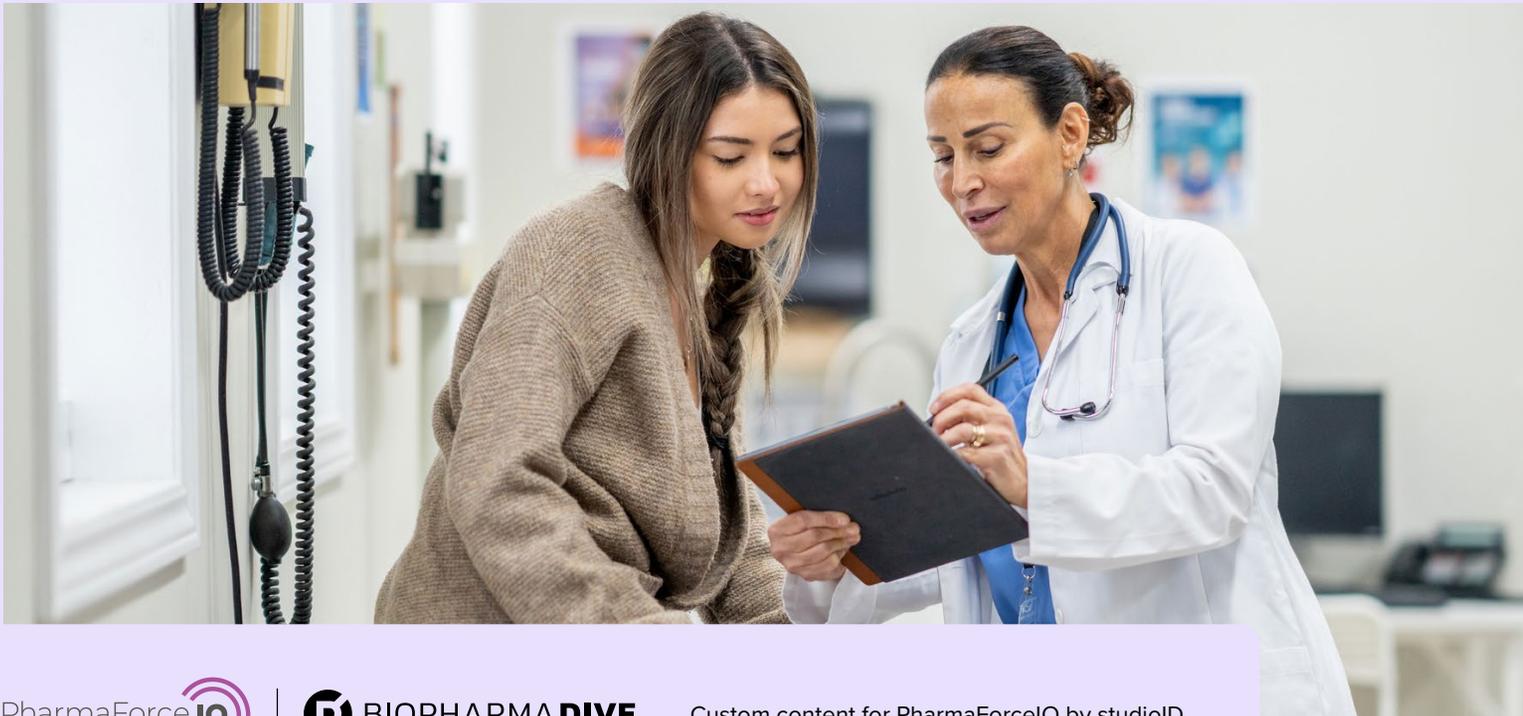


LESS WASTE, MORE IMPACT

Why pharma's omnichannel dreams need an optichannel reality check



PharmaForce **IQ**



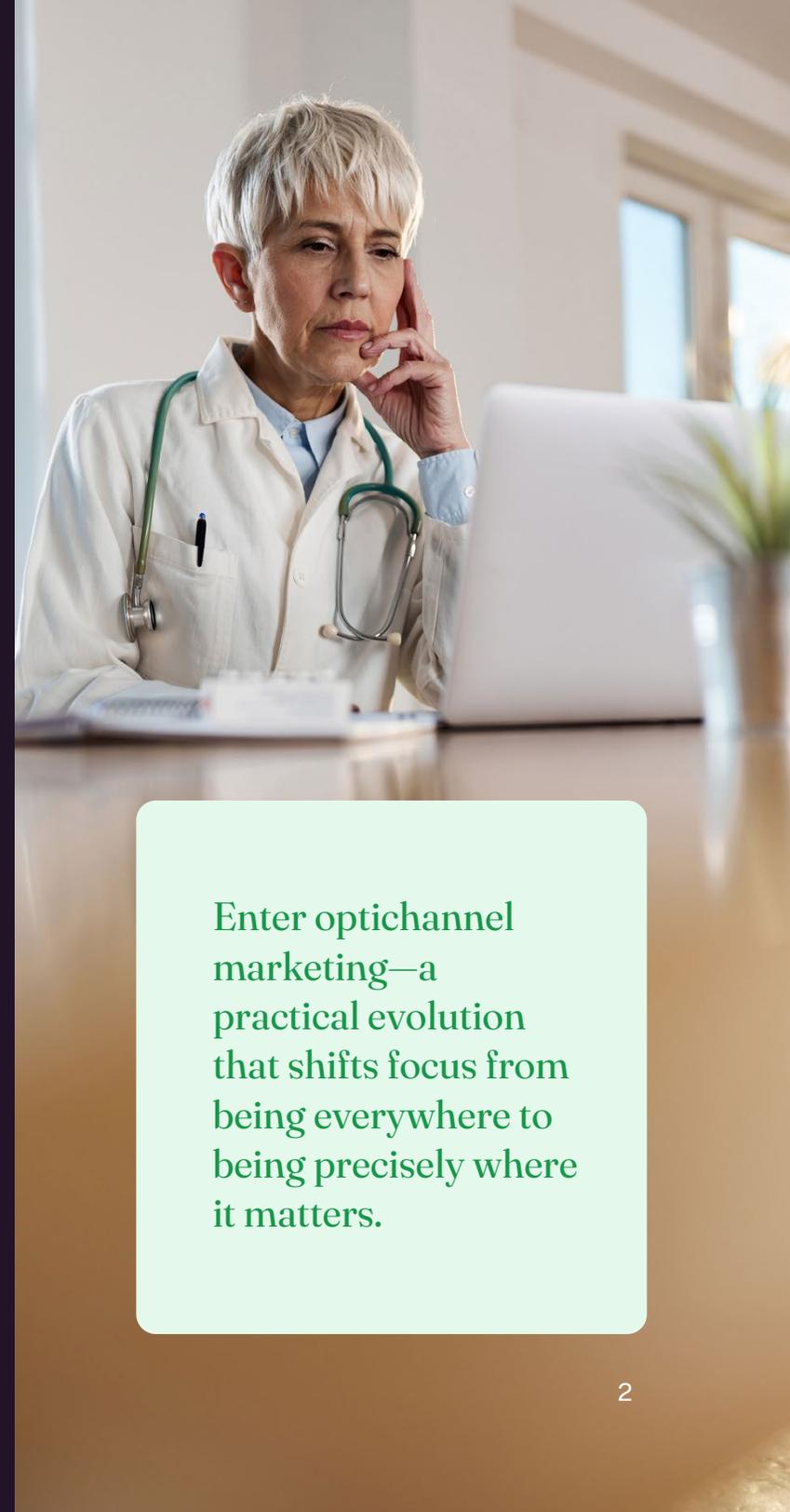
BIOPHARMA DIVE

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Life science marketers are at a crossroads. While the industry slowly evolves from the marketing practices of the blockbuster drug era, today's audiences demand something fundamentally different. Sprawling omnichannel strategies promised to be everywhere at once, but have delivered fragmented experiences and inefficient spend as they come up against legacy systems and conservative company cultures. As budget pressures intensify and specialty drugs dominate FDA approvals, marketers can't afford to keep pouring resources into channels that don't perform.

Enter optichannel marketing—a practical evolution that shifts focus from being everywhere to being precisely where it matters. Unlike omnichannel methods that aim for broad, “always on” presence across platforms, optichannel marketing leans on real-time, real-world data insights to invest exclusively in the channels that will actually move the needle.

For life sciences leaders facing pressure to demonstrate ROI, this shift presents a massive opportunity to transform how they connect with healthcare professionals (HCPs) and patients.



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The omnichannel promise vs. reality

The omnichannel concept swept through life sciences marketing with bold promises: seamless customer journeys, coordinated messaging across every touchpoint, and the ultimate goal of being wherever your audience might be. On paper, it looked transformational. In practice, it often became a resource-draining exercise in checkbox marketing.

