audience. Therapies for rare diseases are becoming a top priority for an increasing number of pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical companies, as well as for the FDA. Nonetheless, there are many issues to manage when bringing a therapy for a rare disease to market. These include a lack of natural history studies, small patient pool and trial size, identification of validated biomarkers, disputed efficacy end points, assurance of its safety profile, and the question of what to do with patient experience data.

There are certain strategies for products that treat rare diseases, such as implementing a comprehensive plan to identify potential patients using RWD or advanced artificial intelligence/machine learning algorithms. According to Mark Stevens, chief strategy officer, Publicis, the use of genetic profiling will also be widespread and in many cases there is the potential that many patients are not even diagnosed yet.

“Launch sequence will be important where the areas/countries with the highest prevalence can provide instant real-world evidence on the efficacy, and this could also mean smaller individual launches to manage expectations,” he says. “Understanding early on the clinical trial landscape and KOL networks to optimize trial design to include key markets and clinical centers of excellence for the disease state is essential.”

Using correct tactics and channels are critical to reaching the intended audience. Often, rare and fatal diseases involve many disciplines, so a treatment-team approach can be very impactful.

“We typically recommend highly personal

programs and less nonpersonal marketing in these cases due to the need to build relationships and create trust as we disseminate the scientific story for the product,” says Jeanne Martel, president and partner, ClinicalMind LLC.

Educating providers on how to identify appropriate patients for treatment will be a very important part of the communication plan and strategy to ensure that the market is ready at launch. Also, educating providers on what will be necessary for this treatment in terms of delivery mechanism and necessary follow-up will help them to prepare for faster uptake of this product once it's approved, she adds.

John Marchese, managing director, Sudler NY, says education becomes more critical and must be at a higher level than for non-rare diseases. Neither physicians nor patients have experience in these rare diseases, so a strategy must include time, energy, and money to educate them to maximize their own efforts. Another difference in strategy would be the precision in which patients need to be targeted. “It is not a shotgun approach to marketing at all, and that's really where you get into using data to identify where these people are, where the challenges are in managing these diseases,” he says. “Support is always at the front and center and it needs to be comparable with the level of support patients receive in rare diseases.”

Reach and frequency as a model doesn't make sense in a rare disease world or for any specialty, super-specialty, rare oncology, or immune-oncology program, says Tim Wohlgenut, senior VP, TGaS Insights.

“Payers and patients are weaving their way closer to the center of every commercial model in a multitude of ways,” he says. “That means the data being collected, the analytics being conducted, the tactics being deployed, and the capabilities that need to be built are all impacted.”

Launching a product for a rare disease requires even more attention on a well-defined patient profile, and more urgency around developing focused strategies for reaching those patients and their physicians, says Katherine Calvert, senior VP, industry marketing, Outcome Health.

“Because the patient populations for these diseases are small, traditional DTC campaigns that reach the masses might not make sense for brand marketers from an ROI perspective,” she says. “Contextualized marketing messages delivered in the minutes before, during, and after an affected patient meets with their physician is a much more effective way to deliver brand impact.”

The patients and their caregivers are important in any launch in any category, but science and patients drive a bit more of the strategy in rare disease launches.

“The key dynamic of rare disease markets is driven by the size of the patient population and interconnectedness,” says Steven Michaelson, CEO, Calcium. “So, while there is nothing inherently different in the ways and hows of products launched into the space, the markets themselves are often a tightly interwoven community of treaters, patients, caregivers, advocacy organizations, and industry professionals.”

For brands to effectively enter these communities they must be authentic in their interactions and behaviors within the community, because these communities are tight, and news travels fast, both good and bad.

“There is no room for error — the customers' experience must be positive at all levels of engagement and, if you make a mistake, immediately acknowledge it and publicly take steps to correct it,” Mr. Michaelson says.

It's imperative to treat these groups as the tight-knit communities they are, and not

the patient advocacy group. Therefore, comprehensive target profiles have never been more important and must be built to not only include the competencies and characteristics needed to succeed, but the cultural alignment as well.

“According to a recent Harvard Business Review article, cultural fit trumps competency every time, and yet few organizations know how to accurately assess candidates for cultural fit,” Ms. Schnell says, referring to hiring sales reps. “Success is delivered by hiring the best

people and talent and that starts with a finely tuned profile and well delineated cultural attributes.”

