

Change Is Changing. Are You Evolving?



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Chapter - 1

HCP Engagement: Quality Over Quantity



HCP Engagement: Quality Over Quantity

Opening Insight

The future of HCP engagement is not about increasing the number of interactions. It is about making every interaction more meaningful. As doctors have less time for medical representatives, repeating the same product story or making routine calls adds little value.

Key Message

Vivek Hattangadi highlighted that repeated calls, leaving literature and waiting for the doctor without adding anything new can become a waste of time. He used the example of sitagliptin to show how doctors may already have a deep understanding of a therapy after years of education and exposure. The opportunity is therefore to improve the quality of the interaction rather than simply increasing call frequency.

Practical Takeaways

- Move from quantity of calls to quality of conversations.
- Bring new, relevant value to every HCP interaction.
- Avoid repeating information the doctor already knows.
- Use limited clinic time to understand and address meaningful needs.
- Ask whether the interaction genuinely helps the doctor, patient or caregiver.
- HEOR studies (Health Economics and Outcomes Research) strengthen engagement and elevate the quality of scientific interaction. This work is a joint effort between the Brand Manager and Medical Affairs, with the initiative led by the Brand Manager.



Power Tip: A shorter (**By shorter you mean frequency or the length in time of the meeting?**) meeting can create greater impact when the conversation is relevant, useful and valuable.



Are you measuring the number of calls, or the value created by each conversation?



The Medical Representative as a Knowledge Worker

Opening Insight

The medical representative of the future must evolve from a product-information carrier into a knowledge worker who creates value for the healthcare ecosystem.

Key Message

Vivek connected the future of the medical representative with Peter Drucker's idea of the Knowledge Worker. In pharma, this means a medical representative who can add value to the doctor, patient and caregiver. When the MR brings meaningful knowledge and insight, the doctor has a reason to welcome the interaction.

Practical Takeaways

- Build knowledge beyond product information.
- Understand the patient's and caregiver's context.
- Bring useful insights into the doctor's practice.
- Become a source of value, not repetition.
- Develop the capability to solve problems through knowledge.
- To transform a medical representative into a Knowledge Worker, the shift in mindset must begin at the top with the promoters, the chairperson, or the managing director, just as it does in multinational companies.



Power Tip: The future Medical Representative is not the one who speaks the most. It is the one who adds the most value to doctors, patients, and caregivers.



What unique knowledge or insight are you bringing to the HCP today?



Know Your Customer, Know Your Business

Opening Insight

A powerful marketing question remains relevant even decades after it was first raised: Do you know who your customer is, and do you know what business you are really in?

Key Message

Drawing from Theodore Levitt's classic article in the July-August 1961 issue of HBR, “**Marketing Myopia**”, Vivek challenged pharma marketers to look beyond the immediate prescription generator. The customer ecosystem includes doctors, patients, caregivers and pharmacists. “**Marketing Myopia**” also asks “Do you know which business are you in? He also questioned whether pharma is merely in the business of generating sales and prescriptions, or whether its deeper role is to help people who are unwell.

Reframing the above para

Drawing from Theodore Levitt’s classic July–August 1961 HBR article Marketing Myopia, which poses two fundamental questions: “Do you know who your customer is?” and “Do you know which business you are in?”. Vivek challenged pharma marketers to look beyond the narrow focus on immediate prescription generation. He reminded them that the true customer ecosystem includes doctors, patients, caregivers, and pharmacists. He further questioned whether pharma is merely in the business of driving sales and prescriptions, or whether its deeper purpose is to support people who are unwell and improve their journey through illness.

Practical Takeaways

- Look beyond the doctor as the only customer.
- Recognize patients, caregivers and pharmacists as part of the ecosystem.

- Define the business in terms of the value it creates.
- Move beyond a narrow sales-only mindset.
- Use customer understanding to shape strategy and communication.



Power Tip: A shorter (**By shorter you mean frequency or the length in time of the meeting?**) meeting can create greater impact when the conversation is relevant, useful and valuable.



Are you measuring the number of calls, or the value created by each conversation?





Customer Profiling & Personalization

Opening Insight

Meaningful personalization begins with accurate customer profiling and understanding. Without a clear picture of the HCP, communication risks becoming generic even when the technology is sophisticated.

Key Message

Vivek pointed to accurate doctor profiling as a major gap in pharma. He recalled how prescription audits and retailer-level information were once used to understand what individual doctors were actually prescribing and what their needs could be. This enabled customized communication even before today's AI tools existed.

