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# Advancing Pharmaceutical Sales Models with Innovative Tele-sales Solutions

Field Representatives and Pharmaceutical Contact Centers  
Partner to Increase Share of Voice

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# Pharmaceutical sales models: New approaches required

Life sciences companies are facing a significant shift in how their products are marketed and sold. In the past nine years the number of pharmaceutical sales representatives has decreased by 38%<sup>1</sup>. The current trends in drug research are focused on personalized medicine and targeted therapeutics, which are primarily prescribed by specialists. The increased focus on specialty pharmaceuticals will continue to keep the size of sales forces smaller as they do not require the large sales forces that blockbuster products prescribed by primary care physicians do.

Additionally, there is a consistent decline in sales representatives' access to physicians. According to the ZS Associates AccessMonitor™ survey conducted in July 2014, 49% of US physicians had restrictions on sales representatives, and that number was an increase from 23% in 2008<sup>2</sup>.

There are many sales channels life sciences companies can deploy to engage healthcare providers (HCPs) about their products including live in-office detailing by sales representatives, e-mail blasts, websites, microsites, tele-detailing, and e-detailing. Healthcare providers are using multiple channels to receive information about products and devices.

There is a need for new ways to engage HCPs in sales conversations. This new environment requires a customer centric model that supports sales interactions through the channels that HCPs prefer and at their convenience.

This white paper explores tele-sales solutions, which are effective in developing relationships with HCPs and their staff, and providing solutions that meet their individual needs. Also included is a case study highlighting how Tunstall has partnered field sales representatives with dedicated pharmaceutical contact center liaisons to enhance relationships and deliver valuable educational content and resources.

### Specialty pharmaceuticals require different commercial models

Spending on specialty pharmaceuticals is on the rise and is expected to increase from approximately \$55 billion in 2005 to \$1.7 trillion in 2030. In 2005 specialty pharmaceuticals made up approximately 24% of a health plan's total drug spending, and by 2030 it is estimated that specialty pharmaceuticals will comprise an estimated 44% of a health plan's total drug spend<sup>3</sup>.

A standard definition for the term "specialty pharmaceutical" does not exist. Key audiences and stakeholders oftentimes have slightly different definitions. In an article in *PharmaVOICE* magazine there are four key elements identified that define a specialty pharmaceutical product<sup>4</sup>:

- Treat complex chronic and/or life-threatening condition
- Have a high cost per unit
- Require special storage, handling, and administration
- Involve a significant degree of patient education, monitoring, and management

Specialty pharmaceuticals require different marketing and sales models than blockbuster products prescribed by primary care physicians. PricewaterhouseCoopers identified six unique features of specialty pharmaceuticals including<sup>5</sup>:

- Broader range of activity and greater potential to generate an immune response
- Prescribed by specialists rather than general practitioners
- Increased expense that attracts more scrutiny before being approved for reimbursement, which is crucial since most patients cannot afford to pay for the product on their own
- Oftentimes includes a companion diagnostic to determine disease sub-types and determine appropriate treatment
- Billing is complex as many specialty pharmaceuticals may be reimbursed under different reimbursement procedures or centers. For example, specialty pharmaceuticals may be reimbursed under a payer's medical benefit rather than the pharmaceutical benefit
- Supply chain considerations as many specialty pharmaceuticals must be ordered as needed, rather than kept in stock because of expense and short shelf lives. Also, specialty pharmaceuticals require great care in shipping and storage because they are much more fragile

Marketing and selling specialty pharmaceuticals requires sales representatives that are highly knowledgeable about the condition and science so they can appropriately communicate benefits and risks to highly educated HCPs. Also, specialists are focused on receiving value from sales interactions, so it is imperative that sales representatives know what individual specialists value. Furthermore, treatment with specialty therapies tends to be more difficult to manage. Very often patients need extensive education on treatment administration whether via IV infusion, injection, or oral medication to ensure they understand and adhere to treatment regimens.

## New sales models are needed

There are many sales channels life sciences companies can deploy to engage HCPs about their products including live in-office detailing by sales representatives, e-mail blasts, websites, microsites, tele-detailing, and e-detailing. Healthcare providers are taking advantage of these options and are using multiple channels to receive information about products and devices. Digital channels are providing opportunities to engage with HCPs on topics that are important to them, through the channels they prefer, and at their convenience.