Ms. Morrell also suggests a clear blueprint for the execution team that includes the reason for the strategy chosen.

misinterpret them as simply segments or categories. The industry wants to be viewed as a responsible member of the community, and can do so by being transparent about why and how it is doing things. This is not the place for advertisements, but for building relationships. And above all, companies, as the experts, should be shaping the understanding of the disease state.

Technology plays a big role in connecting the benefits of innovative therapies to patient populations who may not be aware of them. At Outcome Health, brands using the point-of-care platform have experienced, on average, a 14% lift in new prescriptions.

"Being able to reach your patient-physician universe in a targeted way means you're able to directly impact positive patient outcomes," Ms. Calvert says.

On the sales side, smaller, geographically dispersed sales teams make it challenging for field sales management to train, coach, and course correct to ensure maximum results, says Deborah Schnell, VP, managing director, Taylor Strategy Partners.

In a 2015 global study of 79 brands, it was determined that the launch trajectory is now set in the first 12 weeks, versus the historical six to nine months. Additionally, in a recent Harvard Business Review article it was found that just 90 days after launch, 80% of all prelaunch product information is forgotten.

"Employing technology to support just-in-time coaching and training will be essential for success," Ms. Schnell says. "Traditional ride-along coaching and training will not go away, but neither will it adequately address the need for more efficient communication. It is the combination of traditional means with technology/video for course correction and reinforcement that will deliver max results."

"Don't expect success of a plan without the strategic and transformational prologue explaining the why, helping to guide sales partners to overcome the challenges at the point of sale," she says.

As physicians face a market increasingly



Brand marketers need to start a personalized dialogue with physicians that will break through the influx of new product information.

DENIS WYRWOLL
Healthcasts

oversaturated with information and communication, the challenge is delivering pertinent information to physicians in impactful ways. Solutions include using more targeted platforms and utilizing the moment of care to share relevant treatment information in the very place where providers and patients need it, says Katherine Calvert, senior VP, marketing, Outcome Health.

"What's exciting about advances in measurement and technology is that brands can focus on measuring the outcomes that matter, such as adherence and adoption," she says.

Brand marketers need to start a personalized dialogue with physicians that will break through the influx of new product information, says Denis Wyrwoll, VP, business intelligence, Healthcasts.

"Getting the medication to the hands of the patient is always the goal, so educating providers with quick access updates that affect their patient pool will enhance their ability to prescribe the product," he adds.

To make appropriate decisions regarding resources, marketers also need to know local market conditions, Mr. Sidore says. For instance, deciding how to allocate sales calls, promo budgets, speakers, symposia, etc., requires knowledge of which markets are controlled by integrated delivery/health networks and who is the key protocol decision-maker,



Surveyed doctors agreed in-person meetings with sales reps are more valuable when the focus is not on the product but on information such as patient support and advocacy programs.

DEBORAH SCHNELL
Taylor Strategy Partners

and what markets have lots of physician autonomy where more traditional commercial efforts would work best.

This issue is what TGaS describes as Launch Catch-22. While commercial spend is often restricted due to regulatory uncertainty early on, if teams wait too long until there is more certainty, launch effectiveness will be compromised. Executives in small and precommercial companies must weigh each spending decision in a more precarious environment than larger companies with existing infrastructure.

"Every company of every size faces this issue. It can't be avoided," Mr. Wohlgemut says. "But there are things successful companies do to manage it. Our research clearly shows that they really do act differently than those that aren't successful."

Research shows that the same commercial experts who are responsible for launch are given the opportunity to have an impact on the launch strategy and plan.

Mr. Wohlgemut says those who own the result get a say in the plan. Successful launches also stem from companies investing earlier in customer-facing activities, roles, and capabilities. ^{PV}



FOR BONUS CONTENT
USE YOUR QR CODE READER
OR GO TO
bit.ly/PV1017-LaunchPad



Must-Have Elements for a Successful Launch

Our experts outline the critical elements for a successful launch in today's complex launch environment.



KATHERINE CALVERT
Senior VP,
Industry Marketing, Out-
come Health

The most successful launches we've seen are patient-centered from the outset, and rooted in empathy. If you were living with the condition, what information would you need? How are you getting your information?

To answer these questions, the second critical component to success is approaching a launch from a first principles perspective, so that you can think beyond the traditional advertising model. Patients are becoming more active in their health decision making, and along with physicians, are getting their information differently.



