Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in Medical Affairs

Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Co-Authors

Fran Paradiso-Hardy
Head, Global Medical Communications & Engagement, Astellas

Brian Falcone
Strategic Business Unit Lead, MedThink SciCom

Evelyn DeSantis
Director, Research and Publications, phactMI

Jennifer Riggins
PharmD, President, JSR Medical Affairs Consulting and Partnership and Technology Strategist, phactMI

Donnie Wooten Jr.
Head Strategic Medical Content & Omnichannel, Organon

Clare Jackson
Independent Consultant

Contributors

Sarah Clark-Pfister
Senior Director, Head of Medical Excellence and Operations, Global Medical Affairs Rare Disease, Novo Nordisk

Wendy Fraser
Executive Director, Field Medical Center of Excellence and Global Scientific Training, Merck & Co, Inc.

Maureen Lloyd
Executive Director, LLOYDMJMC LLC.

Kate Pietrovito
Senior Director, Clinical Operations, Varian, a Siemens Healthineers Company

Karen Raines
Medical Information Lead JAPAC, Amgen

Jessica Santos
Global Head of Compliance & Quality and Data Protection Officer, Oracle Life Sciences

Embracing **Omnichannel Engagement** in Medical Affairs

PAGE 1   Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

Executive Summary

The path forward will be iterative involving a gradual evolution towards a true omnichannel realization.

When making clinical decisions, healthcare professionals (HCPs), patients, and payers rely on multiple sources and channels to gather insights into medical data and information. An omnichannel approach enables organizations to coordinate communications across functions, ensuring stakeholders benefit from a personalized, integrated, and holistic experience across these multiple modalities.

Advancing communication using an omnichannel approach is essential due to a rapidly evolving healthcare and medical communication landscape, the increasing volume and complexity of scientific information, and shifting stakeholder preferences for accessing and receiving this information. With this coordinated strategy, Medical Affairs can deliver accurate, unbiased medical content to the appropriate audience through their preferred channels and formats at the optimal moment.

The journey toward true omnichannel engagement will be iterative—involving a gradual evolution as new technological solutions, strategic approaches and innovative processes are adopted—catalyzed through closer cross-functional collaboration. Development remains a high priority for many life sciences organizations but achieving it will be as much about a shift in mindset towards stakeholder-centricity, as it will be about technological capabilities.

This white paper seeks to demystify the term "omnichannel engagement," outline a pathway to achieving it, clarify the role of Medical Affairs within a broader collaborative framework, establish a vision for the future, and identify the key elements needed for long-term success. It is intended for Medical Affairs professionals across all levels and functions, particularly those involved in brand strategy, external stakeholder engagement—including HCPs, patients, and payers—and medical communications.

About This White Paper

This white paper draws on the collective expertise of ten leading professionals in scientific communications and stakeholder engagement, as well as members of the Medical Affairs Professional Society. Their areas of specialization include medical and scientific communications, omnichannel engagement, digital strategy, and field medical operations.

Key learnings:

✓ What omnichannel engagement is—and what it is not, and why cultivating a stakeholder-centric mindset is crucial.

✓ How the organization-level approach to external engagement is evolving from fragmented, separate activities to an integrated cross-functional strategy, the value this approach brings to organizations, and how the role of Medical Affairs is key.

✓ The elements needed for future success—such as technologies, modular content, and advanced analytics—before omnichannel goals can become a reality.

✓ Challenges and barriers to implementing a true omnichannel engagement model, along with solutions being developed by various teams.

✓ How MedTech companies are advancing toward omnichannel engagement, with early adopters already reaping the benefits.

✓ Expert insights on emerging trends, including how omnichannel engagement efforts are likely to evolve with advancements in technologies such as AI.

PAGE 2 | Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

Regulations and the Role of Legal

The expectations of convenience among external stakeholders when engaging with life sciences organizations have increased in recent years, driven partly by technological advances post-pandemic and the growing number of available communication channels. [5] [6]

At the same time, external stakeholders—such as healthcare professionals (HCPs), patients, and payers—face mounting pressures themselves. HCPs are burdened with rising time constraints and face growing competition for their attention. Patients are taking a more active role in managing their healthcare, and with increasing quantities of information available (including misinformation), finding accurate and appropriate information can be challenging. Not least, payers are under growing pressure to derive and demonstrate maximum value from products. [6]

When these factors are combined with an increasingly complex clinical development pipeline, a crowded publication landscape, a competitive launch environment, and increasingly limited in-person access to HCPs, the need for an improved engagement and communication model becomes clear.

An omnichannel engagement model addresses these challenges by putting the needs of end stakeholders at the center. The goal of omnichannel engagement is to create a personalized experience that is holistic across the company. This requires a coordinated approach across channels and functions that connects individuals with relevant, accurate, and unbiased medical information—delivered at a time that suits them in the channel and format most convenient to their needs. [7]

However, achieving omnichannel engagement is no small task in an industry that has historically been deeply siloed by functional area, with Medical Affairs, Commercial, Corporate and R&D functions operating separately and employing uncoordinated engagement models.

To help tackle the challenges, cross-functional collaboration has reached an all-time high and continues to grow. [8] [9]

For the better part of a decade the Commercial function within many organizations has taken the lead in improving and personalizing stakeholder experiences, and in recent years, consulting firms are reporting that efforts are bearing fruit. As reported by McKinsey & Company in 2022, industry leaders implementing analytics-enabled omnichannel engagement models have achieved 5%–10% improvements in stakeholder satisfaction and HCP experiences. [2]

Why the Drive Toward Omnichannel Engagement?
A brief summary of consulting reports and literature to date

80%

Personalization
80% of physicians highly value personalized information when they receive it from pharma vs. generic materials (1)

5-10%

Stakeholder Satisfaction
5 - 10% improved stakeholder satisfaction and HCP experiences* are being seen by industry pioneers of analytics-enabled omnichannel engagement models (2)

67%

Product Understanding
67% of stakeholders better understood a firm's products after interacting with a pharmaceutical company and having an excellent customer experience** (3)

* Measured by NPS
** According to CXQ, Customer Experience Quotient
† Study of 600 prescribing immunologists in France, Germany, UK and US

Figure 1. Dashboard os studies by Sermo, McKinsey, DT Consulting, and Aptus Health

PAGE 3 | Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

Demystifying Omnichannel Engagement

In the life sciences industries, the term "omnichannel engagement" is often misunderstood. It has yet to be fully realized by any organization in the industry, which may come as encouraging news for those just beginning this journey. Industry executives may equate omnichannel with the use of digital platforms, while others perceive it as offering a wide mix of communication channels. However, this would be more accurately described as achieving progress with multichannel communications rather than being omnichannel (see Figure 2).

Multichannel vs. Omnichannel

Multichannel takes a problem-centric approach, with teams often pushing communications one way—toward external stakeholders—without interactivity and across fragmented channels. A multichannel framework has several disadvantages, as the lack of coordination among touchpoints can lead to:

- *Inconsistent messaging*

- *Frustration or burnout from multiple logins, touchpoints, or seeking the relevant information channel*

- *Unconnected channels or lengthy waiting times to receive requested information or engagement*

What is Omnichannel Engagement?

In contrast, omnichannel engagement focuses on seamless, consistent communication aligned with stakeholder expectations integrated across all touchpoints (see Figure 2 below and the example on the following page). This approach aligns well with stakeholders' perceptions of an organization as a unified entity rather than a collection of separate functions and their expectations of an integrated approach.