“In pharma, a lot of marketers might say they’re doing omnichannel, hitting a variety of digital outlets constantly. But there’s limited orchestration behind it,” explains J.J. Ferrer, Head of Precision Medicine, Strategy & Commercialization at Merus. “How deep are you going into real-time behavioral data to trigger immediate, personalized engagement when each recipient shows signs of interest?”

At its core, omnichannel marketing has merit. “When you think omnichannel, by definition, omni is just all channels speaking to each other in a coordinated fashion to deliver a journey flow to a customer,” explains Hemal Somaiya, Chief Strategy Officer at PharmaForceIQ.

Optichannel marketing offers a more sophisticated alternative. “Optichannel is much more dynamic and chooses the best channel,” notes Ferrer.

“Beyond ensuring customers have a cohesive experience wherever they engage with your brand, you’re using real-time behavioral data to reach them at precisely the right moment and channel, with the most relevant message.”

HEMAL SOMAIYA, Chief Strategy Officer at PharmaForceIQ

The implementation gap

Omnichannel implementations often fall short of their transformative potential. Instead of delivering true personalization, many organizations faced with implementation challenges have settled for segment-level messaging that treats groups of HCPs as monolithic blocks rather than individuals with distinct preferences and behaviors. The result? Disconnected experiences where physicians receive conflicting messages from field teams and digital channels, fragmented journeys with long gaps between touchpoints, and generic communications that feel irrelevant to their practice needs.

Omnichannel's broad-brush approach is a costly one. Corporate cultures and marketing practices in life sciences notoriously lag behind other industries, while industry dynamics have drastically changed. **Today's audiences demand hyper-personalized, high-context information through their preferred channels, researchers say.**¹ Yet there's a severe disconnect between where companies believe they are and where they actually stand in their digital journey—a gap that widens as technology advances and customer expectations evolve.

"The 'spray and pray' approach is not the answer," Somaiya cautions. "You don't need to be in every channel. You need to be hyper-targeted and personalized, reaching the right HCPs at the right moments to improve results while cutting costs."

OMNICHANNEL MARKETING

"Be everywhere consistently"

"Spray and pray" approach, with broad presence across many platforms

Limited personalization

Static or outdated data drives campaigns

Siloed efforts and disconnected messaging between sales and marketing

OPTICHANNEL MARKETING

"Be where it matters, when it matters"

Precision-triggered engagement on optimal channels based on individual behaviors

Hyper-personalization

Real-time behavioral signals trigger immediate responses

Enhanced marketing-sales alignment via shared targeting and data insights on individual targets

Why optichannel matters now: Industry forces driving change

Budget pressures intensify this need for precision. Traditional media-buying models create additional inefficiencies: agencies typically earn a percentage of total spend, inherently incentivizing broader, costlier campaigns rather than efficient targeting.

Several converging forces make the shift to optichannel marketing not just beneficial, but essential for competitive advantage.

For one, specialty medications now account for 80% of new drug approvals.² This reality fundamentally changes the marketing equation. Unlike blockbuster drugs targeting massive populations, specialty medications often address rare diseases or highly specific patient subsets. Smaller addressable markets demand precision targeting, not broad-reach campaigns.

“When you’re going after a niche patient population and want to remain hyper-targeted, you need a completely different approach,” Somaiya notes. “You can’t afford to waste impressions on physicians who will never encounter eligible patients.”

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Consumer expectations add further complexity. Research reveals that 91% of consumers prefer to engage with brands providing relevant, personalized messaging,³ and brands that excel at personalization are more likely to exceed revenue goals and improve customer loyalty.⁴ In healthcare, where HCPs are bombarded with communications from multiple pharma and medical device brands, this expectation for relevance becomes even more pronounced.

The optichannel advantage

Optichannel addresses these challenges by reframing the marketing equation. Instead of asking “How can we be everywhere constantly?” the question becomes “Where can we create the most impact with our available resources?”

This sophistication hinges on data integrations. J.J. Ferrer shares an example: “We’ve worked with a framework where we decided which HCP behavioral triggers are important to us, and what type of content goes out to a physician when those triggers happen. We have parameters based on customer relevancy and engagement behaviors. That’s all based on data.”

By synthesizing behavioral signals across thousands of platforms—website interactions, conference attendance, publication downloads—marketers can access real-time pictures of each HCP’s interests and engagement patterns. Machine learning algorithms then determine not just what message to deliver, but when and through which channel for maximum impact.





