



# A DIGITAL DOSE TO BOOST GROWTH IN HEALTHCARE

## AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

### Accenture Business Journal for India

By

**Rishabh Bindlish**

**Managing Director and Lead, India Life Sciences and Global Generics, Accenture**

and

**Amit Misra**

**Senior Manager, Products - Life Sciences, Accenture in India**

And

**Tushar Bakshi**

**Senior Manager, Products - Life Sciences, Accenture in India**

#### Re-imagining India's pharma commercial workforce model in the Never Normal

The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent restrictions have undoubtedly caused a major upheaval in how pharma companies engage

with Healthcare Providers (HCPs) and HCPs, in turn, engage with their patients. The massive acceleration towards remote visits and digital medicine during the pandemic means that the conventional engagement models are moving toward a "new normal." The two distinct vectors we believe that will drive this change are:

#### TREND 1: THE SHIFT TOWARD VIRTUAL HEALTHCARE

While the virtualization of healthcare was long expected, the COVID-19 pandemic has finally proven to be the tipping point. The recent HCP-Patient survey<sup>1</sup> conducted by Accenture confirms the imminent transition in the HCP-patient dynamics. Here are some notable findings of the survey.

##### Finding 1 Patients embrace digital

Lockdown restrictions and the fear of getting infected has prompted patients to learn the usage of new technologies to address their healthcare issues. Even doctors are now encouraging patients to use various apps to manage their health conditions. At the same time, 62 percent of the patients surveyed felt that the extensive usage of technology had reduced their direct access to their healthcare providers, thereby affecting the quality of care.

##### Finding 2 Persisting challenges in digital



diagnosis

The doctor community has embraced virtual tools to manage health outcomes for their patients. Online chat, telephone and video conferencing are the most popular options. At the same time, concerns such as lack of empathy in virtual discussions, delayed diagnosis and patient privacy issues still persist.

Finding 3 Doctors need "right," not more information

Post-COVID-19, there is a 54 percent increase in the volume of information sent by pharma companies through digital channels. However, despite the digital engagement, doctors feel that the pharma companies have not fully understood their changing needs and expectations for patient treatment.

#### TREND 2: BEING A "FIT-FOR-PURPOSE" COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATION

As with other industries, the COVID-19 pandemic has also tremendously impacted the Indian Pharma Market. Though there was a gradual recovery visible in June and July, the trend was reversed in August. Overall, the growth expectations remain muted due to fewer OPDs, delays in elective surgeries and supply-side constraints.

In this protracted period of muted growth, pharma companies need to take a closer look at boosting efficiencies across the business. Hence, initiatives such as effective spend management, optimization of geographical coverage and focus on high productivity HCP conversions with a stress on the phygital (physical and digital) model are some of the imperatives to protect margins eventually.

#### THE NEW NORMAL: STRATEGIC SHIFT IN THE COMMERCIAL AGENDA

Pharma companies' future commercial agenda will have a significant digital influence. However, the outreach has to be more than just

communicating product details. The objective is to deliver a hyper-personalized customer experience, as demonstrated consistently by disruptors such as Google, Amazon and Netflix. In other words, pharmas must adopt digital platforms across multiple channels to deliver a seamless, consistent, intuitive and simplified experience to their customers.

We believe a winning agenda to deliver success for pharma companies will hinge on four key aspects:

#### NUMBER 1 Curate differentiated experiences for HCPs

With COVID-19 reducing physical touchpoints, what is needed is an intelligent and closed-looped communication with the HCP, powered by the right tools and personalization, along with content management and renewed digital marketing capabilities.

#### NUMBER 2 Teaming with HCPs key to effective patient management

As the HCP-patient interactions increase over various digital platforms, both the stakeholders require each other's support to enable a superior patient and practice management. At the same time, pharma companies need to facilitate doctor-patient interactions in a manner that fills the existing gaps—lack of empathy, delayed diagnosis and patient privacy.

#### NUMBER 3 Harnessing analytics to drive continuous improvement

As the engagement moves towards hyper-relevance, pharma companies must invest in improved intelligence to derive data-driven, actionable insights to understand HCPs and patients better.

#### NUMBER 4 Defining new sales structures for efficiency

With customer needs becoming more nuanced and granular, pharma companies must gradually



depart from conventional sales or business unit structures and define new sales structures or "plays" that help serve customer needs more efficiently.