While approximately 49% of physicians have restrictions on sales representative's access, approximately 15% of these "no see" physicians are engaging in non-personal promotion including digital channels, direct mail, speaker programs, and other promotional channels outside of the sales force, according to ZS Associates AffinityMonitor™ 2014 Executive Summary. Additionally, the AffinityMonitor 2014 Executive Summary reports that digital promotion improves engagement among physicians who grant sales representatives access to their office. Exactly 25% of physicians that are accessible to sales representatives also engage with at least one non-personal promotional channel<sup>1</sup>.

Engaging HCPs is much more complex than whether or not a physician allows sales representatives access to their office or not. According to the AffinityMonitor 2014 Executive Summary, physician preferences for engagement include:

- 23% of HCPs prefer to engage with field sales representatives in person, and will not engage in sales discussions in any other channel
- 38% of HCPs are likely to engage with a field sales representative via personal or non-personal channels (ie, over the phone, via video conference, or other digital channels), but NOT both
- 25% of HCPs will engage with pharmaceutical companies through both personal and non-personal channels
- 35% of all HCPs in the US can be reached through digital channels

With multiple channels for receiving information, the role of the sales representative is evolving and becoming increasingly more important. Sales representatives will continue to have a critical role in communicating with physicians about products, but the ways in which they connect with HCPs will change significantly. In a customer centric model, the role of sales representatives will evolve to lead efforts and coordinate the content, channels, and timing of communications.

Successful sales models in the future will also require cross-functional collaboration and communication between research & development, pricing, marketing, and sales in order to ensure the information needs and views of HCPs, payers, patients, and caregivers are shared and incorporated into the development process.

### The evolving role of field sales representatives to deliver value

There is increasing pressure on sales representatives to deliver value. HCPs have less-time for in-office interactions with sales representatives and as a result will only meet with those representatives that provide value to their practice.

To ensure valuable interactions with HCPs, field sales representatives need superior scientific and pharmacoeconomic knowledge, and need to communicate the value of the product in these areas. Sales representatives need to understand the regulatory and compliance issues faced by individual physician's practices, and tailor their discussions to account for these realities. Ultimately, sales representatives want to nurture relationships with the physician and the office staff. Seek to understand the unique needs of the practice, provide solutions that meet these needs, and pay attention to timely follow up on information, materials, or samples.

Today's environment requires a customer centric model that drives sales interactions through the channels healthcare providers prefer and at their convenience. The first challenge is determining the channels and opportunities individual HCPs prefer. Face-to-face interactions with HCPs and sales representatives provide opportunities to determine the channels individual HCPs prefer to engage in sales interactions with life sciences companies.

The second challenge in adopting a customer centric model is integrating all the personal and non-personal channels so information and messages are impactful and complementary. Sales representatives can play a leading role in orchestrating these interactions with marketing.

### Innovative tele-sales solutions build relationships, meet unmet needs, and gather insights

Physicians are looking for life sciences companies to support patient engagement in their care by providing patient services. Manhattan Research published a study, ePharma Physician 2014, that shows 20% of physician are interested in patient support programs and resources from life sciences companies<sup>6</sup>. The study also found that HCPs want to learn about patient support programs and resources through interactions with sales representatives.

The expectation from HCPs that life sciences companies provide a leadership role in developing tools to support patients in remaining on therapy and improving patient outcomes is not surprising. Specialty pharmaceuticals require more patient education and monitoring than blockbuster products prescribed by general practitioners. As more specialty pharmaceuticals are approved the need for patient education, monitoring, and support programs will increase and life sciences companies need to be prepared to provide these services. One opportunity for providing patient education, monitoring, and support programs is through tele-sales solutions provided by a pharmaceutical call center.

