

A Meeting OF LIKE MINDS

Amid the debate over rep counts, specialty focus, and adoption of new technologies, the salesforce's central mission remains constant: to achieve a meaningful face-to-face engagement with prescribing physicians.

Pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies face an increasingly challenging landscape in which to manage and grow their business. Kim Catania-Mishuck, senior director, commercial training for Acorda Therapeutics, cites increasing regulatory requirements such as the Sunshine Act that govern meetings with physicians and the continued disproportionate ratio of sales reps to healthcare providers as contributing to the ever-shrinking window of time in which reps are able to access key customers.

“Smaller companies focusing on a specific specialty, or those that are committed to a specific therapeutic area, can concentrate on the healthcare provider’s educational needs, rather than following the outdated product-centric model,” Ms. Catania-Mishuck says. “By offering value-added services, such as educational opportunities for both the provider and the patient, the company can become a true partner and resource to healthcare professionals and their practices.”

Michelle Lynch, senior director, sales learning & development at Janssen Biotech, believes the most effective approach for reps in this environment is a customer-centric rather than product-centric model.

“Today’s representative should adhere to a value-based approach that goes beyond simply selling the features and benefits of the product,” Ms. Lynch explains. “To make this a reality, sales learning and development organizations have to focus on building crucial skill competencies, such as reimbursement and payer acumen, consultative selling, and clinical selling skills. Ultimately, the representative must be able to address the clinical as well as cost and affordability messages with their customers to make it a value-based call.”

According to Tim Ryan, executive director, prescription medicine training and development, Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, companies will always need reps with clinical expertise and acumen, but it is just as important for today’s reps to understand the business of healthcare.

“This means understanding how quality



ELLIE ECKHOFF Sunovion Pharmaceuticals

metrics and coordinated care will influence how a healthcare provider offers patient care and under what business model it operates,” Mr. Ryan says. “To be successful, we have to bring solutions that are more tied to that rather than to a solution that assumes one pill fits all the needs of every doctor and patient.”

“Business acumen is becoming more relevant in that it helps deliver more sound business practices to enhance patient treatment, productivity, and efficiency within the office,” notes Brian Groves, deputy director, sales training and development, Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals. “Also, anything we can do to enhance the sales consultant’s specialty aptitude, around both product and therapeutic class, certainly helps in achieving a balanced partnership between rep and physician.”

Ellie Eckhoff, senior director, sales training and development, Sunovion Pharmaceuticals, says good partnerships begin with the representative having the right mindset.

“Our training and development program focuses on the knowledge and skills to ensure proficiency, credibility, and a relationship strategy that builds trust and adds value in a way that matters to physicians,” Ms. Eckhoff says.

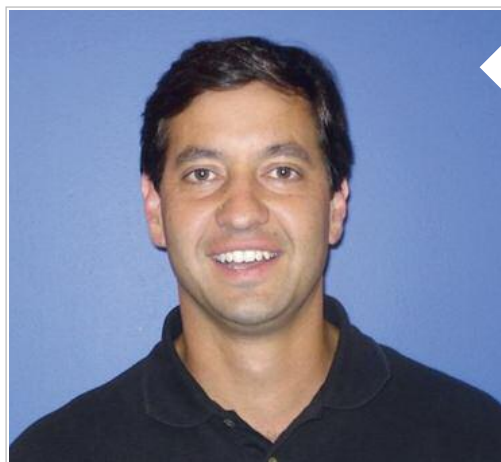
Equally critical, according to Ms. Lynch, is training sales representatives to better understand the mindset of the physician.

“By continuing to focus on understanding our customers’ needs and objectives and adapting to a changing landscape, we create strong partnerships that ultimately better serve the patient.”

Developing an Effective Hospital Salesforce

The U.S. hospital marketplace is made up of multiple market segments that each has its own organizational and decision-making structure for formulary decisions. Indeed, hospital formulary decisions are not only influenced by medical professionals focused on efficacy and safety, but by administrative personnel focused on operational efficiency and cost.

To successfully serve the U.S. hospital marketplace, pharmaceutical salesforces have to understand the nuances inherent in each hospital type to navigate the path to successful formulary placement. Findings from the Best Practices study, Sales Force Effectiveness: Uncovering How Pharmaceutical Companies Serve the U.S. Hospital Marketplace, reaffirm that pharmaceutical salesforces cannot take a one-size-fits-all approach to serving the U.S. hospital marketplace. For instance, within the community hospital segment, the traditional sales rep model remains preferred, whereas within the network segments (i.e., integrated delivery networks) and VA hospitals, the account executive model is used most often. For more information, visit best-in-class.com.