Practical Takeaways

- Build accurate and actionable doctor profiles.
- Understand needs, challenges, problems and aspirations.
- Use field and prescription insights to refine customer understanding.
- Translate profiles into personalized communication.
- Do not confuse a large database with genuine customer knowledge.



Power Tip: Personalization is only as good as the customer understanding behind it.



How deeply do you actually understand the doctors you are targeting?



Meaningful Conversations, Not Repeated Calls

Opening Insight

Doctors are exposed to enormous amounts of information. The challenge is no longer access to information. The challenge is relevance.

Key Message

The webinar emphasized that doctors today can access information through journals, webinars, WhatsApp, digital platforms and AI tools. If a **Medical Representative** only repeats product information, technology can eventually perform that task faster. The human opportunity lies in understanding context, building trust and creating a conversation that matters.

Practical Takeaways

- Start with the HCP's context, not your product message.
- Use available information to make conversations sharper.
- Replace repetition with relevance.
- Build trust through human understanding.
- Make every interaction worth the doctor's time.



Power Tip: Information is abundant. Relevance, context and trust are where human value grows.



If the doctor can get your product information online, why should they still want to meet you?



The Future MR: Human Value in a Digital World

Opening Insight

Technology should not make the **Medical Representative** less human. It should give the **Medical Representative** more capacity to be human.

Key Message

Shailaja explained that the future **Medical Representative** should not compete with technology. Instead, technology should strengthen the knowledge worker. Human understanding and trust are difficult to replace. The **Medical Representative's** role is therefore to use technology for information and efficiency while investing human effort where relationships, interpretation and trust matter

Practical Takeaways

- Use technology as an enabler, not a competitor.
- Focus human effort on trust and understanding.
- Let digital tools handle repetitive information tasks.
- Develop stronger consultative and relationship skills.
- Combine technology with human judgment.



Power Tip: The right question is not 'Will technology replace the **Medical Representative**?' but 'How can technology make the **Medical Representative** more valuable?'



Which parts of your current role should technology automate, and which parts should become more human?



Digital Transformation: Connect Physical + Digital

Opening Insight

Digital transformation does not always mean replacing physical engagement with digital engagement. The stronger opportunity can be to connect both intelligently.

Key Message

Shailaja shared a COVID-era product launch where the traditional physical launch model became impossible. Instead of postponing the launch, the team created a digital plan with online engagement while still using the physical materials already available. **Medical Representative's** carried the physical inputs to doctors, creating a '**Phygital**' (**Physical + Digital**) launch that combined virtual engagement with a tangible human moment.

Practical Takeaways

- Do not assume digital means eliminating physical.
- Look for ways to connect online and offline experiences.
- Use existing physical assets intelligently.
- Personalize digital engagement where possible.
- Design the experience around the customer, not around the channel.



Power Tip: The best transformation may not be digital versus physical. It may be digital plus physical, intelligently connected (phygital).



Where can your current physical and digital activities work better together?



Adapting to Change and Avoiding the Comfort Zone

Opening Insight

Change is changing. Staying relevant requires continuous learning, especially as digital and technological capabilities reshape pharma marketing.

Key Message

Vivek observed that resistance to digitalization can often come from middle-level managers, **both on the field and the corporate office**, who are comfortable with existing ways of working. His warning was direct: professionals who stop learning technology risk becoming outdated. The message applies not only to **Medical Representative's** but to marketers and managers across **all the cross functions** in the organization.

Practical Takeaways

- Identify where comfort-zone thinking is slowing change.
- Learn the technologies relevant to your role.
- Experiment before dismissing new approaches.
- Treat learning as a continuous professional responsibility.
- Use technology to make work smarter, faster and better.



Power Tip: If you stop learning while the environment keeps changing, your experience can become a limitation rather than an advantage.



What new capability are you learning today that will make you more relevant tomorrow?



Rethinking Traditional Pharma Growth Models

Opening Insight

Yesterday's growth model cannot automatically solve tomorrow's business challenges. Pharma marketers need to question whether familiar approaches are still producing meaningful growth.

Key Message

The webinar challenged participants to rethink established approaches and look for growth opportunities that have emerged more recently. The discussion moved from short-term activity and sales thinking toward brand health, patient-centricity, human-to-human marketing, stronger last-mile engagement and intelligent use of data and AI.

Practical Takeaways

- Question whether legacy growth models still fit today's market.
- Look for new sources of value across the ecosystem.
- Balance commercial outcomes with long-term brand building.
- Explore patient, caregiver and trade opportunities.
- Use data and technology to make growth decisions more intelligently.



Power Tip: A changing market demands more than a new tactic. It demands a willingness to rethink the model.