True omnichannel engagement represents a strategic approach that places stakeholder experience at its core, through integration of digital, in-person, and other non-digital engagement channels. Omnichannel is about creating a personalized stakeholder experience where the right information reaches the right individual at the optimal moment, delivered through their preferred channel, format, and cadence to enhance engagement effectiveness. It also includes access to peer-to-peer engagement and allows stakeholders the autonomy to choose their level of participation.
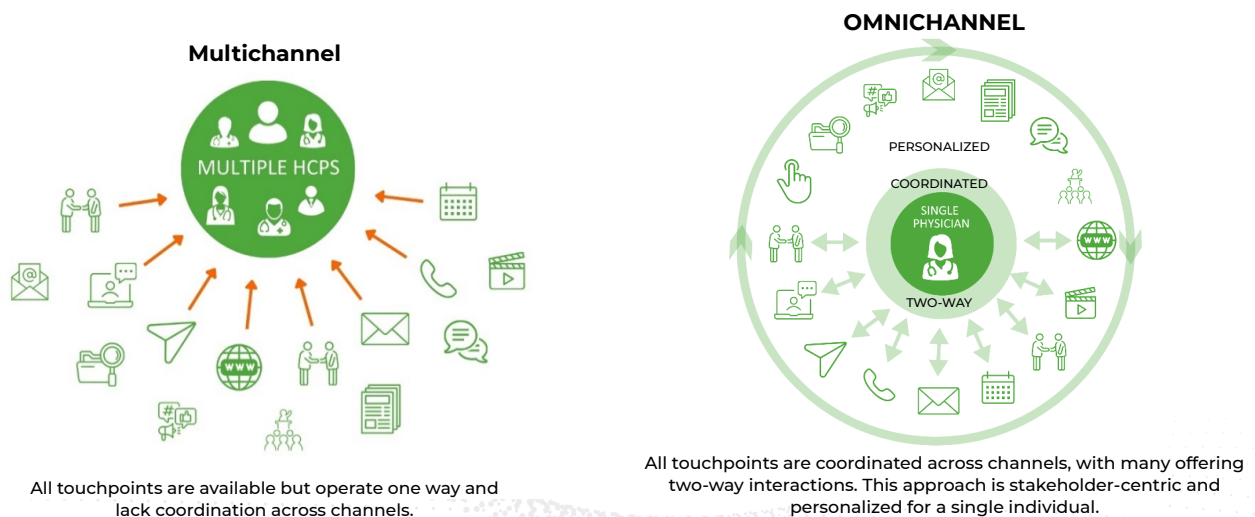
Multichannel

MULTIPLE HCPS

All touchpoints are available but operate one way and lack coordination across channels.

OMNICHANNEL

PERSONALIZED
COORDINATED
SINGLE PHYSICIAN
TWO-WAY

All touchpoints are coordinated across channels, with many offering two-way interactions. This approach is stakeholder-centric and personalized for a single individual.

Figure 2. Multichannel vs. omnichannel engagement models in terms of stakeholder-centricity (10)

PAGE 4 Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

Omnichannel Example

Imagine for a moment that it is the year 2030, and true omnichannel engagement has been achieved by some life sciences organizations. Product X has just been launched by pharmaceutical company Y, and Dr. Gonzalez is considering if Product X could be a suitable treatment for a patient she is seeing next week.

1 — CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE
Day 1, 10:00 AM

Dr. Gonzalez attends a conference and asks Medical Affairs staff about product X. Having identified Dr. Gonzalez through her conference attendee badge, Company Y's proprietary AI Next Best Action Engine suggests that Product X's Medical Affairs staff show her a specific Medical Communications presentation tailored to her interests, knowledge gaps and learning style.

2 — Follow-Up Email
Day 2, 8 :00 AM
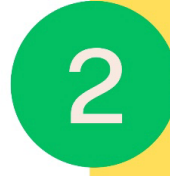
After a discussion, the key data is forwarded to Dr. Gonzalez in her preferred format—video—via her preferred channel—email. The next day, an MSL follows up again by email to ask if she has further questions. Thanks to the tailored presentation and video, she already has questions in mind that are specific and related to the patient visiting that week.

3 — 1:1 CHAT
Day 2, 12:05 PM

In the rep's email is a live chat link, which she opens. After confirming the purpose of her engagement—including options to connect directly with Commercial colleagues or Medical Information channels—she is promptly connected to an MSL, through her chosen medium—chat.

4 — MSL CALL
Day 2, 12:12 PM

After some minutes chatting, the MSL offers to call Dr. Gonzalez if she would like, and the conversation seamlessly shifts to a call. The MSL answers all but one of the physician's questions, which requires in-depth Medical Information.

5 — MEDICAL INFORMATION RECEIVED
Day 2, 12:35 PM

The MSL inputs the question into an AI-powered Large Language Model (LLM) for Medical Information and receives a response in real-time, explaining it to Dr. Gonzalez and forwarding the information as a video link—her preferred learning format. Feeling confident in her clinical decision-making, Dr. Gonzalez treats the patient with product X that week.

PAGE 5 | Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

Where Does Medical Affairs Fit In?

The role of Medical Affairs has been evolving from a traditionally reactive function to a strategic pillar within many organizations. [11] As part of this transformation, Medical Affairs is developing omnichannel engagement approaches and incorporating them into strategic communication planning.

Omnichannel Development in Medical Affairs.
Example: Content Production, Review and Storage

Adopting modular content creation, storage, and delivery processes is a critical step toward efficient omnichannel engagement:

- Modular content refers to content broken down into smaller components, such as titles, facts, or figures.

- It can be reused across different formats and channels, eliminating errors and duplication of effort.

- When delivered, the content can be reconstructed or reordered to present the most impactful and relevant information tailored to individual stakeholders on their preferred platforms.

Collaboration with other functions early in this process allows Medical Affairs to design effective, sustainable scientific information ecosystems. Legal and Compliance colleagues can help streamline review processes for content reuse, IT colleagues can advise on designing technical architectures for scalable and searchable content repositories, and Commercial colleagues may offer existing modular content resources that can be leveraged to accelerate development.

Omnichannel Implementation in Medical Affairs.
Example: Personalization of Content Delivery

Data serves as the engine behind omnichannel engagement, enabling the delivery of tailored, personalized content to external stakeholders. For instance, identifying Commercial stakeholders and tracking previous touchpoints with an HCP is critical. Insights from across the organization can guide content delivery in several ways:

- Front-line agents, such as contact center agents, medical science liaisons, and medical information professionals, can be equipped with critical information to enhance 1:1 interactions with stakeholders such as HCPs.

- AI-powered Next Best Action engines on hosted medical education platforms can recommend courses or videos that may interest stakeholders, thereby elevating their knowledge.

- Messages delivered through email, chatbots, or other digital channels can be tailored for maximum impact.

In this example, collaboration with Legal and Compliance, IT, Analytics, and Commercial colleagues is essential. Breaking down data silos between the Commercial and Medical Affairs functions—while maintaining compliance—can enable real-time adaptations to engagements, ensuring maximum effectiveness.

Cross-Functional Development of New Systems and Processes

Early cross-functional collaboration is crucial to minimizing downstream challenges when developing (and implementing) new ways of working. In addition to stakeholders involved in content creation, involving Legal, Compliance, and Commercial colleagues during development can help Medical Affairs adopt a holistic problem-solving approach, creating robust processes and innovative workflows necessary for the omnichannel journey

Cross-Functional Strategizing: Communication Planning and Implementation

An omnichannel model aims to develop cross-functional brand or therapy area strategies supported by functional tactical plans that deliver on strategic objectives. Cross-functional collaboration is essential in creating communication plans that ensure seamless stakeholder experiences and consistent messaging. Additionally, such collaboration helps optimize internal resource allocation and reduce inefficiencies.