Enhancing sales and marketing alignment

Optichannel capabilities transform sales and marketing relationships. **“I’ve seen a real shift from siloed efforts to shared ownership,”** notes J.J. Ferrer. **“Sales and marketing now align more closely on targeting and timing, with data helping both sides understand where to focus and how to add value for the HCP.”**

Just as important, the optichannel approach enables intelligent lifecycle marketing strategies. Hemal Somaiya advises that effective campaigns should “start way before launch, with clinical trial recruitment,” identifying when physicians have diagnosed eligible patients, launching educational outreach, and creating continuous optimization loops through the product lifecycle.

For specialty drugs that typically peak at eight to 12 months post-launch, this optimization becomes critical for sustaining growth momentum. “How do you retain or grow your market share, instead of plateauing?” Somaiya asks. “Optichannel is the best way to do it because you are delivering a very personalized story flow at key moments of opportunity.”

Real-world lessons: How an oncology brand fueled HCP engagement while slashing its media spend

+10%

They grew HCP engagement
by 10% and market share
by 3% while reducing their
media spend by 35%.

The power of optichannel marketing comes into focus through real-world results. Consider the case of a mature oncology drug whose marketing team pulled off a rare feat: They grew HCP engagement by 10% and market share by 3% while reducing their media spend by 35%.

As Somaiya recounts, this team wanted to improve their spend efficiency without losing market share to competitors. The shift to optichannel thinking enabled them to move from broad, always-on campaigns to precision targeting based on real-time behavioral signals, leveraging PharmaForcelQ's integrations to identify optimal engagement opportunities.

"We are plugged into more than 25,000 websites, platforms, and publishers, and a variety of CRM platforms," Somaiya explains. "We're able to pinpoint moments like someone searching for your brand online, attending a speaker program, stopping by your conference booth, or downloading a publication about your competitor." These are moments of opportunity to bring into your optichannel flows. Instead of constantly broadcasting, the oncology brand could reach HCPs at moments they were most likely to engage.

The efficiency gains were so significant, the team expanded their channel mix while reducing overall costs. "Without the traditional media fee model, the brand still saved money while improving HCP engagement and impact," Somaiya adds.

Vetting an optichannel solution: Key considerations

As more marketers recognize the optichannel potential, they also recognize the value of leveraging the access and data infrastructure of partners who've already mastered these capabilities. A few key considerations can help marketers select an ideal partner that can deliver significant, sustainable value.

DATA INTEGRATION

For starters, data integration capabilities should top evaluation criteria, J.J. Ferrer emphasizes—especially when you're moving to real-time adaptive engagement.

“Data is the essence that’s driving channel and messaging orchestration,” he says. “Where are you going to get data? Is it clean, reliable intel?”

CHANNEL AND TECH

STACK INTEGRATION

Equally critical are the breadth and quality of channel integrations, as well as integration with your existing tech stacks. You should be able to detect behavioral triggers and respond with relevant messaging within hours, not days or weeks. “When I say real time, I mean less than 24 hours from when we know something,” says Ferrer.

STRATEGIC PARTNER

Ferrer also advises approaching vendors as strategic partners working toward shared goals. “Seek a partner who understands your goals and what it will take to meet them. If you're just going to throw things into a system and not optimize it continuously, it's not going to work. Take the time to ensure everyone you're working with has the same vision,” he says.

VENDOR EXPERIENCE

Put vendor claims to the test: Consider their track record with similar organizations and their ability to demonstrate measurable results. Request case studies, client references, and specific examples of how their solution has driven efficiency, engagement, and ROI gains for comparable brands.

Looking ahead: Magnifying your marketing ROI with optichannel

The life sciences marketing landscape will continue to shift at an accelerating pace. **Organizations that master optichannel capabilities now will build a sustainable competitive edge, while those leaning on outdated approaches risk falling further behind.**

Begin by auditing current marketing performance and identifying opportunities for improved targeting precision. Simultaneously, invest in data infrastructure, integrations, and partnerships that enable optichannel success. “Data-driven strategies are here to stay, and upskilling around data, analytics, and AI-driven tools will be essential for marketers to succeed,” Somaiya says.

The optichannel approach offers a clear path forward: more precise targeting, more relevant messaging, more fruitful investments, and ultimately, more meaningful connections with the healthcare professionals and patients who matter most to your brand’s success.

Optichannel means
smarter reach.
Faster activation.
Better outcomes.

Turn your marketing into an ROI-driven engine. Explore how an optichannel transformation can unlock results that help your team win and ensure you never miss a moment that matters.

