

DRIVING MEDICAL AFFAIRS  
TOWARD A  
**DIGITAL  
FUTURE**

**A SUMMARY OF RESEARCH INTERVIEWS**

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## Background

The thoughts in the document have been derived from the perspectives shared by the members of the Indegene **PharmaFuture™** Medical Affairs Digital Strategy Council, a platform dedicated to the open exchange of insights and ideas among senior pharma leaders, during the council's first meeting held in New York on May 7, 2019.

The speakers shed light on the current state of digital evolution in life sciences, best practices for integrating digital practices into the ecosystem, and what it means for the organization in the long run.



## Meet the Council Members



**Mary Alice Dwyer**  
Chair



**Dominick Albano**  
VP, Pfizer



**Kevin Asher**  
VP, Allergan



**Christiane Nina Belly**  
Lead, MSD



**Robyn Bilmes**  
Head, WW Medical  
Capabilities, BMS



**Donna Booth**  
Sr Dir, GSK



**Mike Elliott**  
VP, Gilead



**Andrew Fariello**  
VP, AstraZeneca



**Maureen Feeney**  
VP, Takeda



**Sarah Guadagno**  
VP, Alexion



**Meg Heim**  
VP, Sanofi



**Michael Kavanaugh**  
Exec Dir, BI



**Deb Long**  
VP, Vertex



**Juan Nadal**  
VP, Bayer



**Jennifer Riggins**  
Advisor, Lilly



**Bill Strickland**  
Exec Dir, AstraZeneca



**Richard Swank**  
Exec Dir, Amgen



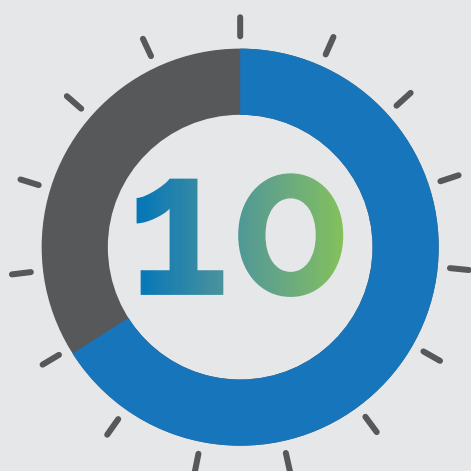
**David Tang**  
VP, Allergan



**Andy Williams**  
Sr Dir, GSK



**Robin Winter-Sperry**  
Head, Field-based  
Medical, Sanofi Genzyme



**out of 15 organizations**  
do not have a mature  
enterprise-wide digital strategy

## What Is the State of Digital Readiness?

**The majority of organizations either do not have an enterprise-wide digital strategy or are in the initial stages of developing or communicating the strategy.**

- Medical Affairs mostly functions independently of the enterprise strategy while driving digital initiatives
- However, digital initiatives within Medical Affairs often run in silos, driven by ad hoc projects and requirements

### 1 Medical Affairs digital strategy as part of enterprise strategy

The majority of Medical Affairs organizations have the autonomy to define their own digital strategy, and in some cases, CMOs lead the enterprise-wide strategy.

### 2 Prioritizing digital initiatives within Medical Affairs

Within Medical Affairs, digital initiatives compete for funding and the need to prove value proposition/business cases.

### 3 Long-term goals for digital transformation within Medical Affairs

Most of the organizations are at an early stage of formalizing their strategy, with a few focusing on building the infrastructure before looking at their goals.

"For medical, digital is a priority, but we either have to piggyback off a commercial or enterprise-wide initiative or come up with a specific case and then try to get funding."

"Until we put the right infrastructure into place, it will be hard to have digital adoption because you're just asking others to do the tactics."



**out of 15 organizations**  
indicated changing customer (HCPs,  
payers, and patients) expectations  
as the key driver for adopting digital

"HCPs are starting to expect from Pharma what they get in the consumer space (like the Amazon experience) where consumers demand instant response, and the ability to do things quickly and simply."

"We can see both an internal urgency for the efficiency and access, and an external urgency to deliver information in a user-friendly format for the HCPs."

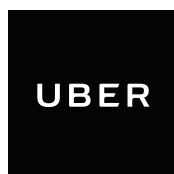
## What's Driving Digital Transformation?

**The changing external customer experience, technological advancements, data explosion, and the need for internal efficiencies emerged as the key urgency drivers for digital transformation.**

- The role of Medical Affairs is evolving as they have an opportunity to leverage digital technologies and transform the way pharma organizations engage with HCPs and patients



**NETFLIX**



**amazon**

"Our best experience anywhere becomes our expectation everywhere."