To inform and guide communication strategies, insights are drawn from across the organization and combined during situational analyses, providing a holistic understanding of stakeholders at different points in the product lifecycle (see Figure 3, and Appendix A for more detail on stakeholder insights collected by Medical Affairs).

Understanding Different Stakeholder Needs using Insights from Across the Organization
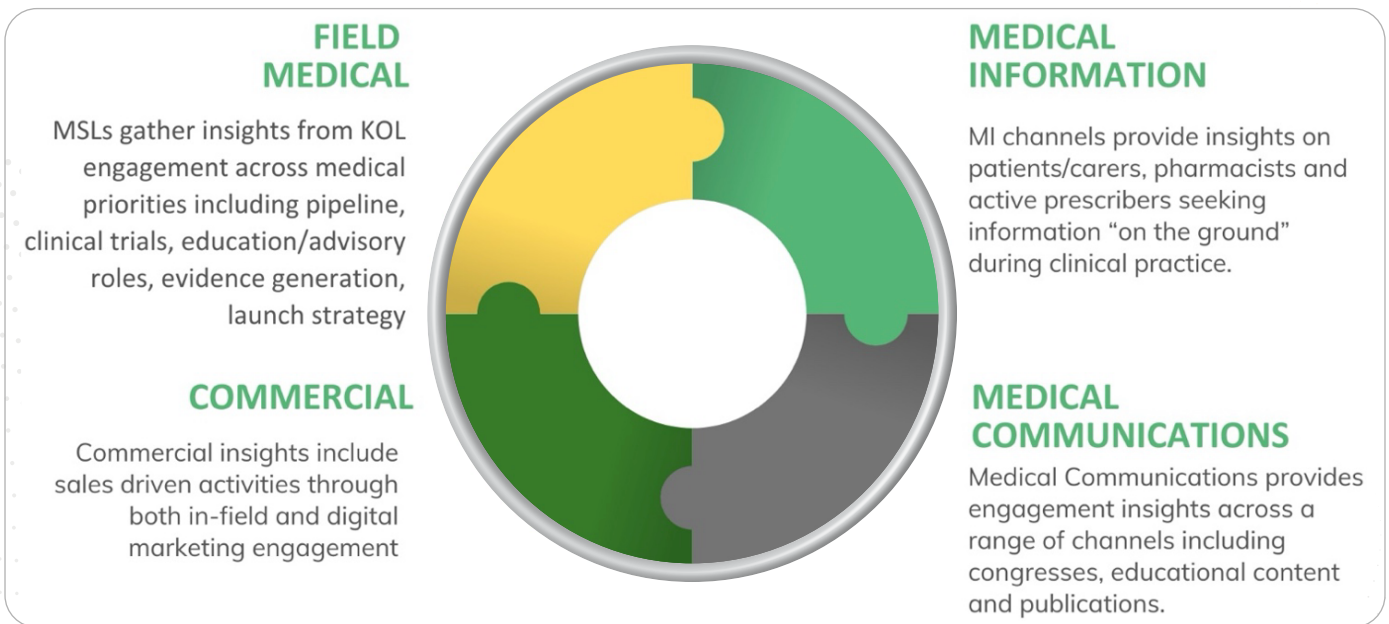

FIELD MEDICAL

MSLs gather insights from KOL engagement across medical priorities including pipeline, clinical trials, education/advisory roles, evidence generation, launch strategy

MEDICAL INFORMATION

MI channels provide insights on patients/carers, pharmacists and active prescribers seeking information "on the ground" during clinical practice.

COMMERCIAL

Commercial insights include sales driven activities through both in-field and digital marketing engagement

MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS

Medical Communications provides engagement insights across a range of channels including congresses, educational content and publications.

Figure 3. How insights from across the organization can be combined to give a broader understanding of different stakeholders and needs. [12]

PAGE 7 | Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

Omnichannel:
An Evolution

Incremental Advances

The journey towards omnichannel engagement is characterized by incremental advancements rather than great leaps forward, due to the number of organizational changes needed and barriers to overcome. Ultimately, the industry is making careful, iterative progress (see Figure 4).
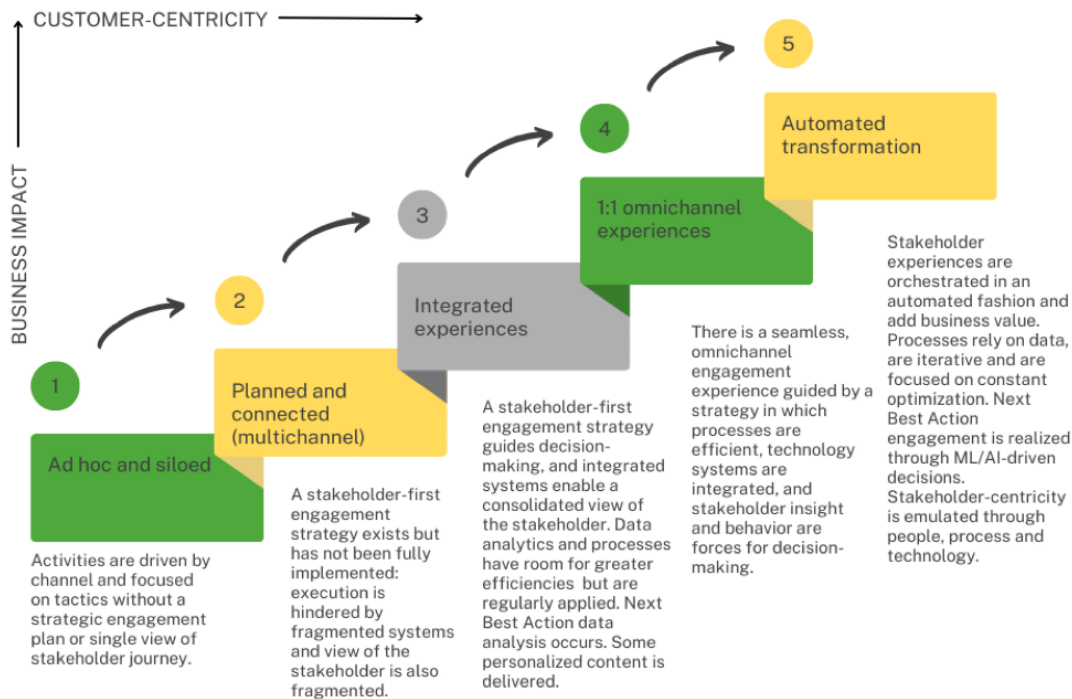

Figure 4. The path toward true omnichannel engagement is incremental, relying on various changes being implemented. [13]

Next Steps for Organizations: Creating Holistic Stakeholder Experiences

For companies operating at the multichannel level, the imperative is to deepen the understanding of external stakeholder needs, preferences, personas and journeys, which will involve data integration across platforms. To achieve this, organizations may need to invest in new technologies, foster collaboration across a range of internal teams and functions, adopt new ways of working, leverage business insights and enhance data capabilities within teams.

Lessons can be drawn from other highly regulated industries, such as finance, where a new wave of digital banks in the past decade has demonstrated how omnichannel can be implemented successfully. However, for life sciences organizations, the driver behind adopting omnichannel engagement is to elevate stakeholder education and knowledge. With such heavily regulated communications, this creates unique challenges that will require creativity to solve.

