

This article comes from Agnitio's 'Digital Academy' – an information series that aims to create debate and communicate best practice in digital sales communication. To sign up for more, simply join our mailing list.

Agnitio: The Digital Academy

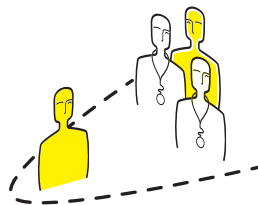
The importance of strategy in digital sales

This is a turning point for pharmaceutical marketing. Right now, technology is being implemented that will shape how we relate to healthcare professionals in the years to come. So it's important to be certain about the kind of future that we want to create.

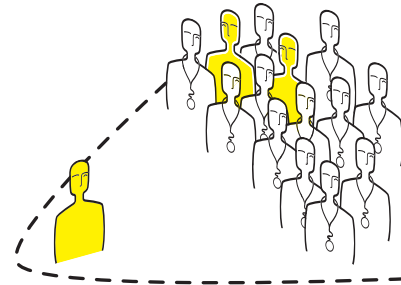
There are currently two schools of thought. The first says that we apply technology to improve what we are currently doing. The second school says that the technology should enable us to try something new and seek better ways to relate to our customers.

The efficiency school

As to the first school, it's inarguable that technology does offer great opportunities for more efficiency. Removing paper from communications means that we can produce materials faster and no longer need to physically transport them around the world. It has a major impact. Effectively you can reduce the amount of time between campaigns.



Traditional marketing is a broadcast



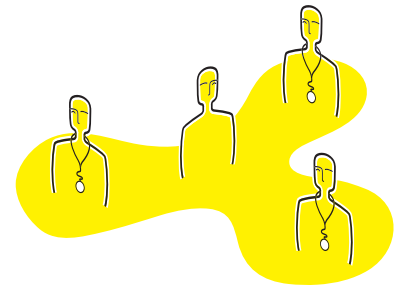
The efficiency is a 'better' broadcast

Yet the 'efficiency school' doesn't solve the underlying problem, which is that healthcare professionals feel over-marketed to and increasingly close themselves off from the industry. In fact, increasing the amount of contacts actually seems to reduce the attention that you get from healthcare professionals.

Adding technology simply makes for more efficient 'push' communication – one-way, mass messaging. So efficiency here means that we can shout louder and more often but doesn't fundamentally change what we're doing. Or how our customers will react. It's like trying to treat side effects by increasing the dose. How can that work?

The relevancy school

The second school treats technology as opportunity to do something new. Information technology can mean more than efficiency; it can actually help us communicate better.



The relevancy school switches from groups to individuals for more engaged communications

It's now possible to relate to our customers in ways that were simply unimaginable before. We can stop alienating healthcare professionals with irrelevant information. Instead we can use technology to work on an individual level and match each healthcare professional's particular needs. In effect, we can move from 'push' to 'pull' communication.

If we make use of the full opportunities that information technology offers, we can create individualized communication that takes healthcare professionals' personal understanding, needs and interests into account. This means highly relevant information. And that means higher value for the customer.

A strategic approach

This is a huge opportunity. Firstly, we free ourselves from running mass campaigns, which only addressed the needs and concerns of a subset of customers and could only be run at certain times. Now we can start doing continual communication that precisely matches healthcare professionals' knowledge level on any particular topic. This is revolutionary. It means that our outreach to customers stops being an annoyance and starts bringing true value.

Unfortunately, as we have seen with the 'first school', simply adding technology won't automatically bring this about. If we only change the technology then we can only achieve the efficiency. To realize its full potential, we need to change our behavior – and raise our expectations too.

About Agnitio

Agnitio helps life science companies generate effective relationships with medical professionals. The provider of the leading pull marketing software platform for the pharmaceutical and medical device industries, Agnitio's system is already implemented in more than 45 countries and 25 languages – and used by major pharmaceutical and medical device companies including: AMGEN, Allergan, Grünenthal, Roche, and Bayer.

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