

# How Agile, Data-Driven Optichannel Marketing Can Maximise ROI

Despite the promise of omnichannel marketing, many pharma leaders are failing to see results. Here PharmaForcelQ's Saraiyah Hatter unpacks the challenges of omnichannel and shares how an optichannel strategy leverages live data to drive optimal channel selection, optimise campaigns and maximise budgets.

Around half of leading pharmaceutical organisations now consider themselves “advanced” when it comes to omnichannel maturity.<sup>1</sup> However, despite increasing adoption, almost 4 in 5 pharma leaders say omnichannel strategies have had little to no impact on customer engagement.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, almost 7 in 10 pharma marketers rate the medical marketing industry's progress in adopting AI as “behind where it needs to be”.<sup>3</sup>

In a changing life sciences landscape, we need to understand why omnichannel approaches are underperforming and how we can harness artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced technology to overcome barriers to campaign success.

Optichannel marketing overcomes gaps and delivers transparent, data-driven impact. It allows companies to maximise campaign relevance, efficiency and spend by making the optimal channel selection for each customer based on real-world data and AI applications. It also offers the opportunity to adjust and optimise throughout campaigns based on dynamic customer behaviour data and deliver on business outcomes like Rx lift.

## Challenges with Omnichannel Approaches

In an era of increasing budget pressures, pharmaceutical companies can no longer afford to spend on broad, costly campaigns which fail to reach their intended audiences. If they do, many HCPs report feeling bombarded due to uncoordinated deployment and orchestration from companies leveraging static, always-on media. Up to 2 in 3 new product launches in the US are missing projected revenue targets.<sup>4</sup>

The shifts from blockbuster drugs to specialty medicines and from field-driven

to digitally-driven engagement have also seen a deepened focus on personalisation. Almost half of pharma leaders say they need to learn how to better use data to offer more personalised experiences.<sup>2</sup>

Limited budgets, siloed systems and a lack of clear vision are all seen as barriers to omnichannel campaign success. A historic lack of transparency in media buying also makes it hard to track spend – and understand what is delivering results, namely prescription lift. Even when insights are unlocked, lagging indicators often result in optimisation only happening a few times a year. This means spend can be left inefficient or wasted for months at a time.

So, how can we overcome these issues and harness data to create more personalised experiences which lead to better business outcomes?

## The Role of Optichannel Marketing in Pharma

Much like omnichannel strategies, optichannel marketing emphasises the need to create coordinated customer experience across different channels. However, it harnesses new technology and data to go much further.

Optichannel approaches ensure omnichannel best practices are implemented to sync field and digital in real-time and deliver tailored content. They then layer on real-world data-driven precision by instantly incorporating audience and engagement data. This drives optimal channel selection, personalises and optimises campaigns, creates agility, and maximises budget.

As budgets continue to tighten, optichannel marketing enables investment in the set of channels that make the most sense for an audience rather than aiming for broad cross-channel coverage. These decisions are data-driven based on both channel performance and granular customer behaviour and preference insights.

This approach has several benefits. Firstly, it avoids wasting budget on platforms which are not right for the target audience. Secondly, it focuses on efficiency and making trade-

offs. The priority is high quality engagement which will lead to more impactful customer experiences rather than a “spray and pray” approach. Thirdly, a narrower channel mix makes it easier to track investments. Understanding what is working, and what is not, allows for agile pivots as conditions shift. Finally, machine learning (ML) can power continual iteration and rapid improvement as behaviour and performance data is ingested and analysed in real time.

## Using Data to Optimise Campaigns

Optichannel campaigns are data-driven to enable real-time optimisation and flexibility. Grounded in a deep understanding of audiences and channels, they require a clear data strategy and a robust two-way data infrastructure. Compliant flow of data across all relevant internal systems is also key, although this can be challenging when dealing with legacy systems.

Because optichannel campaigns are rooted in analytics, campaign optimisations based on engagement data can be made in real time to maximise investments, as opposed to waiting months to identify engagement deficits. This rapid assessment of audience preferences and behaviours allows maximum engagement for the least spend.

Optichannel also makes the most of new technologies. By using direct from source data pipelines and harnessing ML models, it dynamically adjusts to inform the next best action for channel and vendor media selection. This optimises healthcare professional (HCP) engagement rates without locking in specific channel buys.

Instead of casting a wide net and trying to use every available platform, optichannel champions quality over quantity by making the most of the optimal channels that truly engage the target audience.

## Connecting Deployments to Concrete Outcomes

The same two-way data integrations which optimise channel selection can offer further insights for marketers. Dynamic dashboards share real-time insights via intuitive visualisations. Insights into engagement and script lift can be combined with NPI-level

tracking to connect specific deployments to concrete outcomes.

Transparency is the goal throughout. Internal teams or optichannel partners should be able to share data and recommendations throughout the campaign to optimise performance and improve business outcomes.

The opportunity for customisation throughout makes this a truly flexible approach which can maximise ROI. Companies using optichannel approaches have increased HCP engagement while saving 20–30% or more on media compared to traditional campaigns.

### A Hyper-Personalised Experience

Optichannel campaigns build on the omnichannel experience companies have already invested in. They then go further to deliver hyper-personalised content by layering a deep understanding of individual audience preferences and behaviours.

By matching client target lists to AI-driven profiles for each HCP, optichannel reveals the specific channel, vendor, format, and message type that will resonate most with each provider. It then deploys assets in individualised next-best-action sequences according to those preferences to create a more efficient campaign and improve performance. Triggered media deployments based on real-world signals mean you can also pull non-list HCPs who have eligible patients into campaigns to expand impacts. They also allow for real-time targeting of critical HCPs unable to be reached via traditional personal promotion channels, which becomes increasingly important for rare and ultra-rare diseases.

Marketing teams can also be empowered with data integrations which provide instant updates based on current behaviours. Insights can include HCP's most visited medical sites, whether they prioritise efficacy or safety data and their preferences around peer-to-peer learning or rep touchpoints. This allows teams to target those most likely to engage and supports true personalisation.

For example, a brand team launching a niche cancer treatment focused on the tactics and channels target providers were most likely to engage with. These decisions were based on up-to-date real-world data. The campaign deployed targeted content via endemic display and custom media with top-preference publishers. It also included emails, electronic health records (EHRs) and sales rep



visits based on up-to-the-minute insights into audience interests and behaviours. Ongoing optimisations throughout the campaign were made based on real-time engagement data. The result was engagement with 40% of target providers in year one – and the brand achieved 1.9 times the industry standard for monthly Rx share during launch.

### Time for a Change in Marketing Strategies

The pharmaceutical industry has changed, and marketing strategies need to evolve alongside it. With budgets under increasing pressure, we cannot afford to keep pouring resources into channels which do not perform. An integrated data structure, combined with new technologies, offers the opportunity for efficient data sharing and real-time insights.

Optichannel marketing maximises personalisation, effectiveness, and resource allocation. Unlike traditional opaque approaches, it offers transparency, and the ability to invest in the set of channels which make the most sense for the target audience. Ultimately, this allows campaigns to deliver on business outcomes like Rx lift faster and more transparently than ever before.

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