



Empowering Pharma Field Reps in a Competitive Sales Landscape

Introduction

A major division of a research-based pharmaceutical company needed a way to prepare its field forces to compete in a fiercely competitive environment. The pharma company was the sole manufacturer of a particular new drug; however, in just 18 short months, development of an equivalent would be up for grabs by competitors.

Challenge

It is a business imperative that this global pharma company maintains its strong market position. To do this, they needed to enable their field teams to drive more consistent business results.

The company recognized it had to overhaul its selling strategy. Specifically, they wanted to improve the quality of sales reps' conversations with healthcare providers (HCPs) by streamlining and reorganizing valuable product knowledge and making it more accessible.



Since it's very costly to take sales reps out of the field for training, the pharma company required a solution that allows field reps to learn in the flow of work. The company also needed a technology platform to deliver, reinforce, and measure knowledge growth.

Performance Development Group (PDG) has a long history of helping life sciences companies transform their sales organizations. The pharma company approached PDG for advice on how to prepare its field force for this onslaught of competition. PDG knows that to be successful, the company has to arm sales reps with the skills and information needed to sell its product more competitively. Sales reps not only need access to deep product knowledge, but they must also understand the science behind the drug to engage in meaningful clinical conversations. In addition, they need to understand the customer's journey and buying habits and how to sell in virtual and hybrid environments.

Solution

PDG met with the pharma company's division leaders to determine the Knowledge Institute's performance objectives and developed a strategic roadmap of content aligned with the commercial leader's strategic business initiatives of driving more valuable conversations with HCPs. The client also wanted to ensure that the Knowledge Institute was optional. As such, it was promoted as a method to help sales teams spend more time selling.

Since there wasn't much existing content to pour into the new platform, the project team had to dig for information that would be meaningful and relevant to the sales reps and develop a lot of content from scratch.

The project team reviewed and organized all existing clinical content and proceeded to break down long-form content into smaller, more digestible sections.

To make the content more engaging, interactive, and memorable, PDG developed a combination of graphic novels, games, PDFs, and videos. For example, the team created Voice of the Colleague videos containing snippets discussing a best practice, technique, or tip. In addition, PDG used some information as topics for podcasts and panel interviews.

Each quarter, PDG focused on critical information as it pertained to new product rollouts and key clinical product changes. The company evaluated several platforms to facilitate this process and chose an AI solution to house and deliver the information, which helped to reinforce clinical content and improve selling and business skills. The system was designed to save the company millions of dollars in travel and expenses from attending live training events.



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The program started with the delivery of general content (omnichannel/multi-channel). PDG then built the program into specific clinical and therapeutic knowledge paths, including cardio, respiratory, and metabolic. To improve retention, the content was sectioned into bite-sized chunks. Participants were quizzed in fun and engaging ways to reinforce knowledge.

PDG leveraged artificial intelligence (AI) technology to tailor the knowledge path to the individual. For example, when participants answer a question, they are asked how confident they are in their response. If there is a low-confidence score, those questions appear again, asked in a different manner, to help reinforce concepts.

Coaching is vital to a sales leader's ability to create team success. To support this, PDG linked the AI system with a platform allowing for continuous and fluid measurement of their team's effectiveness.

The Results

The Knowledge Institute has proven to be immensely valuable for the company's field force teams who are continually navigating a dynamic selling environment. Serving as an invaluable resource for information sharing and knowledge, the platform and content has empowered the sales teams to adapt and thrive.

The system has been highly successful in preparing reps to have:

- Higher-quality conversations with healthcare providers (HCPs)
- More successful selling techniques based on client needs
- Boosted confidence as it relates to product knowledge and benefits



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The knowledge institute was also cited to be very instrumental to sales leaders. They can set their own performance tracks within the system, brush up on skills, and better manage their teams—keeping them accountable to targets and goals.

Both the system and content have garnered immense satisfaction from company stakeholders due to their impressive results. Field reps now enjoy seamless access to crucial information in the flow of work, enabling them to stay in the field and focus on selling. The content has been widely acclaimed by most field reps as “highly relevant,” directly contributing to their job success. Moreover, sales leaders have lauded the system’s ability to enhance their oversight, recording, and management of their teams’ skills and performance, ultimately leading to better tracking of competitive readiness.

KNOWLEDGE LIFT:

15%

Knowledge Gain Since Inception (from 75% to 90%)

ENGAGEMENT:

90%

90% Regular System Users (US and Puerto Rico)

9

9 Average Monthly Logins Per User

288,701

288,701 Questions Answered

700

Number of Daily Rep Logins

TIME:

6.2

Average Session Duration Is 6.2 Minutes

1.25

1.25 Out-of-Field Training Days Saved Per Learner

Future Use

This pharma company’s division is partnering with PDG for more performance transformations, such as sales process improvement and leadership development, to help them continually stay ahead of the competition. They also wish to merge the new Knowledge Institute with another division’s institute for improved synergies, information sharing, and cost savings. This new initiative will help develop customized knowledge paths for every field force rep across multiple disciplines.

Lessons Learned

Feedback from users and system data have revealed that clinical content is what the sales reps really want. Gamified content has been shown to significantly help with engagement. Leader buy-in is critical to both usage and success, with regions having leader support showing higher levels of both.



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