Omnichannel: An Evolution
(continued)

Next Steps for Medical Affairs: A Mindset Shift to Focus on External Stakeholder Experiences

As part of the journey, Medical Affairs will require a paradigm shift from a problem-centric, multichannel mindset, towards a stakeholder-centric, omnichannel mindset. This will require substantial internal effort that includes in-depth Change Management.

Medical Affairs must not only recognize but also adapt to preferences regarding channels, formats, and content types. Stakeholder convenience should be prioritized even under difficult circumstances. For example, Medical Information websites should abide by firewall regulations but do everything possible to ease accessibility and improve discoverability. In doing so, Medical Affairs must recognize traditional ways of working, which may need to change so that it can tailor its outreach efforts to align with the changing expectations of key stakeholders.

Understanding stakeholders can be achieved not only through previous touchpoints with the company, but also through advisory boards and purchased data. Purchased data can be used in identifying the profile of an HCP and how they prefer to receive information, as well as what kinds of information resonates with them and how they interact with different functional areas. Commercial colleagues are often well-versed at understanding HCPs, their needs and behaviors, so leveraging their knowledge in a way that's meaningful for Medical Affairs is going to be a desired capability among Medical Affairs teams in the future.

Novel Problem-Solving and New Technologies

As part of the journey, Medical Affairs will require new strategies, technologies, and collaboration to enhance omnichannel engagement. In recent years, the industry has seen—and is seeing—a range of novel initiatives and approaches to lay the groundwork for a true omnichannel engagement model. For example, among some teams, stakeholder-centricity has become a priority with incremental progress being made in a range of areas (see example "Celebrating Progress Towards Stakeholder-Centricity in Medical Information Websites").

As part of this movement, new technologies, including advanced analytics and AI, have become more common when developing and executing engagement plans, with numerous pilots and proof-of-concept initiatives underway. (See Appendix B for examples).

According to a 2024 MAPS Ambassador Alliance survey of 32 leading organizations representing the Pharmaceutical, Biotech and Medical and Diagnostic Device sector, 91% of Medical Affairs leaders expect that digital, advanced analytics, and AI will have the most significant impact on stakeholder insights generation compared with all other areas surveyed. This was followed by Medical Communication (selected by 85%) and Evidence Generation (chosen by 79%, see Figure 5). [14]

Furthermore, when specifically asked about key applications of generative AI and machine learning capabilities, 50% of respondents indicated that predictive insights were key applications—a necessity for serving up real-time, relevant content within an omnichannel model [14]. AI is also expected to play a significant role in summarizing clinical trial papers, creating scientific response documents, and providing automated call agents and chatbots as part of Medical Affairs' engagement offering.

Celebrating Progress Towards Stakeholder-Centricity in Medical Information Websites:

Historically, firewalls on Medical Information websites created a significant awareness and accessibility barrier to HCPs. However, this barrier has been drastically reduced in the United States in recent years, according to a recent benchmarking survey by phactMI of 32 pharmaceutical companies. Whereas previously, HCPs were required to apply for authorization to access sites, it was discovered by phactMI that 97% of Medical Information websites within the companies polled now allow HCPs to self-attest, reducing frustration and digital fatigue when faced with numerous company-specific logins. [21]
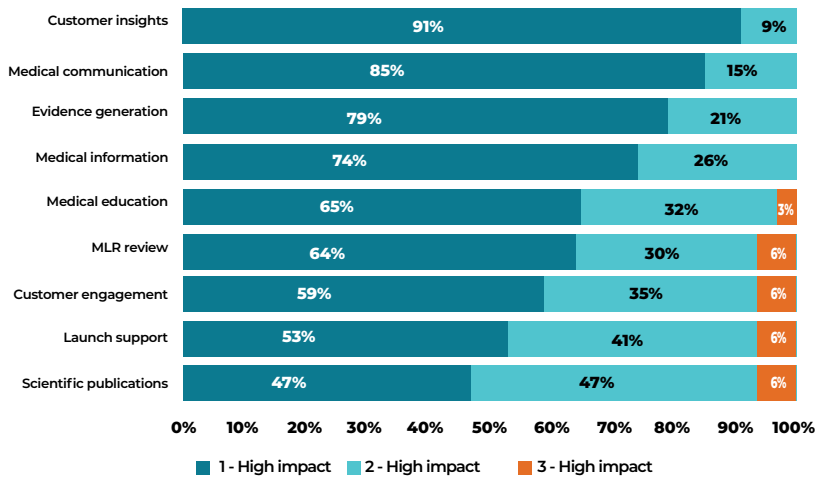
Some organizations, such as Pfizer in the APAC region, are taking additional actions to improve external stakeholder experiences, such as moving material in front of the firewall where compliance allows to improve both discoverability by search engines and accessibility. [12]

"We've witnessed a seismic shift in the US over the last five years when it comes to accessing Medical Information websites. By focusing on HCP experiences—we've greatly reduced the tiresome firewall problem, as most companies now allow self-attestation to access firewalled information rather than needing pre-authorization."

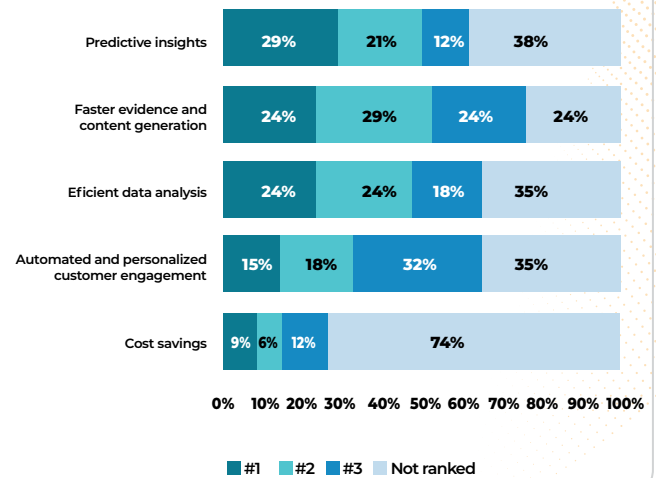Evelyn DeSantis, Director, Research and Publications, phactMI

PAGE 9 Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

Omnichannel: An Evolution (continued)

Exhibit 3 Customer insights, evidence generation and medical communication seen as the most disrupted areas by digital & AI

	1 - High impact	2 - High impact	3 - High impact
Customer insights	91%	9%	
Medical communication	85%	15%	
Evidence generation	79%	21%	
Medical information	74%	26%	
Medical education	65%	32%	3%
MLR review	64%	30%	6%
Customer engagement	59%	35%	6%
Launch support	53%	41%	6%
Scientific publications	47%	47%	6%

Q1.5 What areas of work in MA do you expect to be majorly impacted by digital/advanced analytics and AI?

Exhibit 4 Predictive insights and content generation are seen as key applications of GenAI/ML capabilities

	#1	#2	#3	Not ranked
Predictive insights	29%	21%	12%	38%
Faster evidence and content generation	24%	29%	24%	24%
Eficient data analysis	24%	24%	18%	35%
Automated and personalized customer engagement	15%	18%	32%	35%
Cost savings	9%	6%	12%	74%

Q1.6 What are your top three objetives for using GenAI/ML capabilities?

Figure 5. Advanced analytics and AI are expected to have high impact on stakeholder insights, medical communication and evidence generation.

PAGE 10 Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

Elements for Future Success

Achieving true omnichannel engagement requires a range of elements to be put in place, including the right technologies and analytics capabilities, collaborative strategic planning procedures, efficient content creation and review procedures, and a stakeholder-centric, strategic mindset among Medical Affairs teams.