JOHN MARCHESE
Managing Director,
Sudler NY

One of the initial must haves is securing the right tools and research to understand how that brand is being accepted. Being able to make iterative changes as the brand evolves within its environment takes a couple of essential things. No. 1 is integrating data not just at the enterprise level, but at the brand specific level and integrating the data in a way so it's possible to see how the brand is performing from a sales standpoint as well as from a physician and overall customer level — patients, consumers, payers, etc.



JEANNE MARTEL
President and Partner,
ClinicalMind LLC

A product's launch and its level of success may have wide-reaching impact on the trajectory of the product for some time. It is critical to have a roadmap for success. This is not a one-size-fits-all road map, especially in rare disease or specialty therapeutic areas in which the usual strategies aren't the most effective. These types of launches require the specific needs of the providers and patients to be front and center. It's tough to name just a few critical elements of a successful product launch, but I would say that

they include the following areas. First, managed markets planning is without a doubt one of the most important aspects of launching a drug in the current environment. The payers control the lever on patient access to new treatments, and the reality is upon us that this decision no longer sits squarely with the provider and patient. However, success does not come by simply obtaining a desirable standing on the formulary. It requires the development of materials for company executives and account managers to successfully communicate the value proposition that this treatment brings to the market. These materials should not be borrowed from the brand marketing teams and having HEOR data bolted on because this does not adequately establish the communication with payers on issues that they are most interested in, which does not exclusively include cost. Payer customers need a value story that is centered around their role within patient care and product availability, so these groups should be considered and planned for as a critical component of any launch.

Second, market development has been a critical element, but this can take on very different forms depending on the therapeutic area. For example, in rare disease, you may be introducing the first treatment to market that addresses a disease/condition with tremendous unmet need. The perception is that the market is there and waiting, but there may be many factors that blunt the market success of the treatment. Some providers may not be prepared within their practices to begin treating the volume of patients or perform the genetic testing or diagnostics needed to get patients on therapy. These providers may have little to no experience interacting with industry outside of clinical trials and may have a hesitation to engage. Or, the unmet need is there, but identifying the patients and connecting them with the appropriate providers may be difficult. Sometimes, these patients and the providers with experience in these small-population conditions are diffuse and not concentrated in the same areas. In other cases, you could be launching into a space in which there are no clear diagnostic criteria or treatment recommendations, so doing disease awareness education early on to establish the unmet need is so important. Telling the patient story and creating a compelling reason for providers to pay attention to what you have to offer patients will allow you to be heard above the noise of so many competing priorities

And third, understanding the treatment team is somewhat related to market development, but

it is also distinct. Gone are the days when only the prescribing provider is making decisions for his or her patients. In many cases, particularly again in rare disease and/or in conditions with multiple comorbidities, patients are going through a journey of care and have a myriad of experts who comprise their personal treatment team. Understanding who may play a primary role in a given product's treatment decision and the overall management of the patient through the course of disease is a core competency. Appreciating the role of each treatment team member, their position in the process, their impact on decision making, and their impact on compliance and adherence is an important way to close the loop from initial launch to ensuring that the brand and its customers are set up for longer-term success.

STEVEN MICHAELSON



CEO, Calcium

Complexity is in the eyes of the beholder. The seemingly endless array of options within an ever-expanding set of channels — or micro-channels — should not even be broached until the underlying drivers of trial use for the product are determined. First, brand partners need to determine how the brand budget should be allocated by key marketing drivers, for example education, awareness, activation, and loyalty. Each of these marketing drivers is, in turn, best operationalized through certain disciplines, such as advertising, sales, RM, and social media. By letting market drivers guide you toward certain disciplines and ultimately channels, you have effectively charted a road map that navigates you to the approaches that will best serve the needs of the brand.



JOY MORRELL
President,
JMorrellGroup

While we all believe that increasing patient engagement will lead to better outcomes, there is still something missing. The disconnect between companies is wide. A recent study stated that 71% of pharma companies believe they are patient-centric, but only 6% of patients agree. Where is the disconnect?

Integrating the learnings from R&D data, clinical trial insights from good patient engagement, behavioral data that will influence compliance, health outcomes data, and consumption data are all critical to product launch success. Beyond that, product launch teams need to assess how the product and its services collaborate with other partners in the health ecosystem and be able to answer the “how” in order to have a well-integrated, laser focused product offering. It is important to understand that root causes differ for everyone and that one size does not fit all.