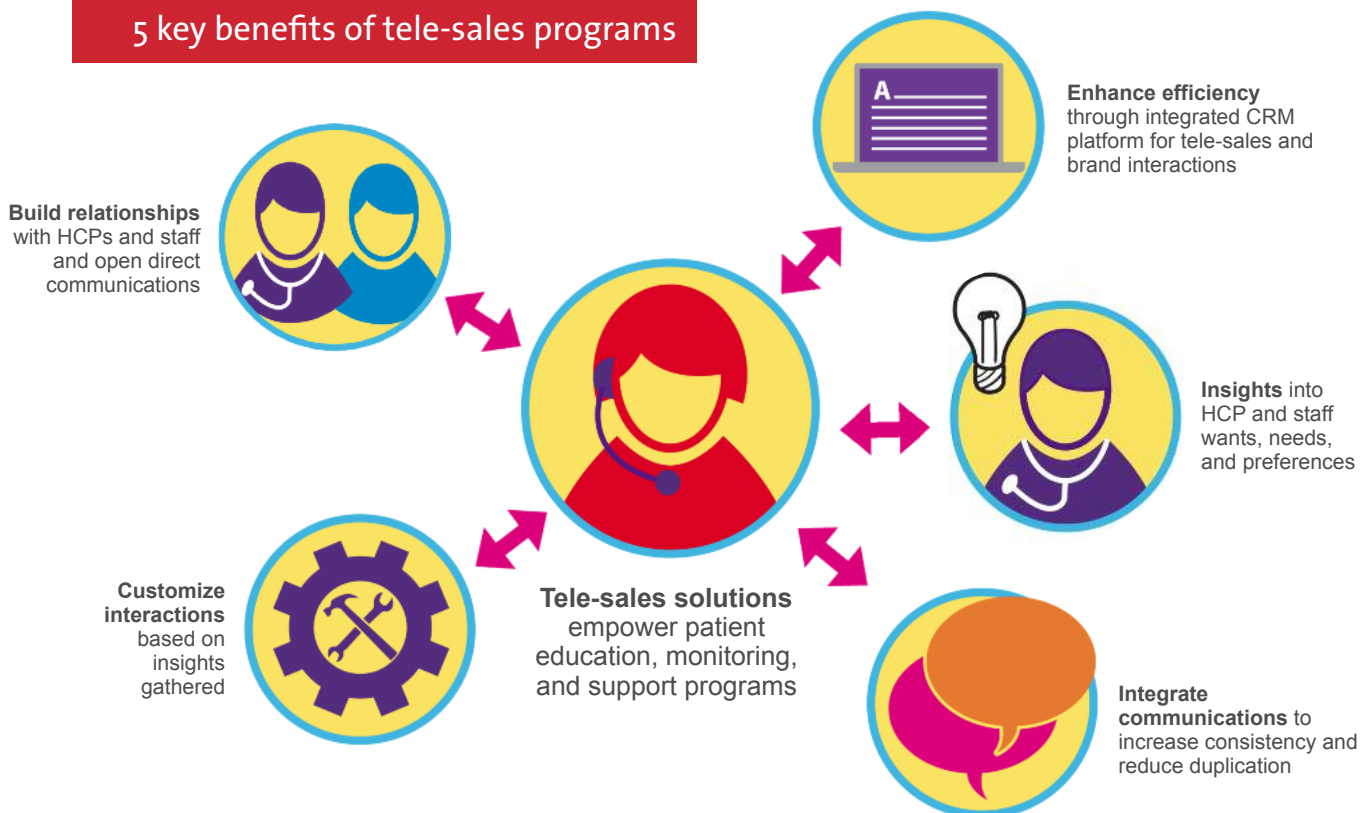
Tele-sales solutions are flexible solutions that provide valuable sales interactions. Tele-sales solutions have the ability to develop relationships with HCPs and their offices in customized ways that meet their individual needs. The unique ability to provide customized information and resources based on HCP needs when it's needed is what makes tele-sales solutions impactful.

Effective and successful tele-sales solutions have two key characteristics. The first is that tele-sales solutions establish relationships with HCPs and their office staff that provide two-way communication between them and the Brand. Secondly, tele-sales solutions have the ability to integrate all communication and marketing activities providing increased opportunities for consistency and sharing insights.

Tele-sales solutions can provide insights into what customers want and need, as well as a customized communication mechanism with customers. Our pharmaceutical contact center liaisons speak directly with HCP office staff often, and have an opportunity to develop relationships with each encounter. Our pharmaceutical contact center liaisons have individual toll-free numbers that provide their HCPs with immediate access to resources for urgent and relevant questions that occur daily. As a part of our interactions we understand the issues and needs your customers have, and we report these insights back to the Brand team.

For increased efficiency, the tele-sales CRM platform and the Brand CRM platform can be integrated to ensure timely updates and robust notes on tele-sales interactions. Ideally, CRM platforms should appropriately elevate requests so sales representatives, brand managers, district sales managers, and pharmaceutical contact center liaisons can quickly act on these requests. Integrating information from various promotional channels into a single CRM platform provides opportunities to identify and highlight insights into the needs and challenges customers have that your product or company can solve.

