



HCP ENGAGEMENT
IN THE AFTERMATH
OF COVID-19.

REIMAGINING
WHAT'S POSSIBLE.



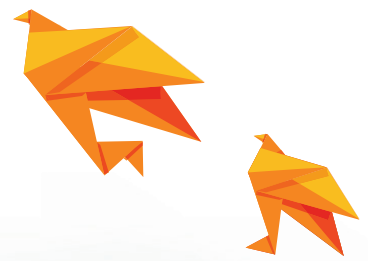
HEALTHCARE COMPANIES ARE TRANSFORMING ENGAGEMENT.

The coronavirus pandemic has been a public health crisis unlike any we have seen in modern history. Like all disruptors of this magnitude, it has exposed the gaps in our systems, but has also provided an unprecedented opportunity for transformation. For healthcare in particular, the pandemic has been a catalyst for implementing technologies and digital strategies that the industry had previously been slow to adopt. What would have taken years to implement has been achieved in much less time. Despite this progress, however, there is still much to be done to ensure that healthcare companies maintain their relevance in a rapidly changing environment, address the evolving needs and preferences of HCPs, and add value with every interaction.



“The secret to change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.”

— **Socrates**



The Need for Virtual Engagement

Prior to the pandemic, more than half of U.S. physicians were already restricting in-person meetings with sales reps.¹ This drove many healthcare companies to begin updating their digital strategies, but few were prepared for the profound changes brought on by the pandemic. In fact, according to a 2020 Accenture survey, many HCPs said that they expect access restrictions made more stringent by the pandemic to continue—some even speculating that the change would be permanent.¹ In the same survey, however, 88% of HCPs said they still want to receive information but want it delivered in a different way. Specifically, 87% of HCPs reported that interactions should be either all virtual or a mix of in-person and remote meetings.¹

THE HYBRID ENGAGEMENT MODEL EMERGES

The hybrid engagement model—a combination of in-person and remote interactions—has been identified by HCPs to be the preferred method of engagement.^{1,2} Many industry experts also believe that this blended model will improve the customer experience and subsequently, commercial performance.

According to Rob Steere, VP Commercial Strategy (CRM) for Veeva Systems, one company conducted a two-year study comparing the performance of three different HCP engagement models: 1) in-person visits only, 2) digital interactions only, and 3) a combination of in-person and remote engagement.

The results of the study showed that the hybrid model improved the company's cost efficiency by 80%.² In another survey evaluating the business value of increased digital agility, healthcare company respondents believed that this upgrade would increase revenue by 28%.³

Additional Advantages of Adopting the Hybrid Engagement Model⁴

- Provides the flexibility needed to address diverse information needs and preferences of various stakeholders
- Optimizes the promotional mix across personal and non-personal interactions
- Evolves as the healthcare market dynamics change
- Leverages data and insights regarding channel preferences, customer reach, engagement frequency, and cross-channel engagement history
- Provides both push and pull engagement mechanisms
- Allows for content agility, so credible, relevant information can be delivered to HCPs when and how they need it

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION CREATES A GREATER NEED FOR QUALITY CONTENT.

Healthcare companies' adoption and implementation of new digital strategies has put content at the forefront of engagement efforts. The need for credible content has never been greater. Following are criteria for being able to deliver quality content to HCPs.

Since the pandemic, HCPs reported that they have greatly increased their digital interactions.

73%

46.5%

One study reports a **73% increase** in digital activity and a **46.5% increase** in online research to replace information previously gained from sales reps.⁵



As healthcare companies become more digitally enabled, a greater volume of credible content will be needed. In fact, one study shows that content is used 80% of the time during a remote interaction compared to 20% of the time during an in-person interaction.⁶

To remain relevant and bring value during this digital era, healthcare companies must also adopt a more iterative approach to content and adopt a more agile response to HCPs' evolving needs for information. Industry experts believe that a modular content approach may help by allowing companies to use smaller, more digestible portions of information to formulate a relevant and cohesive story based on HCPs preferences. Importantly, modular content can be pre-approved by medical, regulatory, and legal bodies, so companies can move quickly to meet the information needs of HCPs.⁶

While format, delivery, and speed are important to consider, the credibility and quality of content remains critical—particularly during these times. An article in *Nature Human Behavior* states that with the COVID-19 pandemic also came an infodemic—the rapid and far-reaching spread of information of questionable quality and one consequence of a highly digital society. As always, counteracting misinformation and disinformation requires content that adheres to the highest and most stringent standards of quality and credibility.