TIM RYAN Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals

“Companies will always need reps with clinical expertise and acumen, but it is just as important for today’s rep to understand the business of healthcare.”

ting-edge technology enhancements and tools have been added to the sales rep toolbox, chief among them the iPad and similar tablet-style computers. These computers are popular with providers as well; according to Manhattan Research data, 30% of physicians had iPads within a year of its March 2010 launch, and that number likely has skyrocketed in the year since.

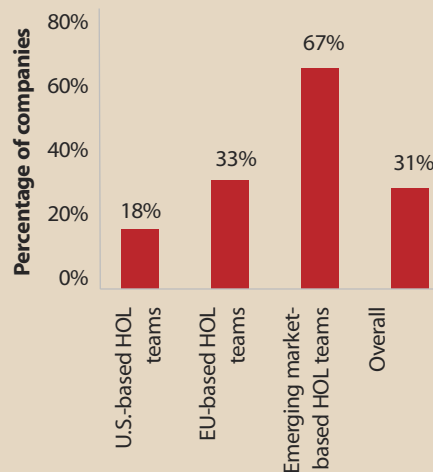
Ms. Catania-Mishuck notes that these tools, along with effective training, can provide reps with the ability to harness real-time information to disseminate to their accounts.

“Sales professionals with a tablet or iPad can engage a healthcare practitioner in an interactive discussion, for example, by sharing a video of a product’s impact,” she says. “This is not just a glossy detail aid, but real patients experiencing the benefits of using a product, which can shift the treatment paradigm and mindset of the healthcare practitioner.”

Industry experts stress that the content, not the technology, remains most critical to physicians, especially when it comes to detailing.

“True partners focus on their goals and the goals of their customers and then provide useful information and resources to achieve mutual success,” Ms. Eckhoff says. “This may include new information on disease states, product

Percentage of Companies Whose HOLs and MSLs Call on the Same Clients



Source: Cutting Edge Information, Health Outcomes Liaisons: Managing a Field-Based Team that Speaks the Payer Language. For more information, visit cuttingedgeinfo.com.

knowledge, payer landscape, and savings programs. These resources need to be delivered in a manner that meets physicians’ needs.”

As one example, Ms. Eckhoff cites a na-

“We have to consider the type of learner that each customer represents and his or her unique style,” Ms. Lynch explains. “These personalized elements require some non-traditional training so that sales organizations can become more customer-centric. All of these learning approaches must then be adjusted to fit the continuously evolving technological environment so we can take advantage of the ever-changing and progressing tools and media available for teaching sales representatives and interacting with physicians.”

New Tools for the Trade

Over the past few years a plethora of cut-

EXPERTS

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Pharmaceutical Companies committed to delivering medically sound and accurate medical information that achieves the goal of

improved outcomes for patients and their families and caregivers. For more information, visit janssenmedicalinformation.com.



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tional satellite broadcast hosted by Sunovion that featured leading psychiatrists discussing schizophrenia. The program featured a live Q&A session, which encouraged dialogue and discussion among U.S. psychiatrists.

“By continuing to focus on understanding our customer’s needs and objectives and adapting to a changing landscape, a strong partnership helps to ultimately better serve the patient,” she says.

Mr. Groves observes, however, that a tool is limited to the value of the person using it.

“If an individual doesn’t have the skill or ability to deliver knowledge and insight in an effective manner, the tool itself becomes meaningless,” he says. “Sometimes the focus is too much on the initial ‘ah!’ factor of a new tool or

technology, when in fact the focus should be spent more heavily on how to use that tool to deliver a wow factor that’s sustained over time.”

Mr. Ryan says many companies that have launched iPads have been in awe of the technology, while lacking an effective strategy for applying that technology to the learner’s needs.

“Companies need to allow performer support and training needs to take precedence, and let the technology be a tool rather than the driver,” he says. “We recommend a blended learning approach that includes understanding the learner’s needs and having a predesignated strategy on how to use technology, including the iPad, for the pharma salesforces.”