5 key benefits of tele-sales programs



### Case study: Tele-sales program increases brand awareness for novel leukemia treatment

#### Objectives

- Increase awareness of non-prescriber stakeholders about a new therapeutic option and financial support program for patients being treated for leukemia
- Increase frequency of Brand contact with oncology practices

#### Program overview

- Support field sales representatives through communications with oncologist's office staff
  - Profile leads selected by field sales representatives for contact
- An introductory call highlights the patient support program and 30-day free trial
  - Monthly follow up calls focus on individual needs and adjunct financial services
  - "Just in time" interactions aim to bring field sales representatives in contact with physicians when most needed
- Pharmaceutical contact center liaisons provide call summaries and fulfillment requests through an integrated CRM portal to field sales representatives
  - Direct fulfillment from pharmaceutical contact center liaisons may occur upon request



#### Program details

- Discuss patient support program enrollment process, terms and conditions, highlight benefits to patients and clinicians, answer questions related to eligibility for initial free trial and co-pay
- Provide important safety information where required, build relationships via regular phone calls with nurses, patient educators, social workers, and other non-prescribers in HCPs' offices
- Schedule or recommend a visit from the field sales representative and send program materials, based on calls with HCP offices
- Maintain accurate information within CRM portal on each client and call, including new staff or leads within practices
- Pharmaceutical contact center liaisons communicate directly with field sales representatives with the ability to escalate urgent requests to different tiers of the sales team
- Pharmaceutical contact center liaisons join monthly Field Sales territory conference calls



**Results snapshot at 4 months**

- Field sales representatives profiled 1,069 stakeholders at 840 oncology practices
- 55% “right party contacts” made with service rendered
  - Discuss patient support program, 30 day free trial
- 580 stakeholders have requested and received information about Brand programs and offerings
- Average of 4 “just in time” interactions per week
  - Including new patient appointments, urgent voucher delivery, and field representative appointment requests
- Low opt out rate of 2%

**Increasing importance of technology in advancing sales models**

Customer relationship management (CRM) platforms are integral to aggregating and integrating information about sales interactions. A well-designed CRM will highlight requests for samples or materials, capture questions or actions requested from HCPs, and provide insights on specific practices so customized solutions can be crafted.

Implementing a CRM platform offers many benefits, and it requires a significant financial investment and time commitment to set the system up and maintain the information. Best practices for successfully using a CRM platform include training, planning sales calls, capturing information on interactions, gaining insights through analytics capabilities, and gaining insights into a specific HCP practice.

Begin with providing comprehensive training to team members using the system. A critical component of a CRM system is to ensure all team members using the system are properly trained on how to add information into the system and access information.

The CRM platform is beneficial in planning daily sales activities. At the beginning of the day review the suggested call list and notes from previous interactions to prepare for current and future interactions. Review closely notes on previous concerns or challenges.

Leverage the CRM platform to capture and share information on sales interactions. Using the CRM platform as the information repository ensures others interacting with the same HCPs have access to details on previous interactions.

The CRM platform can provide insights through built in analytics capabilities. Incorporate into the CRM platform areas to measure progress against key objectives and desired outcomes. Capturing key information in the CRM ensures efforts are measurable and tracked, and provides easy access to insights.

Another area a CRM can assist is in gaining practice insights. The CRM can easily provide information on professional and health system affiliations, staffing, and staff changes.

### Closing thoughts

There is a need for new ways to engage HCPs in sales conversations. Sales models used with blockbuster products will not work in the new environment that is focused on specialty pharmaceuticals. This new environment requires a customer centric model that supports sales interactions through the channels that HCPs prefer and at their convenience.

The role of the sales representative is changing to be more focused on orchestrating personal and non-personal communications with HCPs. The traditional face-to-face interaction between an HCP and a sales representative focused on selling the features and benefits of a product will not work in the emerging marketplace. HCPs are demanding that all sales interactions provide value, and value is not a concrete set of attributes, rather it is dynamic and defined by individual HCPs.

Tele-sales solutions provide opportunities to develop relationships with HCPs and their offices, and provide solutions that meet their individual needs. Tele-sales solutions are flexible and can be rapidly deployed to enhance relationships and increase brand awareness.

### Solutions from Tunstall Healthcare Group

Tunstall is the world leader in connected health services. Tunstall delivers customized 24/7 healthcare communication services to connect individuals, caregivers, and healthcare providers to empower better health. Tunstall's innovative products and services enhance patient care, improve outcomes, and increase operational efficiencies for hospitals, medical centers, health systems, payers, and life science companies.

