

Rethink your commercialization strategy

Welcome to the PharmaVOICE Webcast Network.

In this episode, I meet with Glen Martin, Vice President, Manufacturer Commercialization Strategies, AmerisourceBergen. We talk about emerging industry trends in commercialization practices and how they can help manufacturers when they're on their commercialization journey with a new product.

I'm Dan Limbach, your host and producer of the PharmaVOICE Webcast Network.

Dan: Welcome to the podcast program, Glen.

Glen: Thanks, Dan. A pleasure to join you today.

Dan: The pleasure is all mine. So let's start out with a high level overview. Tell us a little bit about the Manufacturer Commercialization Strategies team at AmerisourceBergen, what's your role and how do you help manufacturers?

Glen: Yeah thanks, Dan. So I am the Vice President of Manufacturer Commercialization Strategies at AmerisourceBergen. We refer to our team internally as the MCS team. What makes this team so valuable to the commercialization process is we are aware of where the AmerisourceBergen businesses are reimagining solutions to confront different things like market forces, patient challenges and much, much more. And most importantly, we know how to bring all of these solutions together to create a commercialization strategy that's going to enable one's product to see its full potential.

For many manufacturers, working with a single point of contact is like having a dedicated executive level commercial strategy consultant that can evaluate your needs from an end to end perspective and help you design your commercialization strategy and journey along the way. As we are designing a strategy, we will then pull in the appropriate solution experts within AmerisourceBergen to make sure that we are actually maximizing your launch potential.

Dan: Excellent. So let's talk about what differentiates your team. What special skills and experience does the MCS team bring to your engagements with manufacturers?

Glen: I think the keyword there, Dan, is experience. There are certainly skills which I'll address in a minute, but from an experience perspective, the team has a tremendous amount of experience in commercialization launch needs, identifying them, understanding them and positioning them.

Also, they come at it from different perspectives. We have individuals on the team that come from the patient community and have actually worked with patients. We have individuals on the team that come from the consulting services world, the outsourced services and outsourced field teams world, and there's a significant amount of experience in complex channel strategy solutions.

And last but not least, we have team members that also have a perspective of working at a manufacturer, which I think is critical to the overall solution and understanding what a manufacturer's needs are.

So if you take these perspectives and you put them all together like any good team, we're all bringing different skill sets to the table, and I think it really helps strengthen the overall solution and the collaboration. It's certainly been very well received by the manufacturers. We've heard that time and time again relative to the skill sets, but most important of all the skills is it really does require leadership and executive level presence.

These positions are very challenging. You're being asked to navigate the complexities of everything we have within AmerisourceBergen. At the same time, you're being asked to navigate the complexities of everything at a manufacturer, what their needs are, what their functions are and putting together the best solutions to meet their patient needs.

We could be working with a small startup company where you're only working with a select few individuals that are making decisions and budget holders. Or it could be working with a very large manufacturer. In that scenario, it could be 10, 20, 30 or even more individuals that are making decisions relative to their commercial launch. Being able to have that executive level presence is an attribute that is required for these roles and engagements to be successful.

Dan: It sounds like a very flexible team. So let's shift gears a little bit. We love talking about industry trends. What are some of the commercialization services you're seeing innovation or emerging trends in?

Glen: The first one that comes mind and it's applicable to the time we're living in right now is direct to patient logistics for at home clinical trials. It continues to improve treatment accessibility by bringing medications directly into the patients' homes. Treatment at home contains all the same inherent variables of launching a clinical trial for a specific therapy such as temperature control issues, drug administration and obviously the chance for potential adverse events.

The next step in working with a vendor, if you will, that is operating in this space of direct to patient logistics that you need to consider is how to manage these variables by utilizing expert logistics and patient support services. Ultimately, keeping the patient at the center of the clinical trial approach is the most important now more than ever in our evolving healthcare ecosystem do we need services that allow the business of healthcare to move forward despite or navigating through the virtual world that we're currently living in.

I would also like to add there's another area that we're seeing increased focus from manufacturers and that's from an outsourcing perspective. We see manufacturers moving more and more towards an outsourced approach in many of the services or solutions that they would formerly have had in-house.

