



## From Volume to Value: Using payer insights to increase sales effectiveness

by Anita Burrell

**“The collective will of the provider community has moved to acquiescence to the payer will – controlling costs and risks through incentives around prescribing behavior.”**

John Jaeger, DRG

**“These are the kind of decisions we want physicians making – optimizing the outcome for the patient at the best possible total cost for the healthcare system.”**

Lance Scott, Zephyr Health

Burgeoning healthcare costs in the United States<sup>1</sup> have led to many fundamental changes in the past decade. Payers seek to constrain costs and increase quality, as care expectations continue to rise.

The changes affect all healthcare stakeholders, in a complex and dynamic interplay. Relationships are not always clear cut. Traditional competitors are collaborating. Providers are acting like payers. Payers are coordinating care. Patients have a greater say in treatments as they bear more of the costs.

Alternative payment models such as Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs), bundled payments, and advanced primary care medical homes also mean physicians are more likely to practice in an “at risk” environment that ties reimbursement to patient outcome.

***The USA is on course to spend nearly \$5 trillion of the GDP on healthcare by 2021.***

Physician behavior and treatment choice is now moving beyond consideration of the clinical profile of the patient to include other important attributes, like formulary status, system guidelines, and network restrictions or incentives which may apply.

1) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, National Health Expenditures Projections 2011-2021. [www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/NationalHealthExpendData/Downloads/Proj2011PDF.pdf](http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/NationalHealthExpendData/Downloads/Proj2011PDF.pdf)

## The New Sales Conversation

So what is the implication for sales representatives who try to provide valuable information to physicians? It means that there is more to consider than the clinical trial performance of a newly launching compound. How does it compare to the current standard of care? Is the new drug on the formulary? Are there data to support the value of the treatment in terms of improved health outcomes for patients or reduced burden on care delivery? How will the field representative or the home office get all of the data necessary to address these new requirements and process it in a way that it can truly be an aid to the field sales teams?

With this new, integrated platform the teams were able to run queries on their target HCPs in less than 2 minutes, when previously, the same aggregation of data from multiple sources could take weeks. With *Zephyr Illuminate's* user-friendly interface, sales and marketing teams for the first time had dynamic and immediate access to the insights they needed.

A value-based environment calls for a different sales conversation. More than 53% of physicians place moderate-to-severe access restrictions on pharmaceutical sales representatives<sup>2</sup>. Time constraints are certainly a factor, but too often a physician feels that the interaction itself lacks value, and may not be worth his/her time<sup>3</sup>.

Practitioners are looking for information beyond product efficacy and safety. It is critical for sales professionals to have a deeper understanding of a provider's environment and the factors influencing prescribing behaviour. Effective sales conversations are the ones that provide relevant, valuable, information within the context that the physician operates.

Technological innovation is helping commercial teams in pharmaceutical companies transform their approach to meet these market dynamics and rethink the sales conversation. For example, many sales organizations have moved to iPads and digital non-personal promotion to improve physician interactions. While representatives now have data at their fingertips, it's even

**“The old conversation is over. Pharma must know who makes formulary decisions and have a value proposition at that level.”**

April Wortham-Collins, DRG

**“When a rep walks into a provider's office, he/she needs to know if the HCP belongs to a large corporation that issues contracts for what is prescribed, and if /how the patient's insurance will restrict the prescription. This knowledge will help the rep know what to offer to the physician to add value.”**

Brigham Hyde, DRG

**“The representatives who know their customers and understand their specific situations the best will have the most meaningful interactions and do the best job of creating an opportunity for their therapy to be used for appropriate patients.”**

Matt Portch, Sunovion

2) ZS Associates AccessMonitor™ 2015 Executive Summary

3) M Fleschner, Now They See You, Now They Don't, accessed at <http://www.sellingpower.com/content/article/?a=2472/now-they-see-you-now-they-don-t>

**“It can be very challenging to bring all this data together so that each representative has access to necessary information in an easy-to-consume format. But representatives who know their physicians better than the competition bring the most value to their interactions. Ultimately, reps can help ensure that the right therapy gets to the right patient more often.”**

Lance Scott, Zephyr Health

**“Sales reps need to work across the internal field team to ensure that the correct people are coordinated with the specific stakeholders – it’s a process of ‘quarterbacking’.”**

Jonathan Birchall,  
Genentech

more important to ensure that the content itself is valuable and that it is updated frequently. More than the data itself, the information and insights that are delivered need to be unique and relevant to the physician’s needs, regardless of the channel, and must provide the representative with timely recommendations for next-best actions. Ideally, a sales representative will have tailored, personal information about the practice, such as:

- Historic prescribing preferences
- Formulary and/or restrictions due to network or payer constraints
- Participation in peer influence and patient assistance programs
- Areas of scientific interest/clinical trial participation, publications
- Preferred type(s) of engagement
- Share of patients by payer book of business and organization

## Moving to True Customer Engagement

As the healthcare environment has changed, practitioners are now concerned with broader topics that may be just as important in their prescribing decisions, especially where these require a justification in order to obtain reimbursement. These needs may relate to factors used in outcomes-based reimbursement models such as quality metrics, meaningful use, total cost of care, and avoiding hospitalizations.