Ms. Eckhoff says to be successful, she believes sales representatives must have access to technology and data that help them understand their territory and the market dynamics that impact their customers.

“Our training program focuses heavily on building very strong business acumen for our sales representatives, and then provides them with the tools to analyze their territory,” she says. “Additionally, we are working toward a 360-degree view of the customer to determine the best approach to engage and assist them via personal or nonpersonal promotion. Delivering business tools via technology is not enough — the most successful representatives also take ownership of their development to gain additional strategic insight and skills.”

“Ultimately, the key is not just the solution being employed, but training managers and representatives to identify and understand territory opportunities based on the data that are being presented,” says Matthew Rowland, director, customer relationship management for Janssen Pharmaceuticals. “Scenario-based training allows employees to understand the technology while being actively engaged in uncovering the types of opportunities that are pertinent to them. This opens the door for

proper communications and consultative education.”

Employing the Outcomes

Outcomes research, which is increasing in importance, focuses on the benefits, risks, and costs of treatments in the real world under actual conditions of use that consider patient types, preferences, and health behaviors, as opposed to ideal conditions within highly controlled clinical trials.

However, observes Catherine Tak Piech, VP, health economics and outcomes research, Janssen Scientific Affairs, due to regulatory evidence requirements, much of this research can only be shared through scientific exchange or in response to an unsolicited request for information from a healthcare provider.

“Optimal salesforce training should therefore include an understanding of outcomes research, the ability to identify unsolicited requests for information on outcomes research, and the process by which the sales rep can assist the healthcare provider in obtaining a response from a scientific representative of the company,” Ms. Piech says. “Having an informed view of what happens in actual use will then enhance the discussion of patient care.”

“Today’s top-performing representatives are confident in sharing approved clinical data from studies that demonstrate to the healthcare practitioner where a product may address a patient’s unmet needs,” Ms. Eckhoff says.

Mr. Groves adds that outcomes research helps establish greater credibility when supported by strong, scientifically validated tools.

“It really helps get the sales consultant and the healthcare provider where they need to be to make the decision as to patient care,” he says.

Because outcomes research deals with aspects of the healthcare system, it plays a role in the care and the well-being of patients.

Developing Strong Health Outcomes Liaisons Teams

With health outcomes liaisons (HOLs) in high demand, life-sciences companies must offer a competitive salary package and a career map to attract and retain effective HOLs, according to recent research from Cutting Edge Information.

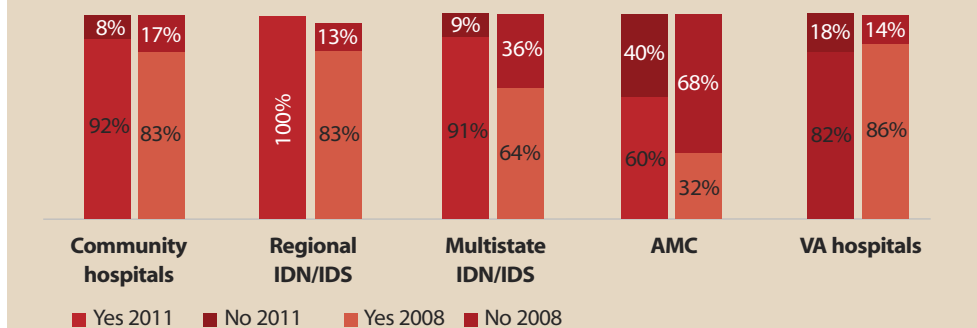
The study, Health Outcomes Liaisons: Managing a Field-Based Team that Speaks the Payer’s Language, shows the financial benefit of increased experience. While salary increases at some companies are gradual, at one company, an entry-level HOL can start at \$85,000 and progress to almost \$200,000 after five years.

HOL staffing poses a special challenge because although the position is in high demand, it also calls for individuals with difficult-to-find assets: knowledge in health economics, experience in clinical research operations, strong interpersonal and presentation skills, and a willingness to travel regularly. Without a competitive salary package, companies will find it difficult to fill HOL positions, the study cautions.

Beyond salary packages, Cutting Edge Information says companies must also develop pathways for professional advancement to keep liaisons engaged in their work. Given that HOLs are a relatively new function — the average age of HOL groups in the study was only five years — career mapping is a step that only a few companies have fully developed. Without tracks for HOLs to follow as they gain experience and expertise, they may become restless and begin looking elsewhere for responsibility.

