



Within3

Optimizing Launch Insights Strategy

Optimizing launch insights strategy

A MAPS and Within3 roundtable discussion

Pharma launch plans often focus on milestones and measurable goals—and that makes sense. Teams need clear targets and ways to track progress. But in the rush to hit those benchmarks, one critical element often gets overlooked: a formal insights strategy.

Too frequently, organizations assume insights will simply emerge along the way. The result? Missed opportunities, misalignment with clinical needs, and costly delays. During the 2025 MAPS Americas meeting, Charlotte Kremer, the CMO of MAPS, cited a striking stat from Deloitte: one in three drug launches still falls short of expectations.

To dig deeper into this issue, Within3 hosted a roundtable with medical affairs leaders at the MAPS conference. The goal? Explore the challenges and opportunities of launch strategies—and how improving the insights process can help teams meet, or even exceed, their goals. Participants discussed the growing need for real-time insights, the importance of cross-functional collaboration, and the expanding role of artificial intelligence (AI) in insights reporting.

What pharma launches are missing

A strategic framework for insights management

An ideal launch strategy is fully aligned with the needs of health care professionals, patients, and payers. But insights that support that alignment don't just happen—they need to be deliberately gathered and applied. A structured approach is essential for medical affairs teams to generate the insights required to inform their strategy.

Tony Page, senior vice president of insight analytics at Within3, presented a strategic framework for launch success that emphasized moving from reactive to proactive decision-making. This framework ensures that insights flow continuously, align with key success factors, and support informed, timely decision-making.

“It really comes back to that strategic framework,” said Page. “Because even if your process is slow and manual, if you know what questions you need to answer by a specific time, you can generally make something happen.”

The panelists agreed. In a poll, four out of six participants said they implement a specific insights plan as part of their launch strategies, often beginning the insights-gathering process up to two years before launch.

The evolving role of medical affairs

Medical affairs teams play a crucial role in shaping the scientific narrative—often beginning well before launch. Most participants noted that their involvement typically starts in Phase 3, 12 to 18 months prior to launch. However, shrinking timelines are pushing teams to get involved as early as Phase 2.

Here’s how insights evolve across development phases:

- **Phase 2:** Teams provide data-driven insights to help shape the launch strategy and build the scientific platform.
- **Phase 3:** Insights help refine the scientific narrative and align on communication priorities.
- **Pre-launch:** Medical affairs uses insights and strong clinical data to build relationships with key opinion leaders (KOLs), laying the groundwork for a successful launch.

Half the participants said they incorporate KOL or HCP databases into their insights process, and half also use social listening. These tools help identify valuable sources of insight, improve field medical interactions, and elevate the quality of strategic planning.

Speed, agility, and the decision cycle

Tony Page introduced the concept of “decision cycle time”—borrowed from the military—as a way to evaluate how quickly teams can analyze information, plan activities, and execute.

“If the insights process is late or slow, decision cycles get compressed and there’s not enough time,” said Page. “That’s why companies with poor insights processes often end up in crisis reaction mode.”

Medical affairs teams need to work with near real-time insights so they can adapt to market shifts and make decisions fast enough to affect outcomes.

“Speed is key to launch optimization,” said Page. “It’s about making things move quickly and turning data around to provide actionable answers.”

Without insights, decisions are essentially guesses. To extend the military metaphor, there’s now a quiet arms race to adopt technologies that improve the speed and accuracy of insights. AI plays a central role, helping teams reduce cycle time and giving them more space to think, plan, and act with confidence.

Aligning medical and commercial strategies

“We start with our cross-functional strategic imperatives—medical strategy, commercial strategy—and line up our key insights and questions based on those strategic pieces,” one participant explained.

The idea that medical and commercial teams work in silos isn’t new—but participants unanimously agreed that bridging those silos is essential to aligning scientific narratives with business goals.

Centralized insights platforms can help foster better collaboration and integration, but more importantly, a shared insights strategy ensures both sides are working toward the same objectives. As one participant put it, “Everyone needs to be playing from the same sheet of music.”

Where AI fits in—and what’s holding it back

Despite the growing buzz around AI, only two of the six roundtable participants currently use it in their insights strategy. Two others are exploring AI tools, while the remaining two cited organizational caution and confidentiality concerns as barriers to adoption.

“The company is cautious about AI tools and needs safeguards for confidentiality,” one participant noted.

This isn’t surprising. In a heavily regulated industry like life sciences, change comes slowly. Still, most participants agreed that AI is becoming indispensable for analyzing large data sets, identifying patterns, and generating meaningful insights.

“We’re a small company where the head of field medical goes through each individual insight manually,” one participant shared. “It’s very monotonous.”

“Trying to analyze insights without AI is crazy,” another added. “If you have any volume, you can dump insights into an AI tool, ask for summaries, potential actions, and trends—it’s infinitely easier than doing it manually.”

We’re at a tipping point. The technology is ready, but many organizations have yet to implement the policies and safeguards that would allow them to adopt AI effectively. That said, participants stressed that human expertise remains essential to interpret and validate the insights AI delivers.

Making the case to leadership

Interestingly, half of the roundtable participants identified “leadership buy-in” as the top area for improvement in their insights process. Two said that selling leadership on the value of insights remains a major hurdle.

“How can we increase awareness to leadership of the value of insights—and how they can be leveraged during pre-launch or for launch success?” asked one participant.

While medical affairs professionals are often fully committed to insights strategies, organizational leadership may still need convincing. Tony Page has observed the back-and-forth in pharma companies trying to centralize insights functions:

“I’ve seen organizations create global insights functions, and then eliminate them a year later. That tells me people are still trying to figure it out. But from my perspective, insights is a key function that needs to be managed.”

Looking ahead, the participants agreed that a dedicated insights team will be necessary to drive alignment across departments and ensure the effectiveness of launch strategies.

The insights and intelligence advantage

As product launches become more complex and timelines more compressed, medical affairs teams need timely, actionable insights to stay aligned with market needs.

A structured, strategic approach to insights—combined with AI-powered tools—can help medical affairs teams deliver the right data at the right time. That means being able to act with speed, agility, and confidence.

The organizations that invest in dedicated insights management and secure leadership buy-in will have a clear advantage. They’ll be better equipped to navigate challenges, adapt quickly, and drive successful launches that ultimately deliver therapies to the patients who need them most.