Stakeholder-Centric Approach

Central to an omnichannel engagement approach is alignment between Medical Affairs and key external stakeholders, such as HCPs, patients and payors. Strategic medical objectives, for example, should be aligned with the needs of different stakeholders. To meet external stakeholders' expectations and maintain a competitive edge, understanding their needs, preferences, and behaviors is imperative. Testing and gaining buy-in from the external stakeholders while omnichannel models are in development is also essential. The information that Medical Affairs provides externally must be presented in formats and through channels that resonate best with the audience. This demands a robust framework that can continually adapt to the dynamic nature of stakeholder interactions

Change Management Plan

In change management, stakeholder buy in is key. Mapping out and visualizing a plan from the current external engagement model to the desired omnichannel engagement model can help win buy in from internal stakeholders. Using a change management framework such as the ADKAR method can help communication and address any roadblocks along the way.

Technology Stack

The technologies implemented and used together are key in supporting the evolution towards omnichannel. Systems that can capture, integrate and analyze stakeholder data in real-time, aided by AI, sharing it between functions where feasible, will be crucial. These technologies will not only perform analytics and manage insights but will also ensure that the right content is served up to the right audience at the right time. The insights generated will provide the foundation for developing engagement plans that are focused, dynamic, and measurable.

Cross-Functional Collaboration

Leverage the knowledge of relevant internal stakeholders from other functions and teams within Medical Affairs when creating new strategies or processes.

Strategic Medical Plan

External engagement efforts should anchor to an overarching brand vision and Medical Strategy.

Data, Analytics and Insights

The fuel of any omnichannel engagement model is data. Advanced analytics can then provide insights on the preferences and unmet needs of external stakeholders. Integrating data and breaking down data silos will be a fundamental part of creating a seamless stakeholder experience.

Modular Content

Success in omnichannel engagement hinges on the implementation of modular content creation and deployment processes and streamlined review procedures. Although well underway in many organizations, this will require significant changes away from current procedures. Creating an efficient modular content engine necessitates efficient collaboration across the organization, particularly with legal, compliance, and commercial teams, as well as collaboration between internal Medical Affairs functions at global, regional and local levels.

*ADKAR:
A - Awareness (of the need for change)
D - Desire (to support and participate in the change)
K - Knowledge (of how to change)
A - Ability (to implement the change)
R - Reinforcement (to sustain the change)

PAGE 11 Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

A Simple Omnichannel Framework

Below is a simple framework for achieving omnichannel excellence in the future.

	WHO is involved?	WHAT do they do?	HOW is success measured?	WHAT'S in the future?
CONTENT EXCELLENCE	Medical Affairs communications team	• Use insights on knowledge gaps to develop an overarching communications strategy • Create compelling content that is scientifically accurate and consistent with the brand narrative that can be distributed in multiple formats across various channels	• Addressing strategic imperatives through communication goals • Demonstrating knowledge gaps are being resolved • Efficiently creating and reusing content (including use by local markets)	• Next generation content; greater interactivity, deeper data cuts • Content that is 'omnichannel ready' for distribution in multiple formats across various channels
ORCHESTRATION OF DELIVERY	Medical Affairs communications team, Field Medical, Compliance, Regulatory	• Identify audience preferences on channels used to gather information • Ensures omnichannel coverage of content	• Optimizing content/channel mix to best utilize available resources • Optimizing metric capture	• Modular content to create highly personalized deliverables • AI-guided content assembly for personalization on scale
SUPPORTING STRUCTURE	Leadership, Compliance, Regulatory, IT, Data & Analytics	• Provide the vision, guidance, and tools necessary to successfully enable omnichannel engagement	• Uptake and utilization of omnichannel mechanisms	• Task automation • Utilization of AI

Table 1. Simple omnichannel framework for future omnichannel excellence.

Key Steps to Omnichannel Transformation

To transform an external engagement model to an omnichannel model, there needs to be buy-in from leadership. See Table 2 below for the key steps on the omnichannel transformation journey.

Omnichannel Transformation: Key Steps

Relevant Internal Stakeholders	Considerations	Evolving Solutions	Relevancy
1. Buy-In: Changing mindsets to stakeholder-centric			
Leadership, Medical Affairs team members	Understanding and meeting external stakeholders' unmet medical education, information and treatment needs is central to what Medical Affairs does.	Adding "convenience" as a central tenant to how it meets those needs may not sound like a big ask, but it will involve changing almost every facet of how it operates in the process—a huge ask. This will require all team members to take a step back and think differently.	Medical Affairs, arguably, struggles with the idea of a stakeholder as a 'customer.' The argument can be made that the function would benefit from taking a 'customer-centric' approach and could leverage Commercial's expertise in this area.
2. Content Excellence: Update content creation and review procedures			
Medical Communications, Medical Information, Medical Education, Regulatory	In many organizations, the content creation and review process in Medical Affairs could be more efficient in terms of time and resources. Content that can be updated and cascaded across materials efficiently and without error is central to orchestrating delivery of an omnichannel engagement model.	Modular content—breaking down materials into small, reusable parts— can prevent duplication of effort both within Medical Affairs and Regulatory review teams.	Medical Information is a good starting point for modular content processes in Medical Affairs. Commercial experience and technologies can be leveraged, if available.
3. Supporting Structure: Implementing and future-proofing new technologies			
Leadership, Compliance and Regulatory, IT	Upgrading or replacing legacy technology systems is expensive, and once new technologies are implemented, they can be costly to maintain. Leaders within Medical Affairs have noted that the technologies necessary for omnichannel were created for use by the Commercial function, and there is yet to be a suitable technology in existence to enable omnichannel capabilities for Medical Affairs.	To help reduce costs, technologies can be integrated across organizations to create more of a seamless experience between functions. As technologies advance more rapidly than ever, building a robust technology stack that can be updated with new capabilities is essential.	An organization-wide challenge, with particular ramifications for Medical Affairs, as Commercial technologies often receive the lion's share of investment.

PAGE 13 Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

4. Orchestration of Delivery: Integrated data, advanced analytics and real-time understanding of previous touchpoints

Medical Communications, Field Medical, Medical Information, Medical Education, Data and Analytics	Without data integration across functions, understanding an external stakeholder's previous touchpoints with the organization and offering a seamless experience to stakeholders as they switch between channels becomes impossible. In some organizations, the way that data has been stored can make it difficult for new technologies to integrate data between functions and teams as fully as hoped. Integrated "data lakes" have been promised for over ten years; will they ever be delivered?	One part of overcoming this challenge is cross-functional collaboration to create an overarching vision of how omnichannel engagement should look. Additionally, mapping out the tools and resources that each functional area has available to them, identifying gaps between a true omnichannel model that integrates all functions, and building connectors between tools, can help overcome data integration barriers.	Another organization-wide challenge, as pharmaceutical organizations have always struggled with siloed data, due to mandated separation of certain data types between functions. Medical Information, in particular, needs to work on gaining access to identifiable information when external stakeholders make contact. Without identifiable information personalization to stakeholder's needs and preferences is not possible.