For more information, visit cuttingedgeinfo.com.

Q: Which hospital market segments does your hospital sales group service?



Source: Best Practices, Sales Force Effectiveness: Uncovering How Pharmaceutical Companies Serve the U.S. Hospital Marketplace. For more information, visit best-in-class.com.

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“If sales professionals are trained to educate healthcare practitioners, they are now a resource and provide value by partnering to benefit the healthcare practitioner’s patients,” Ms. Catania-Mishuck says.

Mr. Ryan says going forward, validated outcomes research used in a compliant manner will drive providers to make more efficient and evidence-based decisions.

“When representatives are able to effectively

and compliantly communicate the why and how of the outcomes research, it will help physicians coordinate care in a cost-effective manner that ties to the quality metrics to which they are being held accountable,” he says. **PV**

VIEWPOINTS



PHILIP MCCREA

CEO
Clearpoint

Learning Objectives: Priority One

With the surge in digital health education programs delivered both internally and externally, pharmaceutical companies have a great opportunity to drive changes in attitude, behavior, and skills in real time. However, without clearly defined learning objectives and an understanding of the environment in which the programs will be consumed, too many well-intentioned investments fail to deliver tangible results. Analytics driven by surveys, assessments, and educational games are critical to long-term success as they allow modifications and enhancements throughout the life cycle of a program.



MICHELLE O'CONNOR

President and CEO
CMR Institute

Knowledge is Power

Expanding representatives' knowledge base is absolutely essential to adding value to the rep/physician relationship. Representatives who understand the complex issues affecting healthcare and the way physicians practice bring more value and credibility to the relationship. Take, for example, treatment pathways. Since a growing number of physicians are relying on these pathways to guide their decisions, representatives who understand how these pathways are influencing their customers will be better able to position their products appropriately in discussions with clinicians.

Outcomes Expectations

The challenge for companies is knowing how to ensure that representatives will relate patient

outcomes information in an appropriate, compliant, and ethical way. And this is where training and simulations become so important. One strategy might center on enhancing the representatives' ability to use clinical reprints that demonstrate cost-effectiveness. Another approach is to expand training in evidence-based medicine and planning evidence-based sales calls. So while representatives should have a thorough understanding of outcomes measurements, they must also know their limitations.



ELLEN LEINFUSS

Senior VP, Life Science
EduNeering, a UL Company

Reach and Timeliness

Adding a Web-based technology to a healthcare practitioner (HCP) program improves reach and timeliness by delivering a continuing learning process tailored to an individual's role or knowledge level, rather than a one-and-done class. Additionally, Web-based HCP educational programs deliver a better consultative experience, demonstrated in improved KPIs. Relevant and timely educational content is pushed to HCPs based on demographics and other prescribing data. Valuable HCP feedback is collected, analyzed, and shared with sales reps.



FRED MARSHALL

CEO and Founder
Quantum Learning

Practical Practice Solutions

A physician's practice is really a system of diagnosis, prior authorization, and treatment and the way to become a value-added partner is to provide practical resources that help that system work better for your product. Most brand teams focus their reach and frequency efforts on the treatment decision. Instead they

should focus on the end-to-end treatment process by providing stakeholder-specific tools that reduce or eliminate barriers to the appropriate use of your products.

iRevolution

The new iPad could play a revolutionary role, but most companies will simply push the same old difficult-to-use territory reports and the same boring voice-over-text learning modules through the iPad with little or no improvement in outcome. The best companies are increasing their training and IT budgets to fully leverage the powerful iPad interface and use new tools such as iBooks to dramatically improve learning, action planning, and face-to-face impact.



CELESTE MOSBY

Regional VP, Life Sciences
Wilson Learning Corp.

Real-Time Feedback

Physicians' needs when caring for patients can be very different, so representatives who want to build deeper face-to-face and virtual value-based relationships need to understand the importance of giving real-time guidance that can be immediately applied to increase patient outcomes. Because of the increased use of social media, patients are now becoming more informed about their healthcare so representatives can differentiate themselves by providing physicians with a valuable stream of continual information and tools that support the demanding and fast-changing healthcare environment. This information must be of a product- and non-product-specific nature and should be customized to the needs of a physician's patient population. Representatives who leverage and communicate with physicians by developing a strategic partner approach will add value to every customer interaction, while fostering continual brand growth.

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