Are you solving tomorrow's challenges with yesterday's growth assumptions?



Measuring Brand Health Through Prescriptions

Opening Insight

Brand health should ultimately connect to the real-world impact of the brand. Vivek described brand health as directly proportional to the quantum of prescriptions generated for the brand, rather than simply its value. **He was carrying forward the principle laid down by his Guru, Prof. Chitta Mitra.**

Key Message

For a corporate pharma brand, he described health as the cumulative effect of prescriptions generated across its brands. The larger warning was against expecting immediate profit immediately after launch. Brand building requires time, consistency and patience rather than an overnight-results mindset.

Practical Takeaways

- Look at prescription generation as a core indicator of brand health.
- Consider the cumulative health of the corporate portfolio.
- Separate long-term brand health from short-term profit pressure.
- Avoid judging a brand too quickly after launch.
- Build systems that support sustained prescription growth.



Power Tip: A healthy brand is not built overnight. Give the brand time to earn prescriptions and trust.



Are your brand-health discussions focused on long-term prescription strength or only immediate financial results? This question too should be first addressed at the top and cascade downwards.

Reframing: *Are your brand health discussions anchored in long term prescription strength, or are they driven only by immediate financial results. This question must first be addressed by the top management and then cascade through the organization with clarity and conviction.*



Building Brands Takes Time

Opening Insight

Pharma marketing has moved through different eras, from sales-led thinking to stronger brand building and increasingly toward **Human to Human (H2H) Marketing and its healthcare specific, patient centered marketing approach.**

Key Message

Vivek described the period from independence to around 1980 as strongly sales oriented. He then identified the 1980s through the early 2000s as a defining era of brand building, followed by a gradual transition toward H2H Marketing, the healthcare specific, patient centered approach to marketing. His message was clear: if marketers expect immediate results from every new brand, they risk undermining the discipline of long-term brand building.

Practical Takeaways

- Understand the evolution of pharma marketing.
- Recognize the value of long-term brand building.
- Do not confuse immediate sales with complete brand health.
- Build assets that remain valuable beyond one campaign.
- Allow patient needs to influence the next stage of brand evolution.



Power Tip: Strong brands need trust, time, consistency and a clear reason to exist in the customer's mind.



Are you solving tomorrow's challenges with yesterday's growth assumptions?



From Brand Building to Patient-Centered Marketing

Opening Insight

The next evolution of pharma marketing is not simply about better brand communication. It is about putting the patient's experience closer to the center of the marketing model.

Key Message

Vivek described a gradual movement from traditional brand building toward patient-centered marketing and referred to patient support as an important part of this evolution. The message is that pharma should understand the **patient's journey and their** lived experience, not **just** the prescription pathway.

Practical Takeaways

- Understand the patient journey
- Understand what happens after the prescription is written.
- Consider patient needs beyond the product itself.
- Explore patient support and education opportunities.
- Include the caregiver in the patient journey.
- Build marketing around real healthcare experiences.



Power Tip: The prescription may start the journey, but the patient's experience determines what happens next.



What does your brand do for the patient after the prescription is generated?



H2H Marketing: The Human Future of Pharma

Opening Insight

Pharma marketing is ultimately human-to-human. The doctor is a human being. The patient is a human being. The pharmacist is a human being. The medical representative is a human being.

Can we have that diagram here?



Key Message

Vivek introduced H2H, or human-to-human marketing, as an important future direction. He connected this with the increasing importance of patient-centric marketing and the changing healthcare environment. The strength of pharma marketing, in his view, should come from human interaction rather than treating stakeholders only as segments, numbers or transactions.

Practical Takeaways

- See every stakeholder as a person, not merely a profile.
- Build trust through human interaction.
- Combine technology with empathy and understanding.
- Make patient-centricity a practical marketing principle.
- Move beyond narrow B2B or B2C thinking where appropriate.



Power Tip: When every stakeholder is treated as a human being, marketing becomes more empathetic, relevant and meaningful.



Where in your current marketing process have you forgotten the human being behind the data point?





Making Patient-Centricity An Organizational Mindset

Opening Insight

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Winning the Last Mile: The Retail Pharmacist

Opening Insight

The doctor may generate the prescription, but the retail pharmacist is a critical part of the journey where the product is ultimately fulfilled.

