

# E-Solutions as Part of a Multi-channel Strategy: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO REACH THE PHYSICIAN

*Integrated channel management offers an approach to combine e-solutions and traditional channels into a customized and cost-effective communications and optimization mix.*

**W**ith ever-increasing competition for healthcare providers' time, attention, and the escalating challenge of access, the traditional sales force model is challenged to match its historical returns. Understanding how physicians prefer to receive branded communications and other information allows sales and marketing resources to be carefully targeted for optimum returns.

In a recent interview, Peter Dussias, who is Executive Director, Integrated Channel Management Services, Commercial Solutions, at Quintiles, explained that integrated channel management offers an approach to combine e-solutions and traditional channels into a customized and cost-effective communications and optimization mix. This can be continuously monitored and updated across all channels, including sales representatives, allowing biopharma companies to drive prescription growth throughout a product's lifecycle in the most cost-effective and productive manner.

## What are the biggest competitive advantages companies can experience from adopting e-solutions?

E-solutions as part of an integrated channel management (ICM) program offer competitive advantages in multiple areas:

- » **Efficiency and effectiveness:** Saving time, reducing cost, and making field representatives more effective.
- » **Reach:** Getting to the key markets and to stakeholders that matter most to the success of the product; and reaching stakeholders wherever they are (online and offline) and by their preferred means.
- » **Flexibility and speed:** Deploying the right resource and channel mix where and when needed based upon channel preference.
- » **Impact:** Dynamic optimization of promotional spend at the individual physician level using channel receptivity data in an integrated campaign to drive sales.

## Contributed by



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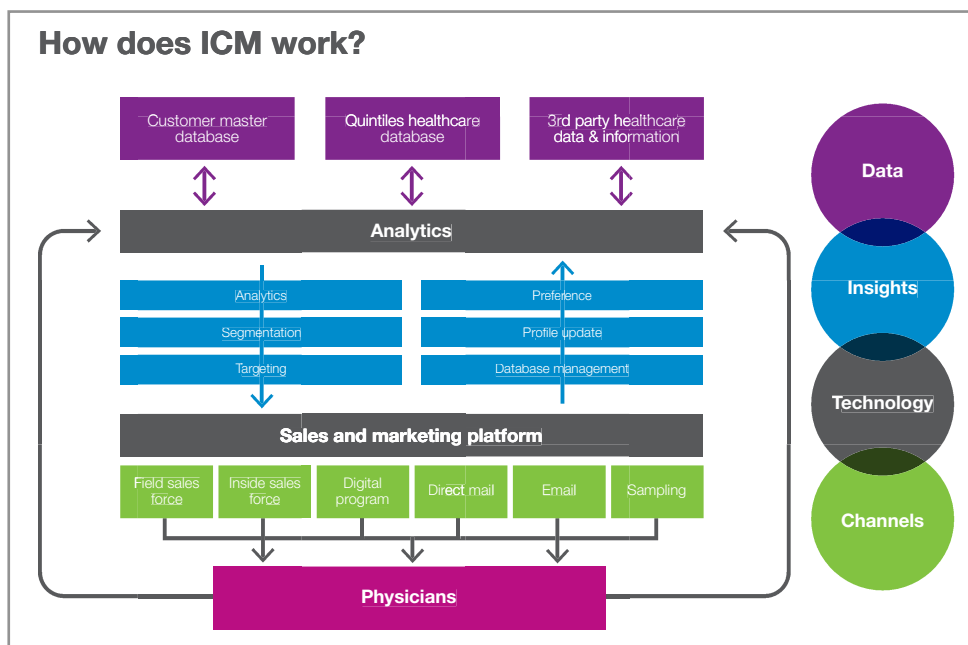
These approaches can be used from launch, when companies need to rapidly maximize sales efforts, through to loss of exclusivity, when promotional budgets may diminish, via a synchronized multi-channel approach that optimizes resource use.