**Steve Mason**, Multichannel & Marketing Cloud Expert



**out of 15 organizations**  
indicated resourcing constraints and  
funding as the key challenges for  
driving digital

## What Are the Key Challenges?

**Lack of a culture of innovation, resourcing constraints, and siloed digital activities emerged as the key challenges for digital transformation.**

- Although driving digital evolution is a priority for the majority of the organizations, the legacy structure and culture often pose a big challenge for adopting digital



Lack of a culture of  
innovation



Siloed digital  
activities



Application  
of technology



Lack of resources and  
capabilities



Cost-value analysis of  
digital initiatives



Change  
management



Data  
explosion



Lack of  
regulatory clarity

"The key challenge is the cost of digital: the fact that the innovations come fast and furious and we have to keep coming out with new things and new ideas."

"We're pretty entrepreneurial, with each group going in their own direction and doing their own things in digital. So, I think one of the challenges is to come back to what's our overall digital strategy."



**11**  
out of 15 organizations  
are actively running one or more  
digital pilots/initiatives in different  
areas

"Technology can be sexy, but it can be scary. You need to be focused and avoid distraction from the shiny objects (cool tech stuff with minimal value)."

"Wherever you have repetitive activities that are fairly mundane, AI could actually do those things better than humans."

## Where Do We Begin?

**While the focus areas for digital transformation in Medical Affairs vary across organizations, the majority of the members are actively engaged in finding digital solutions to drive efficiencies in their core functions.**

- Med Info and MLR review are two areas that are ripe for automation
- Field medical and external engagements are emerging opportunities for digital

### Med Info:

How do we use automation and technology to make Med Info more dynamic and efficient?

### Data Insights:

How do we use analytics to derive real-time data insights?

### Publications:

How do we make publications more interactive and user-friendly?

### MLR:

How do we automate routine processes within MLR reviews?

### Advisory Board:

How do we set up virtual engagements with KOLs?

### MSL:

What are the right digital tools to support and train MSLs?

### CRM:

How do we leverage CRM platforms to draw meaningful insights for Medical Affairs?

### External Engagement:

How do we redefine customer engagement through on-demand and customized content?

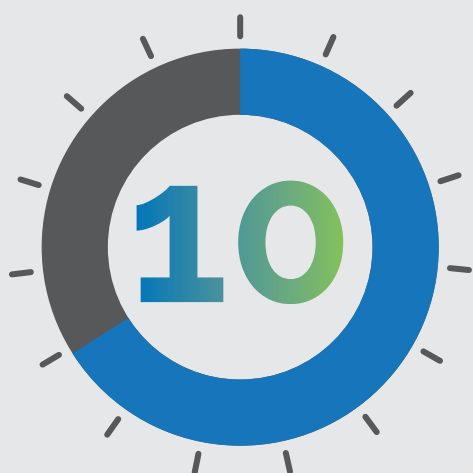
### Patients:

What role should Medical Affairs play in advancing patient centricity?

### Med Communication:

How do we incorporate analytics into our communication strategy?





**10**  
out of 15 organizations  
are actively looking for or working  
with individuals with non-traditional  
capabilities

## How Do We Jump-start Our Digital Journey?

**The majority of organizations indicated a clear need for new capabilities in Medical Affairs to accelerate their digital journey.**

- Medical Affairs organizations are focusing on individuals who can bring external expertise and data science capabilities to the team

### 1 Partner with enterprise-wide data and analytics teams

A few Medical Affairs organizations are partnering with enterprise-wide data and analytics teams to accelerate digital evolution in Medical Affairs.

### 2 Hire resources with external expertise and data science background

Almost 50% (8/15) of the organizations are considering or working with resources with external expertise or data science background to advance digital in Medical Affairs.

### 3 Work with external solution providers to leapfrog digital transformation

A few Medical Affairs organizations are partnering with external solution providers to leverage cutting-edge technology to leapfrog their digital journey in Medical Affairs.

"AI will help in tracking down and spotting trends, but the analysts still have to look through and see what it means to organizations and our patients."

"You don't need all kinds of resources at all the time; you may need specific resources for specific tasks. You have to have different partners for different kinds of data sets."

## What Does the Future Look Like?

"One of our big focus areas is personalization and how we can do it in the medical space. Most of the things we're hearing now are on the commercial space, but we want to figure out how we can do that in a meaningful and non-creepy way in the Medical Affairs space.

We know that if we're providing value, they don't necessarily see us to be creepy, as compared to if we're not bringing any value."



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