5. Advanced Stakeholder-Centricity: In-depth understanding of, and catering to, stakeholder's preferences and needs

Medical Affairs teams, Compliance and Regulatory, IT, Data and Analytics	Medical Affairs can offer great value to omnichannel engagement planning and delivery through stakeholder insights. This value relies on analytics capabilities. Historically, the function has yet to develop in-depth analytics capabilities despite having advanced capabilities in this area in recent years through activities such as real-world evidence studies and pilot schemes for AI insights generation.	Insights on the needs of KOLs, patients, prescribers in the field and pharmacists are being mined from Medical Affairs databases more rapidly using AI. However, for use in a true omnichannel engagement model, insights and analytics must be available in real-time, which depends on implementing the right technologies.	Another organization-wide challenge, but with particular urgency for Medical Affairs.

Table 2. Key steps involved in omnichannel transformation.

PAGE 14 | Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

Challenges, Barriers and Evolving Solutions

Considering all of the interrelated components, embarking The development and execution of an omnichannel engagement model in Medical Affairs and for the organization generally has significant challenges and barriers to overcome.

Challenges in developing a true omnichannel model include:

- The need for a stakeholder-centric mindset to be adopted across all outward-facing functions.
- New technologies need to be implemented.
- Data integration across functions to allow for the development of advanced analytics whilst simultaneously remaining compliant.

According to a 2024 survey of 23 Medical Affairs professionals with omnichannel planning experience by MedThink SciCom, common barriers to omnichannel development and planning included a lack of leadership buy-in, having a large number of internal stakeholders involved, and a lack of time and funding, selected by 50%, 36%, 36% and 29% of respondents respectively (see Figure 6). [15]

Challenges in executing a true omnichannel engagement plan include:

- Cross-functional collaboration, including data sharing and coordinated channels.
- Efficient and effective content creation, approval, storage and delivery.
- Personalization of content delivered in real-time through data integration across functions, so that each team understands the previous touchpoints of external stakeholders.
- Remaining compliant both in terms of data shared across functions and communication activities

As reported by MedThink SciCom, most respondents (62%) reported a need for more funding as a barrier to executing an omnichannel engagement plan. Other common barriers experienced included an inability to measure success or demonstrate ROI (38%) and a lack of time (31%) (see Figure 6).
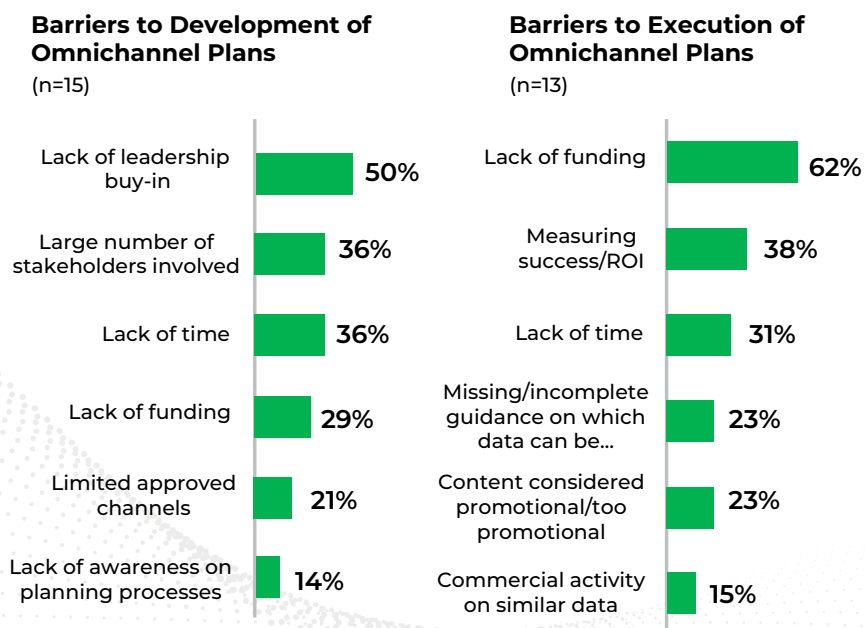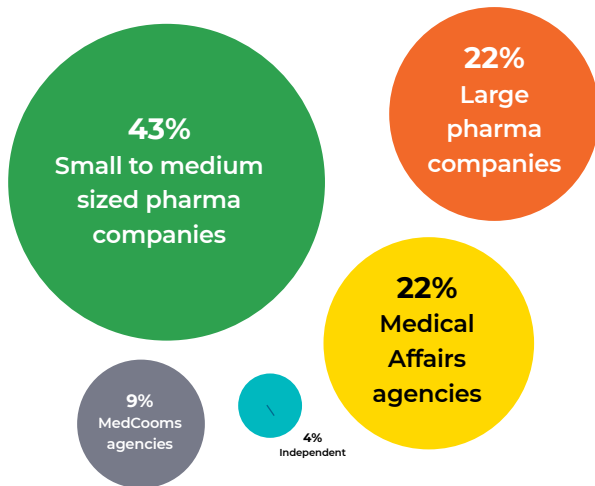
Barriers to Development of Omnichannel Plans
(n=15)

Barrier	%
Lack of leadership buy-in	50%
Large number of stakeholders involved	36%
Lack of time	36%
Lack of funding	29%
Limited approved channels	21%
Lack of awareness on planning processes	14%

Barriers to Execution of Omnichannel Plans
(n=13)

Barrier	%
Lack of funding	62%
Measuring success/ROI	38%
Lack of time	31%
Missing/incomplete guidance on which data can be…	23%
Content considered promotional/too promotional	23%
Commercial activity on similar data	15%

Figure 6. Summary of survey findings on barriers to developing and executing omnichannel engagement plans among Medical Affairs specialists [15]

PAGE 15 Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

To execute omnichannel communication plans successfully, increased collaboration will be needed between outward-facing functions to ensure a stakeholder-centric mindset and optimum use of resources. However, as cross-functional collaboration increases, organizations must remain vigilant while aligning efforts with overarching brand strategies, with care taken not to blur the lines between functions and remain compliant with Regulatory Authorities such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or Office of Inspector General (OIG) (see "Ask a Life Sciences Lawyer").

43% Small to medium sized pharma companies

22% Large pharma companies

22% Medical Affairs agencies

9% MedCooms agencies

4% Independent

Respondent Company Types
(n=23)

Of 53 total respondents, 23 had experience with omnichannel planning. Of these, 65% worked within pharma.

Ask a Life Sciences Lawyer: Compliant Cross-Functional Collaboration in an Omnichannel World

"Coordination between Commercial and Medical Affairs is increasing. Be aware that everything will be viewed by regulators as a constellation of activities, and they will look at that larger context, but at the same time, they can also cherry pick. Working together and coordination is fine when everything's on label, but when you're doing something that is more appropriately in the purview of Medical Affairs, it's harder to claim independence when half the time functions are working together. For example, if Medical Affairs is conducting communications on off-label uses or techniques, a regulator may still be skeptical and question whether activities are truly separate if Commercial and Medical colleagues regularly work together. One activity from one team alone might look innocuous, but when compiled together with other activities from other teams, a number of small, insignificant activities to the regulator could look like a concerted effort to drive off-label sales."

Jessica Ringel, Partner, King & Spalding LLP [20]

Tip: There Will Be a Strong Need for Change Management

With so many challenges and elements of success needed, all of which require significant change from the current situation, change management will be a crucial part of implementing omnichannel engagement.

Change management activities can be arranged to involve several functions at once or even be organization-wide— activities don't need to be organized for individual functions. Organizing activities in this way can help foster a more collaborative environment, creating and deepening connections across the organization, which can subsequently aid creative problem-solving and strategizing.

