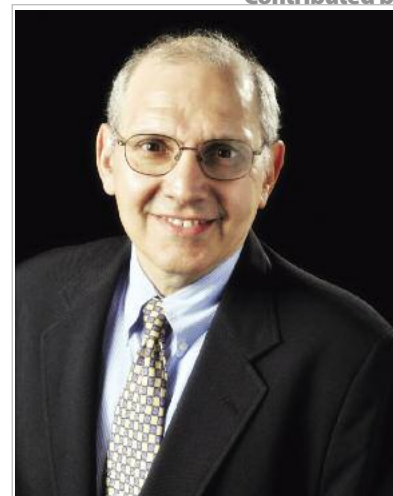




Five Keys to Successful MEDICAL AFFAIRS INNOVATION



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One of the best ways to attract, motivate and retain high-energy people with talent, ingenuity, drive and enthusiasm is to develop a culture focused on innovation excellence. An essential aspect of this culture at today's leading pharma companies is the ability to look across all aspects of their operations and identify, develop, execute and mainstream innovation initiatives. This applies not to just a few but to multiple initiatives each year.

Medical affairs is a key focus for this culture. While fresh ideas are critical, the creative thinking that builds and sustains the infrastructure essential to innovation is often overlooked. As we've learned from our My Virtual How (My VHow) Medical Affairs mini-benchmarks, such thinking produces efficiencies that are themselves innovative, support innovation in other areas and free up scarce resources.

By combining the Medical Affairs expertise of KnowledgePoint360 with TGaS Advisors' operational benchmarking and advisory experience, we identified areas of medical affairs open to streamlining to promote innovation. In the process, we defined five keys to successful innovation.

1. Innovation "Personality" of the Leader

This is paramount. The innovation leader must subordinate individual ego to the good of the enterprise and not become emotionally attached to any one initiative. This person must possess a thirst for knowledge of best practices and must look outside the organization and industry for ideas.

Innovative leaders take a strategic approach. One area, for example, is the strategy, design, development and use of new and evolving information sources, including pooled data, claims databases and electronic medical records for pharmaco-economic, safety, efficacy and comparative effectiveness mining.

2. Strong Work Ethic

Great ideas are the core of innovation. No less important is the effort required across the

organization to reflect and nurture the idea, bring it to pilot phase, test, evaluate, and finally mainstream — or kill — it. One area that demands both innovation and a strong work ethic is regulatory compliance. In querying medical publications professionals about guidelines, we found companies are working hard to achieve transparency and compliance. At the same time, we found a fair degree of variation on how to achieve it, signaling a need for innovative thinking on process and management.

3. Strong Executive Sponsorship

In the current value-conscious environment, senior leadership is looking increasingly to medical affairs. A recent VHow, for example, found that medical science liaisons (MSLs) in particular are evolving from a complementary field role to an indispensable resource for helping determine clinical value. This trend is expected to continue as healthcare costs rise and expectations of the comparative benefits of new entries into the marketplace increase. The ability to identify and leverage trends requires innovative thinking and strategic resourcing supported by strong executive leadership.

Strong executive sponsorship is marked by:

- Recurring time on senior management team meeting agenda
- Senior management team's awareness of the status of all innovation initiatives
- Budget commitment to evaluate initiatives
- Clear vision of innovation end points and success/failure criteria
- Appropriate recognition of innovation champions, celebrating successes as well as failures that generate organizational learning

4. Clear Innovation Evaluation Metrics

Too few innovation programs clearly define what constitutes success or failure. In medical affairs, for example, TGaS analysis identified such goals as the ability to move customer opinion, achieve real cost savings beyond headcount reduction and reduce cycle time for internal and external processes.

On another level, medical affairs leaders must develop quantitative and qualitative metrics to define the contribution, relevance and importance of medical affairs functions to the organization, not just activity but value provided.

5. Well-Defined Process to Mainstream/Stop Innovation Initiatives

Regardless of whether an innovation initiative is mainstreamed into routine operational programs or shut down, leaders need well-defined roadmaps. Criteria:

- Clear turnover and transition plans
- Adequate budget to assure transition
- Realistic expectations of organizational acclimation
- Documenting innovation — what went right and why, organizational lessons, pitfalls

Medical affairs planning, management and execution are critical, high-profile functions with increasingly complex regional, national and global demands. Stimulating and rewarding innovative thinking is essential. The five keys to innovation can help medical affairs groups fulfill the 21st century injunction, "Innovate to Prosper," with ever greater creativity, efficiency and productivity. **PV**

TGaS Advisors is a provider of benchmarking and advisory services for pharmaceutical commercial operations and a division of KnowledgePoint360, a global leader in healthcare information services.

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