The secret sauce is to truly understand what drives individual patient behavior. The root causes for patients will vary, even if they are diagnosed with the same disease state and it is imperative to recognize the value in the differences. Only then can you determine the most effective way to reach patients so they will have a great experience with your product. This recipe gives patients a reason to want to join your real estate, tell others “you need to try it, I did and this is my experience” and, most important, by delivering patient happiness, you have created the best reason to be more adherent and stay with you.



RYAN ROBERTS
CEO, Elandas

Being able to track and share market access developments quickly and efficiently is at the top of our list of must-haves for a successful launch.

Since a drug's launch trajectory is set within the first six months, it's critical to set up the right technology stack to support cross-functional knowledge sharing, collaboration, and speed up launch tracking.

One must-have system captures, validates and analyzes market access predictions during the pre-launch phase. This makes it easy for account managers to share expectations on how a drug will be covered. In the early weeks of a launch the product's access changes daily. The access tracker enables constant reporting, and identifies access restrictions and availability at point of sale. Leveraging local knowledge into a systematic tool is easy with the right technology.

Preparing early also means making sure you've got a process in place to avoid delays in getting pull-through materials to the field. Having pull-through templates pre-approved

and ready-to-go, and using an automated pull through system for customization and distribution — digital, mobile, or printed — can mean access tactics can be acted on within a couple of days, not weeks. It can make all the difference to the success of your launch.



DEBORAH SCHNELL
VP, Managing
Director, Taylor
Strategy Partners

According to a recent survey of 1,814 U.S. practicing physicians across 25 specialties, it was revealed that 74% of physicians use search engines weekly. A thorough and comprehensive understanding of how physicians consume information and what information is most important to them, to their practice, and to the patients they serve, is essential. In fact, in this same survey, a whopping 63% of doctors agreed in-person meetings with sales reps are more valuable when the focus is not on the product, but on information such as patient support and advocacy programs, outcomes, etc.

JAMIE SIDORE
VP, Managed Markets, QuintilesIMS

Brands need to have a view on how market access will evolve over the first 12 to 18 months of launch, both from a quantity of access perspective and on the cost of achieving that access. Lots of access is certainly possible, but the costs of securing that access might not be within the gross-to-net expectations of the company.

Brands also need to be able to demonstrate whether they are additive, or replacements for other therapeutic options. Every brand can develop some sort of cost-offset or budget impact model, and that's still required. But the payer account team or MSAs must be able to indicate how the drug is expected to be used. The default position from the payer/PBM mindset is that everything is additive and that means more costs to their systems.

There also needs to be a clinical story about why the drug exists. A pure me-too drug can't even count on discounting to get access or adoption, because the earlier products can simply offer a more modest discount off their much greater volume.

MARK STEVENS
Chief Strategy Officer, Publicis

There are quite a number of must haves for a successful launch in 2017, some of which include



a complete picture of the regulatory and commercial environment. Many call this the “stakeholder map.” This needs to be well thought out and the dependencies understood to simulate future events. A launch plan also needs a very robust forecast model to provide opportunities for the marketers to simulate the impact of market forces that are external to the current trends. Marketers need a thorough understanding of the reimbursement environment as well as a well-thought out pricing strategy that takes into account competitive environment, product positioning in the current protocol driven environment, and estimates the power of the stakeholders to leverage optimum pricing. Finally, there needs to be a comprehensive sales plan that encompasses all aspects of every customer facing strategy including patients and expected outcomes.



TIM WOHLGEMUT
Senior VP, TGaS Insights

The commercial model needs to be appropriate to the launch. Products don't sell themselves anymore, not that they ever really did. Today, it is impossible to launch well

without an integrated commercial approach that goes far beyond a well-trained salesforce and basic marketing mix. Payers, medical, Hub, trade, reimbursement, patient support, multiple field teams, and multichannel marketing all need to work together as a cohesive commercial model.

The relative importance of any of these elements shifts from asset to asset, so you see a wide variety of commercial models today. Marketers need to understand them all well to be effective. And, there needs to be a credible forecast.



DENIS WYRWOLL
VP, Business
Intelligence
Healthcasts

Targeting and segmenting are essential. Identifying the doctors who are stakeholders to the treatment and pinpointing the issues they care about right from the start are keys to successful commercialization.