Meet the Demand for Relevant, Timely, and Credible Content Right Now

Many healthcare companies are in various states of digital and analytic readiness. Effective engagement tools that have long-term value but that can be deployed in the short-term are in demand. Healthcare companies should consider the following types of available tools to provide credible, quality content to HCPs:

ABSTRACT AND CITATION DATABASE

A comprehensive, curated abstract and citation database can help HCPs quickly find relevant and authoritative research, identify experts, and provide access to reliable data, metrics, and analytical tools across a wide variety of disciplines.

REFERENCE MANAGER

A reference manager helps HCPs store, organize, note, share, and cite references and research data.

TIMELY INFORMATION SOURCE

HCPs need easy access to the most current evidence-based content to help inform diagnoses and treatment plans.

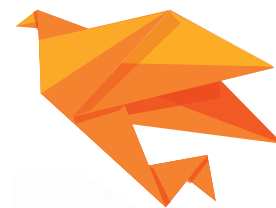
REPRINT/EPRINT

These tools provide content that is relevant and highly valued by HCPs. In fact:⁷

- About 90% of physicians say reprints are useful for their practice and a reliable source of information
- More than 80% of HCPs read medical articles in reprint format

“When you read something, you want to make sure it’s gone through the proper stringent scientific and medical rigor. You want it to be a peer-reviewed article, you want to make sure that their methods and their conclusion are correct; their statistical analyses are accurate. And how I figure this out is by utilizing reputable journals and publication sources.”

— Ali Valimahomed, M.D., Interventional Pain Medicine,
explaining the importance of credibility



BECOMING A DIGITAL-FIRST ORGANIZATION

According to global management consultant firm Kearney, healthcare companies that embrace a “digital-first” approach to engagement are in a much better position to be competitive in the post-pandemic market. In their recent article, the consultant offered healthcare companies some basic rules of engagement for achieving a digital-first approach.⁹



START WITH LEADERSHIP

Leadership must believe in the need for digital transformation and commit to making the necessary changes



ENSURE DIGITAL HAS PURPOSE

Determine first what problems need to be solved, what unmet needs must be addressed, and how digital technologies can be a solution



MAKE DIGITAL A CORE STRATEGY

Digital first must be a guiding principle in all parts of the business and should be explicitly incorporated into core business processes



TEAM UP FOR TRANSFORMATION

Enable collaboration between digital champions and core business units



USE A CROSS-FUNCTIONAL APPROACH

Healthcare companies must be digitally agile, so compliance, regulatory, and legal functions must gain the digital expertise to provide guidance and respond quickly to requests



CONSIDER COLLABORATION

External partnering will become a core competence for the digital-first healthcare company



ENSURE DIGITAL IS SCALABLE

Companies need to experiment, but it must be scalable: large enough to have impact but able to be quickly deployed across the organization



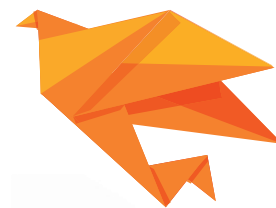
According to recent research it's important to identify the barriers that can undermine a company's efforts to advance their digital capabilities. Here are some of the roadblocks to look out for:⁹

- Entrenched organizational processes
- Too much time and money spent on maintaining existing digital infrastructure
- Legacy technologies that are hard to use
- Overreliance on (and overburdening of) IT teams
- Slow implementation of digital experience management platforms



“HCPs are now empowered to have whatever discussion about a drug they prefer, and they will likely value that discussion more than any carefully crafted marketing message.”

— Author Craig Moore, Avant Healthcare



A CONSTANT IN THE MIDST OF CHANGE: THE NEED FOR TRUSTED CONTENT.

For decades, Elsevier has supported the medical and scientific communities with credible, trusted, world-class content. Today, Elsevier continues to help healthcare companies provide the content HCPs want in the formats they prefer. There has never been a better time for trusted, authoritative content that supports HCPs in their clinical decision-making and that, ultimately, helps improve patient outcomes.



We, at Elsevier, would like to express our heartfelt compassion and concern for all those impacted by COVID-19 as well as our deep appreciation for those healthcare and essential workers who gave so much for the good of the greater community.

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