There's two that come to mind that we're seeing a significant amount of interest from manufacturers. It would be regulatory consulting outsourced services and pharmacovigilance or drug safety. Regulatory consulting is a need for organizations to have early planning and execution all the way through the commercial journey. And from a drug safety perspective it's a need that will be built in throughout the clinical trials and commercialization process as are significant safety requirements that manufacturers need to adhere to. And with the amount of infrastructure required in both these areas, it's no surprise that we're seeing manufacturers move more towards an outsourced model.

Dan: Those all seem like some pretty positive innovations and trends which is great news for the industry. The other thing that we really love talking about are real world examples of solutions being implemented. So can you share any examples of how your team makes the commercialization journey smoother or easier for manufacturers?

Glen: Yeah. Dan, we've used this commercialization approach to help manufacturers of all sizes navigate their commercialization journey. We've done it with startup companies, mid-sized companies and very, very large manufacturers, and we've done it effectively at all those levels. The voice of the customer comes through loud and clear from the manufacturer. It is well thought out. It is a strategic approach and it's holistic.

We actually help the manufacturer in a sense that they're not having to navigate multiple contact points within our organization. They're able to bring their questions, their ideas, their potential solutions to a central point of contact and then we take that and work across our organization to ensure that we have thought through all the aspects of commercialization, and it's been very well received and supported by our manufacturers.

Dan: That's excellent. So let's talk about where the rubber meets the road now. Can you describe the process your team uses to help identify solutions that would benefit manufacturers?

Glen: Yeah. So it really does start with consultation. It's a conversation that we initially have with the manufacturer to uncover specific information relative to their product. We want to understand what the patient population is, understand a little bit more about the therapeutic area and where the product is going to be administered, the site of care, and what's it going to look like from a reimbursement perspective. What we're essentially doing during that consultation process is we're gathering attributes relative to that specific product.

We use a proprietary tool that we called the product signature tool, which visually looks like an EKG readout. And it's made up of, what we believe from our experience in helping companies launch products, 13 of the most impactful or influential commercialization attributes that we need to look at and we'll take the manufacturer on a journey through their product signature. And what that does is it allows us to then take those attributes and where the product sits within each of those attributes to

guide us through the 70 plus commercialization solutions that we have within our organization. And that's where the plan starts to get put into action, Dan.

So every product has its own signature. We're able to look at that signature and what services that we should be talking with the manufacturer about that we believe will help them to optimize their commercial launch.

The other advantage of the process is we're able to look at other products that are in that therapeutic category. So they're able – the manufacturer is able to understand how they can differentiate their product from, let's say, like products or maybe they're not like products, but they treat the same diseases and they're still able to make decisions that allow for differentiation from other products that are currently on the market.

Dan: Outstanding. So finally Glen, I know launching a new product it can be an arduous and time consuming process. So how early in the commercialization journey should manufacturers start working with your team?

Glen: Dan, this is a really interesting question because oftentimes when we do engage with a manufacturer, whether it's they sought us out or we sought them out, one of the things that we hear from them is they're not ready to talk about a specific service or solution because they feel as though it's too early in the commercialization timeline to begin discussions. I can't tell you how many times we had engaged with manufacturers where that topic has come up, and in reality the way that we would project out a commercial timeline it's actually a little bit late or very late to be engaging in that particular solution, topic or service.

So in closing, you're not engaging with us too early. As a matter of fact, most times we're probably getting together a little bit too late in the process. So being more proactive if it's an opportunity or a possibility for you, I do believe would certainly help.

Dan: Okay. So the sooner the better, that makes a lot of sense. Glen, I want to thank you for sharing your thought leadership and expertise with us today.

Glen: Yeah, Dan, as I said in the beginning, I really do appreciate the opportunity. So thank you very much.

And that does it for this episode. For more information about AmerisourceBergen, visit amerisourcebergen.com. And don't forget to check out our other podcasts, white papers, webinars, virtual panels, videos and more at PharmaVOICE.com.

Until next time, I'm Dan Limbach.