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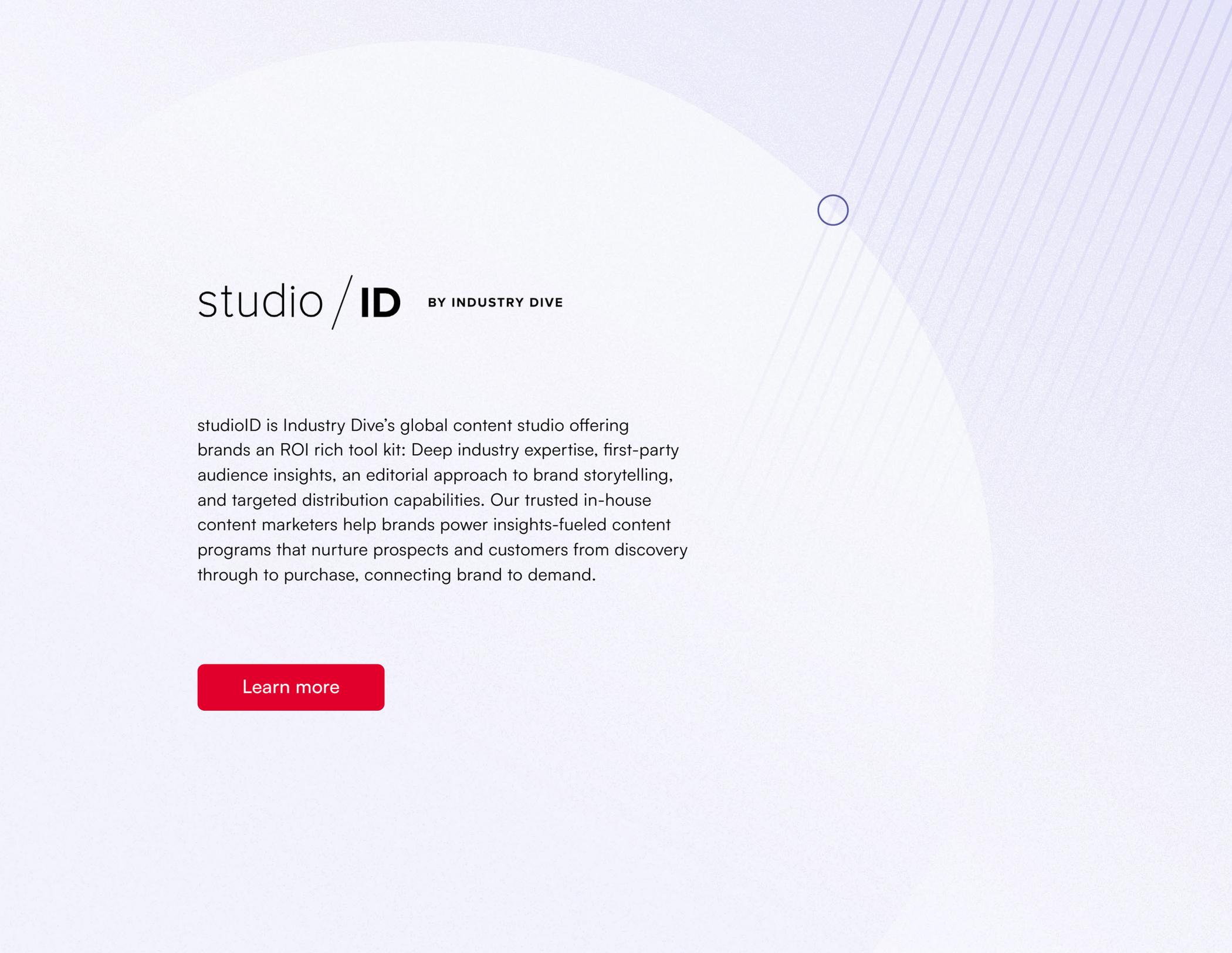
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PharmaForceIQ is a real-time engagement platform built specifically for life sciences, giving you an unfair advantage in reaching and engaging HCPs and patients. Our platform unites deep affinity data for 7M+ HCPs, signals from dozens of real-world data sources, streamlined optichannel execution across 25K+ sites/platforms, and live Rx-level reporting to understand ROI. Experience the power of true agility: launch on the optimal mix for your audience, optimize campaigns mid-flight, and prove impact fast. With dynamic targeting and deployment, you never miss a moment that matters.

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