

Sales Training in TRANSITION

As the pharmaceutical industry transitions to new customer-centric models, a complex payer environment, and higher-level technology, the traditional sales representative role is shifting to that of a key account manager, and training models are evolving accordingly.

Trends such as the increasing influence of payers, the imminent patent cliff, ever-increasing promotional restrictions, and the rise of comparative effectiveness research are driving sales training professionals to adjust their focus and approach to training customer-facing reps and managers to succeed in the new environment.

During the 2010 annual meeting of the Society of Pharmaceutical and Biotech Trainers (SPBT), SPBT President Mike Capaldi noted that pharma “can’t continue to implement training in a linear fashion, relying solely on formal learning and being all things to all people.”

Mr. Capaldi, who is also associate VP, institutional affairs at Sanofi-Aventis, recommended that pharma retool its sales rep training group to serve as a “performance consultant that solves the most critical business needs in an adaptable manner.”

The customer-centric approach of key account management, driven by the information spin of closed-loop marketing, may offer the adaptation the industry needs to keep pace with the shifting healthcare landscape.

According to experts at Qforma, engaging community opinion leaders (COLs) who drive practice behaviors within their peer circles can build a broader, more diverse base of professional advocates with actionable relationships on the ground. They say these relationships will enhance the positive effect across sales and marketing initiatives, from speaker programs to PR to managed care pull-through. (To read more about COLs, please turn to From KOL to COL: Regional Influencers Are Critical to Commercial Model Re-invention.)

Novartis Global Sales Head Huw Tippet, who was recently interviewed for an industry report, defined key account management as focusing on mutual value and aligning business objectives with those of customers.

“This means understanding and supporting customers’ goals and priorities, choosing long-term relationships over short-term gain, partnering with customers with a business-to-business dialogue, focusing on creating tangible win-wins with customers, and demonstrating transparency to build trust,” Mr. Tippet adds.

Given the rep’s increasingly central role as a conduit for delivering reimbursement and patient services to customers, demand for well-trained sales personnel is actually expected to grow over the next several years.

“New pharmaceutical products, regulation changes, and new technology are changing the employment landscape,” observes Rhonda Dierberg, senior VP, skills certification, for the National Association of Pharmaceutical Representatives. “It doesn’t mean that we don’t need entry-level people; it’s just that we need industry-trained and educated applicants to apply.”

Training Becomes Academic

Experts believe that small group practices focusing on primary care will become less important to pharma over the next five years amid the continued rise of larger healthcare networks, retail health clinics, and institutional providers, all of which have more leverage with payers when it comes to influencing their coverage decisions.

Rather than simply focusing on communicating key product messages, handling objections, and delivering samples, sales reps need to become more effective at delivering solutions to help these practices operate more efficiently, such as reimbursement support, patient assistance, and patient adherence programs.

Rob Lytle, director, business development, at Verilogue, says arming reps with meaningful product- or patient-focused messages won’t make them more effective communicators.

Five Steps to Reinventing Training and Development

1. Align with business and strategic imperatives.

These can include the company’s pipeline, long-term goals, and strategies; commercial strategy and goals for sales, marketing, and managed markets; and coordination with affiliated groups such as medical affairs, compliance, and partner companies.

2. Conduct a situation analysis.

The baseline should include resources, capabilities, and programs; customer feedback; and brand life-cycle mapping.

3. Design an operational strategy.

This should include five or six strategic imperatives that specifically enable company and commercial goals, supported by tactics that are actionable, realistic, and time-phased.

4. Create annual plans.

In addition to input from training and development staff, these business plans should be reviewed by key stakeholders across departments to ensure buy-in, and should include individual goals and departmental scorecards.

5. Follow through with execution and refinement.

In addition to the previously mentioned scorecards, internal checkpoints, advisors, vendors, and training societies all can help keep the process on track.

Source: TGA Advisors, Re-inventing Training and Development as a Key Player in the New Commercial Environment. For more information, visit tgas.com.

VIEWPOINTS

Change Management for Success



While the role of training has traditionally focused on improving performance, the pace of change, coupled with today's financial pressures, necessitates a broader view. Training leaders must develop

models that support effective change management and incremental training through a continuous learning approach. Measurement systems that track key performance indicators will play an important role in aligning sales organizations with evolving commercial models. Companies that develop these capabilities will be well-positioned for growth.

PHILIP MCCREA, CEO, *ClearPoint*

Technology Improving



New technology and media are definitely changing the way we approach all communication. The quality of interactions is now more critical than the frequency of those interactions. It doesn't

matter if we're talking about reps, or HCPs, or other stakeholders. The questions become, what can I do differently? How can I engage and communicate with these stakeholders quickly and easily? How can I give them what they want right here and now? Technology, like video and the iPad, has given us a whole new set of tools to provide value and engagement.

MICHAEL J. DEPALMA, Executive VP, Innovation, *M3Health*

Digital Education



Digital media is the largest change impacting education. Self-paced, as well as live over the Web, training appeals to the busy schedules of today's associates. Convenience of location, cost of travel, and

lodging, not to mention the environmental savings will continue to push the technical limits of this method of education far into the future.