Pharmaceutical companies are now expected to understand holistic patient management, with data-driven insights and services that reinforce the value of their products in this new care model.

All of this points to not only a different sales conversation, but a different way of working for sales professionals. The field representative is faced with the challenge of understanding key issues beyond the clinical benefits of their brands – and how these issues impact their specific customers. Today’s sales professionals are coordinating with other field teams and home office to engage with multiple stakeholders and influence complex buying decisions. They are in the role of “quarterback”, with true customer relationship management responsibilities and expectations.

### Key considerations for sales effectiveness:

- Historic prescribing preferences
- Formulary and/or restrictions due to network or payer constraints
- What is driving Rx behavior?
- Are there formulary or payer restrictions?
- Are there clinical protocol implications?
- Is there any real world effectiveness evidence?
- Does the practice have specific quality metrics to meet?

## Technology can provide an edge

In this new world of complex interfaces and relationships, the need for relevant and dynamic data is paramount. It may also seem overwhelming as the sales representative is required to understand local details specific to each practice and coordinate with other field teams to provide appropriate information to influencers in the healthcare decision making cascade. In order to be effective, therefore, the sales representative needs technology that can provide actionable, data-driven insights around the physician and the healthcare ecosystem within which they operate. Armed with the right data and insights, commercial teams can deliver value to their customers which underpin a competitive advantage in ensuring delivery of their therapy to the patients who will benefit most.

**“Sales reps need to work across the internal field team to ensure that the correct people are coordinated with the specific stakeholders – it’s a process of ‘quarterbacking’.”**

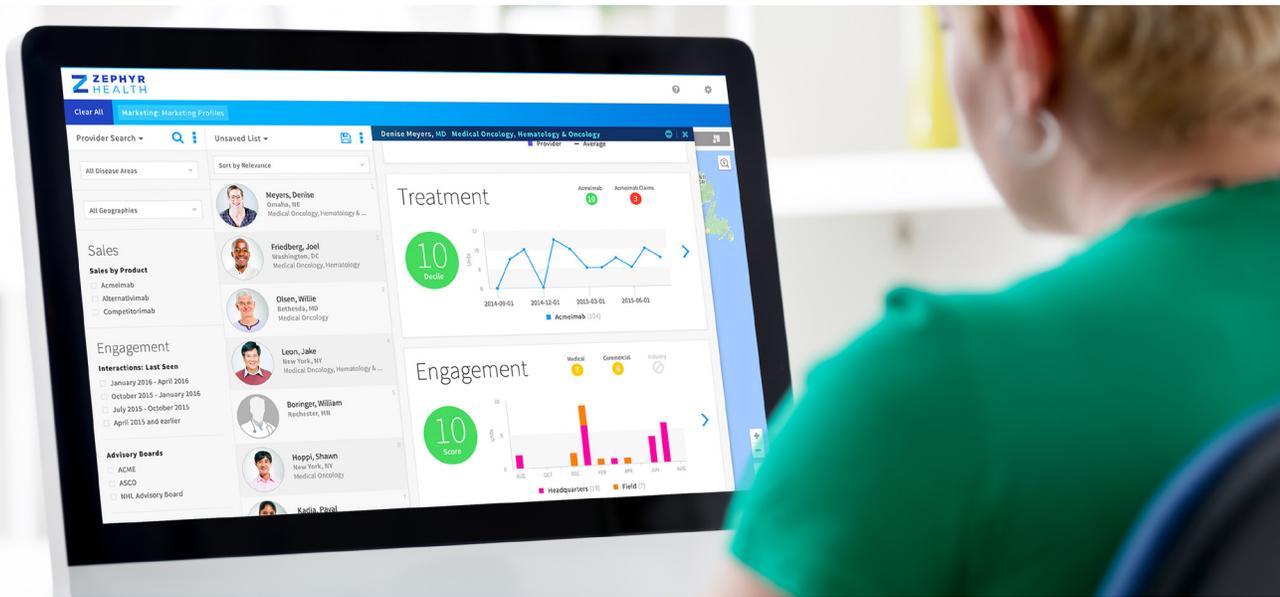
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Genentech

**“By equipping sales with relevant information, we enable them to have interactions that provide true value to their customers. This allows physicians to make the most informed decision when choosing products for patients.”**

Lance Scott, Zephyr Health

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Zephyr Health helps Life Sciences companies – pharmaceutical, biotech, medical device and diagnostics – engage the right physicians, accounts and institutions using insights from global health data. Zephyr Illuminate™ is a leading insights-as-a-service solution that integrates thousands of data sources to create precise and predictive insights. From pre-launch to product maturity, life sciences companies can make confident decisions faster with data-driven targeting and deep customer profiles. Zephyr Health's customers include several of the Top 10 Pharmaceutical, Biotechnology and Medical Device companies.



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Anita Burrell has 23 years of leadership experience in the pharmaceutical industry in a wide variety of roles and geographies including Global Head of Pricing and Reimbursement for Sanofi. She is an adjunct assistant professor at Rutgers University on the Health Outcomes, Policy and Economics Masters course and a regular speaker in the industry on health economics, market access and mHealth. She is Principal at Anita Burrell Consulting. [anitaburrellconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:anitaburrellconsulting@gmail.com)

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