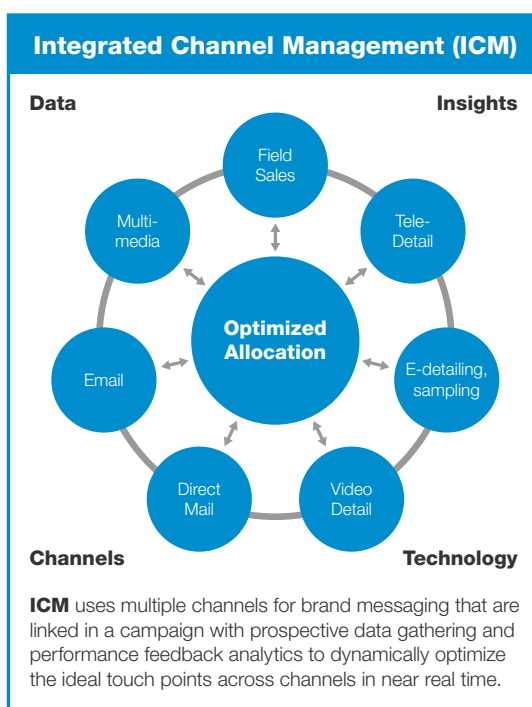
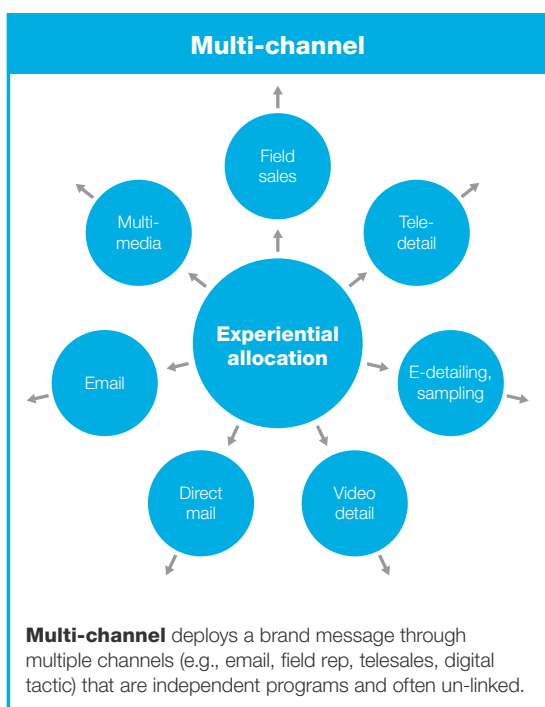
## How integrated are today's multi-channel strategies?

The short answer to this is, "not very." Today, competition for physicians' time has intensified and the traditional sales force model is challenged to deliver returns. Healthcare providers (HCPs) are overloaded with information from a myriad of sources, including e-channels, but in more of a one-size-fits-all approach. There is a pressing need for an analytically driven integrated communication approach to managing both traditional and e-channels that are available to organizations wishing to engage with physicians.

A systematic, four-step approach can be used to create and execute a dynamic, integrated multi-channel strategy. At a high level this entails:

## How does ICM work?





- » **Strategy assessment:** Development of a blueprint for repurposing or creating marketing materials tailored to each channel.
- » **Treatment plan:** Analysis of channel activity and Rx data, in combination with preference data, to design a baseline channel mix for target physicians.
- » **Campaign execution:** A dynamic campaign management system to execute channel communications to individual HCPs based on real time behavioral response.
- » **Continuous optimization:** Measurement of ongoing physician responses to both message and channel, allowing plans to be adapted to optimize engagement throughout the campaign.

This approach allows biopharma firms to respond to physician preferences at a given time, providing the information they want, in the format and via the channel of their choice.

### What is the difference between multi-channel and integrated channel management?

Multi-channel approaches deploy a brand message through multiple channels (e.g., email, field rep, tele-detailing, e-detailing, video detailing, direct mail, e-mail, digital media...) that are independent programs and often not linked.

In contrast, ICM uses multiple channels for brand messaging that are linked in a campaign with prospective data gathering and performance feedback analytics to dynamically optimize the ideal touch points across channels in near real time.

### What are the biggest opportunities and challenges to integrating e-solutions within an ICM strategy?

Perhaps the biggest opportunity is that the effectiveness of e-solutions within an ICM strategy can be measured and optimized using a channel receptivity scoring model that incorporates physicians' prescribing behavior. Channel preference is derived by measuring and weighting physician channel receptivity based on response. Scores are dynamic so each time a communication is sent, scores are updated based on response or non-response through a particular channel. The stronger the preference, the higher the score for a channel. Strength of preference score is a function of the number of responses and exposures in a given channel.

This approach coupled with a real-time campaign management system allows dynamic management of the communication process where an ongoing "mix-meter" is created to help inform "next step" marketing. The potential is to optimize the campaign and may result in significant productivity improvement while dramatically reducing overall brand spend.

Hurdles to integration include several channels to integrate, diverse stakeholders and players often with competing interests, range of technology platforms and analytics, as well as risk aversion and resistance to change.

### How does one integrate the field sales team with e-solutions?

The field sales team remains the most criti-

cal channel in an integrated campaign. Field sales resources can be used with e-solutions, with the sales rep as the "quarterback." The field team delivers core product messages and drives targets to digital content, which may be accessed via a personalized URL, for example. By utilizing an integrated campaign management system, the impact of the sales team and multi-channel promotion can then be measured on a weekly basis to determine the optimal resource allocation and ultimately leads to dynamic call planning where the field sales rep call schedule and messaging is coordinated with the timing

and content of multi-channel tactics required to deliver an impactful communication strategy. Over time, a customer master file can be built, including details of channel mix preferences, representing a valuable resource for planning launches and expanded indications.

### The way forward?

Given the complexities involved with integrating multiple channels it remains to be seen how rapidly the industry can evolve and adapt the communication mix and timing of brand messaging in near real time, including changes to the sales rep's call plan. Flexible "test and learn" approaches now underway will likely generate proof as to how well a new model can deliver on the goal to dynamically optimize promotional spend at the individual physician level across channels. **PV**

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