DAVID KOVALCIK, CEO, *PharMethod Inc.*

Training On Target



The rapidly shifting landscape will require professionals to have more on-demand access to critical information and personalized knowledge. Training will be delivered in shorter bursts and be more

targeted to the individual learner. Targeted content will become more relevant, particularly with respect to clinical or science-based information. This demand for more informal, less linear learning will significantly impact how training is created, delivered, and supported, especially as new cloud technologies emerge.

MICHELLE A. YOUNGERS, President and CEO, *ScienceMedia Inc.*

The E-evolution of E-Learning



Cost management for many companies already has them examining how they can conduct training cheaper and faster. For compliance training and product training many companies are already using

online learning. The existing e-learning options are still not the answer for management or leadership development, but over the next five years as the Web matures better learning models will evolve.

THOMAS MATTUS, President, *Successful Strategies International Inc.*

Technology for Skill Development



Data are showing an increased reliance on technology to deliver training and development solutions. While distance learning has leveraged technology for many years, most media — DVDs, online

learning modules, webinars — have focused primarily on the transfer of knowledge. Going forward, we see technology being used to enhance not only knowledge but also skill development. Current virtual classroom practices are just the beginning of dynamic, interactive tools designed to enhance the

knowledge and skills needed to perform in the new commercial environment.

JIM ELLIOTT, Director, Management Advisor, *TGaS Advisors*

Value a Premium



Consolidation and downsizing will continue to reshape the healthcare sector. Organizations will continue to shed reps and increase their use of contract organizations for sample and promotional material stocking

at physician's offices. Physicians will rely more heavily on the Internet as a primary source of product and disease state information. Access will remain a hurdle. As the industry reshapes itself we'll see more reps combining advanced science backgrounds with MBAs. Reps will not only need to know the disease state, patient types, and product attributes, but they'll need business skills to help customers understand how to better run their businesses and navigate the complicated payer markets. Gaining access through providing overall value to customers will be at a premium.

ROB LYTLE, Director of Business Development, *Verilogue Inc.*

Virtual Training



There is a new demand for virtual learning platforms. Companies are responding by leveraging technology to engage learners over a continual learning process that focuses on 20% theory and 80%

experiential application. On-demand and live webcasts, interactive online activities, coaching checklists, and comprehension tests will be more widely used over the next year. Over time, more training will be field-based, so arming district and regional managers with training tools that integrate customer communication platforms as part of the sales process will build more powerful relationships. Consistent processes for applying business acumen training to sales analytics data will help in making more strategic decisions.

CELESTE MOSBY, Regional VP, Life Sciences, *Wilson Learning*

“However, developing their linguistic intelligence to understand the dimensions and dynamics that occur within a business conversation will help them influence, manage, and extend their conversations, allowing their meaningful messages to be told,” he adds. “Utilizing a linguistic framework, reps can be better prepared to take advantage of the speaking and/or listening openings that occur naturally in any given conversation.” (To read more about improving business communications, please turn to Skill, Science and the Art of the Conversation.)

Analysts predict that academic medical centers will grow in importance in the coming years, given their high level of influence in the development of treatment pathways and guidelines, which can have great impact on pharma product use, as well as their involvement in clinical research and status as home to numerous influential KOLs.

The challenge in training personnel to call on AMCs is to ensure their efforts are coordinated to make each interaction an effective one. There is clearly strategic value in coordinating the AMC efforts of sales reps, medical science liaisons (MSLs), key account man-

agers, and top executives in a way that helps each stakeholder to be effective in his or her role.

In its white paper, Re-inventing Training and Development as a Key Player in the New Commercial Environment, TGA Advisors says the overall sales training and development universe is “in a state of flux, moving to a spectrum of initial, advanced, and continuous programs, training portals, mobile technologies, and learning management systems.”

Chris Goins, VP, management advisor, TGA Advisors, says performance improvement has evolved from an emphasis on knowledge and skill development — primarily the role of training and development — to a more holistic view to improve performance.

“Before initiating a training solution in this new environment, it is essential to ensure that employees know what’s expected of them and have the proper tools to perform, incentives are properly aligned, and managers are capable of coaching for performance,” he says. (To read more about the role reps will play in the future, please turn to Focus on Specialty Reps: From Information Source to Information Connector.) **PV**

EXPERTS



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that discovers, develops, produces, and markets therapies that enhance people’s lives. For more information, visit sanofi-aventis.us.



RHONDA DIERBERG. Senior VP, Skills Certification, National Association of Pharmaceutical Representatives, a trade association for

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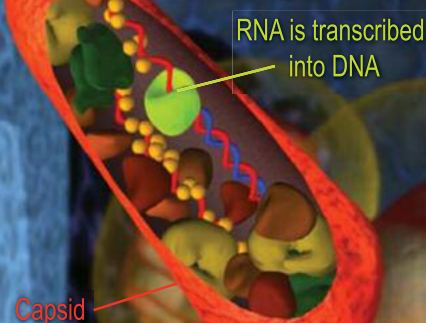
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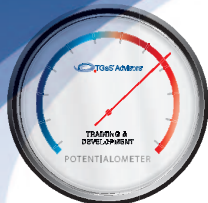
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As the pharmaceutical Commercial Model continues to rapidly evolve, pharma training and development groups may be struggling to keep up . . .

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How do other pharmaceutical companies do it?

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