Tunstall is focused on helping build and maintain relationships with patients, caregivers, and healthcare providers to drive awareness and knowledge, support patient adherence, and empower patients to take charge of their health. Tunstall works closely with each client to develop customized solutions for all call center needs and to design and build successful patient and caregiver support programs.

Serving more than 3.5 million people worldwide every day, Tunstall is uniquely qualified to implement patient support and adherence programs. Tunstall offers a wide-variety of personal emergency response devices that can be used in any patient setting or via mobile to provide 24/7 monitoring and click-to-chat services for support, information, and educational materials to patients, providers, and payers.

Tunstall is the voice of connected health.

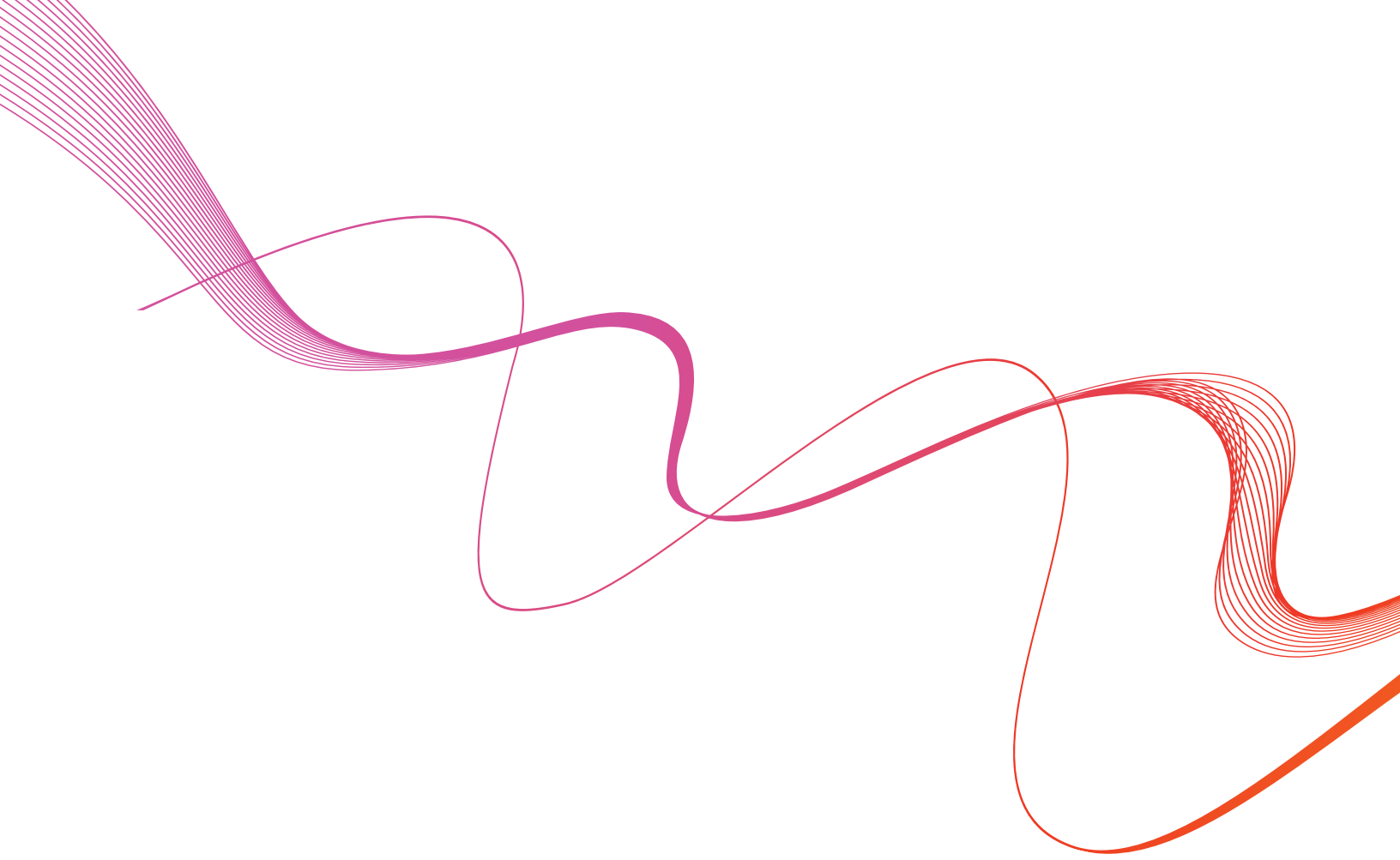
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