## **TRANSFORMING THE WORKFORCE IN THE NEW NORMAL**

For pharma companies to enhance their commercial viability, the mantra is to re-imagine their work processes and align their workforce to the commercial agenda in the new normal. This would entail redefining skillsets, mindsets and ways of working. Here's what we believe are the three strategic themes imperative to transform the workforce in pharma companies.

### **RE-IMAGINING ROLES**

As pharma companies become more connected and sophisticated, they need various new skillsets to gain a competitive advantage and adopt intelligent technologies to upskill and reskill existing talent. Three such roles that will undergo a metamorphosis are:

- **ROLE 1 Transforming medical representatives into intelligent representatives**

For medical representatives, engaging the HCPs by leveraging specific intelligence based on behavioral preferences will be the key. Armed with a closed-looped CRM, representatives can effectively use data insights to plan, deliver and report calls. This is where skills such as digital awareness and analytics will be put to good use. The emphasis is to see through doctors' eyes to understand their needs and solve problems by serving customers as individuals, not as numbers in a call roster.

- **ROLE 2 Transforming brand managers into CX managers**

As doctor interactions become more dependent on omnichannel digital platforms, a brand manager's role will be pivotal to facilitate a uniform interaction experience across all

mediums. Therefore, the communication and choosing the right templates and promotional items must also include a better understanding of doctors and patients and how they want to be engaged. This would also include building ecosystems to offer the right solutions and regularly adjust to meet changing customer expectations. In the future, brand managers will have to acquire skills such as content management for continuous engagement across multiple channels and experience management to retain a multichannel identity and branding across the company.

- **ROLE 3 Let's think beyond the patients**

As the Accenture survey suggests, virtualization of healthcare is all about HCPs making further customizations into how they operate—both clinically (teleconsultation) and commercially (payments). One area where pharma companies can differentiate themselves is by helping doctors manage their practice and patients better. They can do so by acquiring critical skills in disease awareness (identifying key gaps that impact patient experience and clinical outcomes) and various digital engagement tools to perform these functions.

Putting in place right-sized structures In a muted growth scenario, pharma companies must tackle the legacy of a "one-size-fits-all" organizational structure head-on and create a new competitive reality that propels them ahead of their competitors.

## **CHOOSING THE RIGHT PILL FOR THE RIGHT CURE**

Winning in India is about winning in "many Indias." However, the pharma industry has been straddled by uniform sales structures across the country, irrespective of the potentiality or winnability.

Identifying growth hotspots at a micro-territory level based on potential assessment drivers can



shape a company's operating structure, such as divisions and marketing mix. Some of the vital assessment drivers are doctor needs, patient profile, disease burden, territory economic potential, competitive intensity, prescription and dispensing patterns. As the omnichannel's outreach gains ground through innovative go-to-market models, companies are now better positioned to serve customer needs effectively and improve operational efficiencies. Furthermore, adapting sales structures with a view on expected ROI can help pharma companies drive significant efficiencies.

### **INSTILLING A DIGITAL- AND ANALYTICS-DRIVEN WORK CULTURE**

Digital will be the pivot around which the organizational transformation would revolve for pharma leaders—embedding digital skills across the company. As native digital-pharma experience does not exist, companies will need to employ a hybrid approach that requires:

- A digital center of excellence (CoE) led by a business expert having a flair for digital technologies and the external digital ecosystem.
- Digital champions within functions who can identify and resolve problems through digital interventions.

Since data empowers leaders and individual employees to make quick and accurate decisions, a COE can manage the seamless flow of data across business models, functions and project teams. Moreover, as processes mature, predictive and prescriptive analytics will

help them make data-driven and insightful business decisions.

### **THE ROAD AHEAD**

Though virtual healthcare has been here for a while now, the COVID-19 pandemic became a crucial catalyst in forcing pharma companies to accelerate their digital transformation journey with speed and at scale. Many pharma companies are already taking steps around the digital imperatives, but the difference lies in how fast they execute their strategies. The key is to harness the power of these structural shifts and new tools and technologies to deliver high-quality and hyper-personalized patient and healthcare services, while also improving business outcomes and resilience to counter future disruptions.

This article is written by Rishabh Bindlish, Managing Director and Lead, India Life Sciences and Global Generics, Accenture; Amit Misra, Senior Manager, Products - Life Sciences, Accenture in India, and Tushar Bakshi, Senior Manager, Products - Life Sciences, Accenture in India.

Copyright © 2020 Accenture  
All rights reserved.

Accenture and its logo  
are registered trademarks  
of Accenture.