When undertaking change management activities, having a solid plan is essential to follow during implementation and win the hearts and minds of internal stakeholders, whether they be leaders or involved in day-to-day execution. For the journey toward omnichannel, this means having an engaging visual to present to content developers and distributors, metrics and analytics teams, leadership, financial colleagues legal and Compliance advisors. Involve everyone in the conversation of what is happening, explain the plan, and keep them updated on progress. Finding a practical change management framework, such as the widely-used 'ADKAR' model can help identify critical areas of communication for winning stakeholder buy-in.

PAGE 16 Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

MedTech and Omnichannel

The MedTech industry has long relied on in-person engagements to convey product innovations and provide procedural support. However, this approach is being challenged as the definition of a "stakeholder" expands. Stakeholders can now include core groups such as surgeons, nurse practitioners, physicians and patients, and hospital decision-makers and administrators. Additionally, MedTech companies face mounting pressure to enhance productivity and the impact of their field teams amid these changing dynamics.

Already, MedTech has adopted virtual and remote interactions through video calls and email with Medical Affairs or Commercial agents. Clinical support, often given during procedures, was once heavily reliant on in-person interactions but has transitioned to a hybrid model combining virtual engagement with digital content. According to research by ZS, two in five surgeons and three in five hospital administrators are engaged at least monthly on virtual channels with MedTech agents. However, only half of the stakeholders asked were satisfied those interactions with manufacturers aligned to their engagement preferences. [16]

Furthermore, a survey of 1,900 MedTech leaders by McKinsey & Company revealed that stakeholders desire an omnichannel engagement approach. [17] Despite stakeholders' expectations and needs, the engagement model for MedTech remains fragmented and uncoordinated. MedTech organizations typically grapple with the complexities of shifting toward an omnichannel approach, with one reason being restrictive resources for investment.

As with other life sciences industries, MedTech organizations are historically siloed and accustomed to distinct internal functions, so aligning departments to deliver a cohesive customer experience poses significant challenges. Yet, as technology advances, there is a compelling opportunity for MedTech companies to present a unified front, enhancing engagement across all customer touchpoints.

According to Donnie Wooten Jr., Team Lead, Field Medical Center of Excellence at Organon, improved data integration across functional groups could help progress organizations towards an omnichannel model. Wooten recommends compliant use of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software with data leveraged to highlight specific providers with data of interest, such as knowledge gaps or unmet educational needs, which could then inform communication strategies and tactics.

With limited resources, Wooten suggests that MedTech organizations looking to optimize the use of resources could benefit from creative approaches to metrics that guide strategies and hone tactics used. By combining data from various sources, including internal engagement data across functions, real-world data and other pertinent sources, communications teams can understand which activities are more impactful.

> "The underpinning of executing a successful omnichannel model is the significant and highly operational groundwork required to unlock critical data. In smaller organizations or the MedTech sector, that work can be daunting; but it represents time and money well spent. Data should act as a North Star for everything to follow; insightful and tailored stakeholder communications, insights to the product development team, and investment decisions around data generation."
>
> **Jessica Ringel,** Partner, King & Spalding LLP (20)

PAGE 17 | Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

What trends are you seeing within the industry driven by the move towards omnichannel engagement?

"From an agency perspective, we're seeing changes across the industry, with increased demand for strategic consulting, change management and restructuring guidance. This is reflective of a need to change within Medical Affairs broadly, with omnichannel as a driving force for making that change."

Brian Falcone, Strategic Business Unit Lead, MedThink SciCom

What are the elements of success to developing and implementing omnichannel?

"There are a lot of different pieces and parts that have to work together to gain a full cyclical view of an interaction with an HCP. One big piece is around understanding the stakeholder directly, who they are and what their preferences are. Another huge piece is content and making it available through various channels—which is where modular content becomes a really important aspect of making omnichannel work in the future. Another component is the channels need to be in place. A big component is understanding insights and analytics following any kind of interaction."

Jennifer Riggins, President, JSR Medical Affairs Consulting and Partnership

How can a stakeholder-centric approach guide engagement activities?

"We have to understand what healthcare professionals truly want, and what level of personalization and convenience is the right level. So, for example, you might be a healthcare professional doing some medical education training, watching videos. Something like a Next Best Action (NBA) engine, like on Netflix, which can tell you what you might want to watch next, that could be really helpful, and it doesn't feel invasive."

Evelyn DeSantis, Director, Research and Publications, phactMI

How do you overcome the challenges of implementing omnichannel engagement?

"To overcome some of the challenges of implementing omnichannel, it will become even more important to work with our internal experts, like Legal, IT, Commercial, or Development to really dig into and leverage their expertise and asking them to help us solve a problem. It's going to require a new kind of collaboration."

Fran Paradiso-Hardy, Head, Global Medical Communications, Astellas

Why are compliance considerations essential when developing IT systems and planning data integration?

"When you think about connected systems and the information held about a stakeholder; there are pieces that are appropriate for each function to see. There are also pieces that we want to make sure Medical Affairs is not using in any way, or Commercial, alternatively. Compliance discussions are critical in moving omnichannel forward."

Jennifer Riggins, President, JSR Medical Affairs Consulting and Partnership

How can meaningful metrics aid omnichannel engagement planning?

"Meaningful metrics that tell us whether behaviors have changed over time can help move us to strategize as part of our omnichannel journey by helping us focus on effective tactics. For example, imagine your company has an asset that has a unique Adverse Event (AE), and in the past, you used one of your communication channels to inform healthcare providers in specific zip codes how to proactively manage that AE. If you see a decrease in call volume around AE management in those regions, it gives an indication that our tactics have been successful."

Donnie Wooten Jr., Team Lead, Field Medical Center of Excellence, Organon.

What advice do you have for organizations that are considering an omnichannel engagement model?

"If your organization is just starting out on the journey towards omnichannel, start by understanding how content is developed, then understand different audiences and channels and how these interplay. Learn what other companies are doing. Be patient and then make the leap."

Brian Falcone, Strategic Business Unit Lead, MedThink SciCom

PAGE 18 Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

Key Takeaways

- Omnichannel engagement is a misunderstood term amongst many Medical Affairs professionals. The concept has preceded the ability to execute, and, in part, this is causing some confusion. Some believe it to be about digital engagement, some believe it to be tactical, but the reality is that omnichannel engagement encompasses an organization-wide, strategic, external stakeholder-centric mindset and way of communicating.

- Cultivating a stakeholder-centric mindset will be crucial because of the degree of change necessary to create a seamless stakeholder experience across functions and channels. Accessibility, personalization, channel and format preferences can affect stakeholder experience, resulting in changes in beliefs around products and clinical behaviors.

- Medial Affairs will increasingly collaborate with other functions such as Commercial, IT, Legal and Compliance to develop seamless, compliant omnichannel capabilities and strategies. Tools and resources may be shared between functions, with careful consideration to ensure compliance with all existing regulations and codes. Over time, the function will move from disparate, separate activities to a more integrated role within a holistic, cross-functional strategy.

- There are several parts necessary to successfully implement omnichannel engagement. Teams must understand stakeholder preferences through data, either bought or collected across the organization. New technologies will be needed to collect this data, analyze it and deliver relevant content to stakeholders. Modular content will be an essential part of the puzzle, allowing text and images to be reused efficiently in various formats.

- Change will need to be managed carefully by leaders to ensure teams come along for the journey. Investment in new technologies is needed, as well as new processes borne by new ways of thinking.

- Advances towards omnichannel engagement will be spurred on by new technologies such as advanced analytics and AI. There are currently numerous pilots and proof of concepts underway across the industry, some of which will bear fruit in the coming years.