Key Message

Vivek challenged brand managers to consider how much time they personally spend with retailers. He shared the story of an 81-year-old chairman who spent substantial time visiting retailers because he wanted first-hand information rather than filtered reports. The lesson was that the last mile contains valuable market intelligence. **He also spoke about a leading company that placed such high importance on retail pharmacist marketing that, in review meetings, the focus shifted from numbers to prescription research and its insights.**

Practical Takeaways

- Spend meaningful time with retail pharmacists.
- Understand what is happening at the point of dispensing.
- Use retailer conversations to gather first-hand market intelligence.
- Learn about stock, demand and customer behavior.
- Treat the last mile as a source of strategic insight, not only distribution



Power Tip: The last mile is not merely where the product moves. It is where valuable market information lives.



When was the last time you personally spent meaningful time understanding the retail counter?



Trade Marketing as a Strategic Growth Lever

Opening Insight

Trade marketing deserves more than a short visit and a scheme discussion. Retail pharmacists need education, engagement and meaningful communication.

Key Message

The webinar highlighted examples where companies invested in educating chemists and gave retail pharmacists dedicated communication material. Vivek recalled using a separate visual aid for retail pharmacists, treating them with importance comparable to doctors. The discussion also emphasized the need for pharmacist education because inappropriate substitutions can create serious problems.

Practical Takeaways

- Give trade partners dedicated communication and education.
- Do not reduce retailer engagement to schemes and offers.
- Understand pharmacist needs and knowledge gaps.
- Use the retail channel to strengthen availability and brand understanding.
- Treat trade engagement as part of brand building.



Power Tip: A retail call should add value to the pharmacist, not simply check that a visit happened.



What is the real objective of your retailer interaction: a visit, a scheme, or a valuable relationship?



AI: From Automation to Augmentation to Transformation

Opening Insight

Pharma is becoming better at digitizing processes, but digitization alone does not guarantee smarter decisions. The real question is what decisions change because of the data and AI.

The real opportunity is not to make the existing pharmaceutical model simply “more digital.” It is to use AI to rethink how decisions are made from identifying the right HCP, to understanding patient needs and predicting market behaviour, deciding where the next best action should come from.

Key Message

Shailaja described three maturity levels: automation, augmentation and transformation. Automation makes existing work faster through report generation, data entry, cleansing and content creation. Augmentation supports predictive analysis, sales forecasting, targeting and customer insights. Transformation changes the decisions organizations make and how they operate.

The key question at this stage is: “Can AI save people time and reduce repetitive work?”

The value is primarily efficiency, speed and consistency.

Practical Takeaways

- **Level 1:** Automation makes existing work faster.
- **Level 2:** Augmentation improves analysis and prediction.
- **Level 3:** Transformation changes decisions and operating models.
- Move beyond producing reports to producing better insights which enable better decisions.
- Assess where your organization currently sits on the maturity curve.

The mistake many organizations make is trying to jump directly to transformation without building the foundations. Poor-quality data, fragmented systems, weak governance and lack of user trust can prevent even the simplest AI application from delivering value.

A Simple Test For Ai Maturity

A useful way to assess an organization's maturity is to ask three questions:

Question 1: Automation: “Are we using AI to eliminate repetitive work?”

Question 2: Augmentation: “Are we using AI to improve the quality of human decisions?”

Question 3: Transformation: “Has AI changed the way we make decisions, serve customers or operate the business?”

If the answer is only “yes” to the first question, the organization is using AI primarily as an efficiency tool. If it reaches the third question, AI is beginning to become a strategic capability.



Power Tip: Efficiency is doing the same work faster. Intelligence is using information to make a better decision.



Is your organization using AI to save time, or to change the decisions it makes?



Data, AI & the Future of Pharma Decision-Making

Opening Insight

The future of digital pharma marketing will depend on how intelligently organizations connect data across customer, digital, patient, caregivers and trade ecosystems.

Key Message

The webinar highlighted applications across competitor analysis, digital analytics, patient insights and trade analytics. AI can detect emerging competitor patterns, analyze engagement intent, explore patient sentiment and predict stock-out risks. It can also support personalized communication, resource-efficiency mapping and campaign ROI analysis. Yet human interaction remains important, especially for understanding caregivers and situations that data alone may not capture.

Practical Takeaways

- Use AI for continuous competitor and market pattern analysis.
- Move digital measurement from clicks toward behavior and intent.
- Use patient insights to understand discontinuation and sentiment.
- Use trade analytics for demand and stock-out prediction.
- Integrate data points to support meaningful decisions.
- Keep human understanding and judgment in the loop.
- Use AI to make work smarter, faster and better, not simply more automated.
- Build cross-functional AI use cases rather than isolated analytics dashboards. Marketing, sales, medical, market access and supply teams can often create greater value when they look at the same signals together.