PAGE 19   Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

'Compact' Appendices

A) Insights and Analytics from Medical Affairs on Unique Stakeholders

Medical Affairs adds value by offering multifaceted insights and analytics on unique stakeholders, such as key opinion leaders (KOLs), prescribers, pharmacists, and patients. These insights come from diverse data sources, including Medical Communications, Field Medical, and Medical Information engagement data, and they provide strategic input to guide and prioritize engagement efforts for both Commercial and Medical Affairs teams. This ensures efforts are impactful and aligned with unmet needs.

B) Examples of Pilot and Proof-of-Concept Studies Advancing Engagement Capabilities

Proof-of-concept for omnichannel engagement model underway: Regeneron implemented an advanced multichannel approach to improve the timely diagnosis of homozygous familial hypercholesterolemia (HoFH), a rare disease characterized by elevated LDL levels. In 2012, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued guidelines regarding LDL-level testing in children. However, using real-world data, it was shown that certain regions of the United States rarely applied the guidelines, and specific HCPs were identified that did not adhere to them. Using a data warehouse engine to integrate data on HCPs, their behaviors and learning preferences, a geo-targeted Medical Education campaign was delivered to the identified HCPs. Regeneron plans to assess the impact of their efforts moving forward using real-world data, to refine their approach according to predefined metrics. [18]

Successful pilot of Medical Information AI-powered voice agent— In 2023, Amgen successfully deployed a pilot scheme where an automated voice agent was able to both steer and respond to incoming Medical Information calls on medication stability giving well-defined Medical Information responses. Approximately 25% of calls were efficiently redirected to other functions, improving the caller experience. Subsequently, 30-40% of calls were dealt with by the virtual agent without the need for escalation to a Live Agent. Adding high-quality, compliant automated channels such as this presents an opportunity for organizations to reduce costs. However, when stacked with other technologies in the future, such as LLMs, additional opportunities to advance stakeholder convenience become apparent, such as integrating an immediately available, 24-hour, automated Medical Information service into a range of communications for stakeholders to access at their convenience. [12]

Identifying opportunities and measuring success—Insights from various channels can be used to identify opportunities to elevate communication and education strategies, such as knowledge gaps or unmet needs. Data collected over time can then determine whether strategies and tactics successfully bridged the gaps or tapped into identified opportunities.

Medical Information AI and analytics— Large Language Models (LLMs) are being used to analyze Medical Information call transcripts more efficiently to glean insights on prescribers' information needs and knowledge gaps "on the ground," pharmacists and patients. [12]

Field Medical "signals" elevation— AI is being piloted by some companies to detect "signals" from the noise within MSL engagement data with KOLs, to raise and elevate issues, such as knowledge gaps, without resource-intense human analysis.

Insights gathering and management: External solution providers can generate insights from across a range of channels including Social Listening, Group Engagement and Disease Community Monitoring, combining them with data from Field Engagement to identify gaps and opportunities and guide engagement strategies.

PAGE 20 Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

About MAPS

MAPS transforms Medical Affairs organizations and Medical Affairs Professionals globally by speaking as the single voice of the Medical Affairs profession, defining the current and future practice of Medical Affairs, and being the global community for Medical Affairs professionals. Furthermore, we leverage collective thought leadership to train the next generation of Medical Affairs leaders by tapping into the collective experience and best practices of Medical Affairs peers globally.

MAPS Resources on Omnichannel Engagement

To learn more about omnichannel engagement for Medical Affairs, watch the MAPS webinar "Omnichannel Integration in Medical Affairs," read the MAPS Medical Affairs textbook, or search for "omnichannel" in our knowledge center.

1. **Sermo**. HCP Sentiment Series Part 7: What Physicians really Want, from Clinical Trials to Personalization. 2021.

2. **McKinsey & Company**. Demystifying the omnichannel commercial model for pharma companies in Asia. McKinsey & Company. [Online] January 05, 2022. [Cited: October 01, 2024.] https://www.mckinsey.com/jp/en/our-insights/demystifying-the-omnichannel-commercial-model-for-pharma-companies-in-asia.

3. **Tongeren, T., Capella, C.** The State Of Customer Experience In The Pharmaceutical Industry; Applying CXQ to More than 3,300 Interactions Worldwide. s.l. : DT Consulting, 2019.

4. **McKinsey & Company.** From product to customer experience: The new way to launch in pharma. McKinsey & Company. [Online] August 15, 2018. [Cited: October 01, 2024.]

5. **Buchter, B., Cordina, J., Eckroate, J.** Consumers rule: Driving healthcare growth with a consumer-led strategy. Mickinsey & Company. [Online] April 15, 2024. https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare/our-insights/consumers-rule-driving-healthcare-growth-with-a-consumer-led-strategy.

6. **E., Muñoz.** Top Trends to Watch in 2024. IQVIA. [Online] January 08, 2024. [Cited: 10 22, 2024.] https://www.iqvia.com/locations/united-states/blogs/2024/02/top-trends-to-watch-in-2024.

7. Scientific literature: Information overload. **Landhuis, E.** 2016, Nature, Vol. 535, pp. 457-458.

8. **Reuters Events Pharma.** The Evolution of a New Era of Digital Engagement. 2022.

9. —. The HCP Engagement Transformation: Latest Trends and Activities. 2023.

10. Omnichannel & Life Sciences: Where Are we Now and What's Next? **Across Health.** s.l. : BMS Conference, Keynote Speech, 2022.

11. **Medical Affairs Professional Society.** The Future of Medical Affairs 2030. 2022.

12. —. Rising Star: Medical Information's Strategic Transformation. 2024.

13. **Reuters and HCG.** Journey to Omnichannel. [Webinar] s.l. : Reuters and HCG, 2022.

14. **Medical Affairs Professional Society.** 2024 MAPS Ambassador Alliance; Digital, Advanced Analytics & Artificial Intelligence in Medical Affairs. 2024.

15. Barriers to Omnichannel Planning in Medical Affairs. **Linares, M, et al.** Washington, DC : MedThink SciCom, 20th Annual Meeting of ISMPP, 2024.

16. **ZS.** What omnichannel means for medtech: Customer-centric strategy will drive success. ZS.com. [Online] May 17, 2021. https://www.zs.com/insights/what-omnichannel-means-for-medtech-customer-centric-strategy.

17. **McKinsey & Company.** How medtechs can meet industry demand for omnichannel engagement. McKinsey & Company. [Online] March 28, 2023. [Cited: October 01, 2024.] https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/life-sciences/our-insights/how-medtechs-can-meet-industry-demand-for-omnichannel-engagement.

18. **Patill, D., Kampman, W.** Delivering Medical Affairs Value Through Omnichannel Orchestration. PharmaExec.com. [Online] January 30, 2024. https://www.pharmexec.com/view/delivering-medical-affairs-value-through-omnichannel-orchestration.

19. **Indegene.** Medical Information: Striking the Balance Between Personalized Experience and Global Scale.

20. **Medical Affairs Professional Society.** The Future of External Education 2030. 2024.

21. An Update from the Benchmark Survey of phactMI™ Member Companies on Providing Medical Information in the Digital Space. **Dupuy, S., et al.** s.l. : Springer, 2024, Vol. 58.

PAGE 21 Embracing Omnichannel Engagement in MA
Changing Mindsets to Put External Stakeholders at the Center of Engagement

Medical Affairs Professional Society (MAPS)® 2025

![MAPS - Medical Affairs Professional Society logo] FOR Medical Affairs Professionals BY Medical Affairs Professionals

Medical® Affairs Professional Society

WHITEPAPER
ADVERTISEMENT