

# Digitizing Scientific Communication

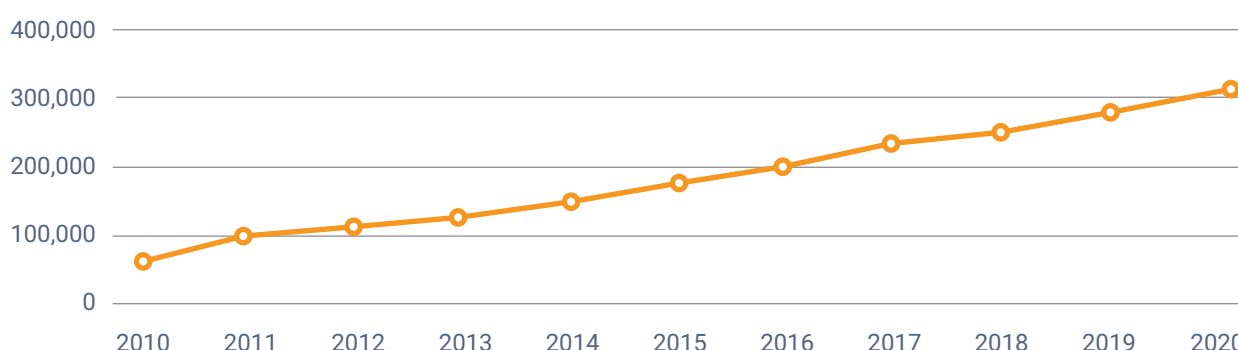
## Medical affairs best practices and tools to improve patient outcomes

The goal of scientific communication is to facilitate the swift spread of evidence-based ideas into clinical practice and help improve patient outcomes. During times of emerging infectious disease, like the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for rapid dissemination of approved scientific content is critical to support health care providers on the front lines. Life sciences companies that embrace a tailored and personalized communication approach can better support their scientific experts.

## Acceleration of scientific invention

Massive R&D investments and unprecedented support to speed clinical trials is creating an avalanche of scientific content. For the novel coronavirus alone, over 1,500 interventional studies progressed to clinical trial in the first half of this year.<sup>1</sup> Overall, there are five times more clinical studies registered today than just 10 years ago.<sup>2</sup>

**Cumulative Number of Registered Studies Over Time (January 2010 – January 2020)**



Source: ClinicalTrials.gov

<sup>1</sup> ClinicalTrials.Gov (2020). Trend, Charts, and Maps. Retrieved from [clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/](https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/)

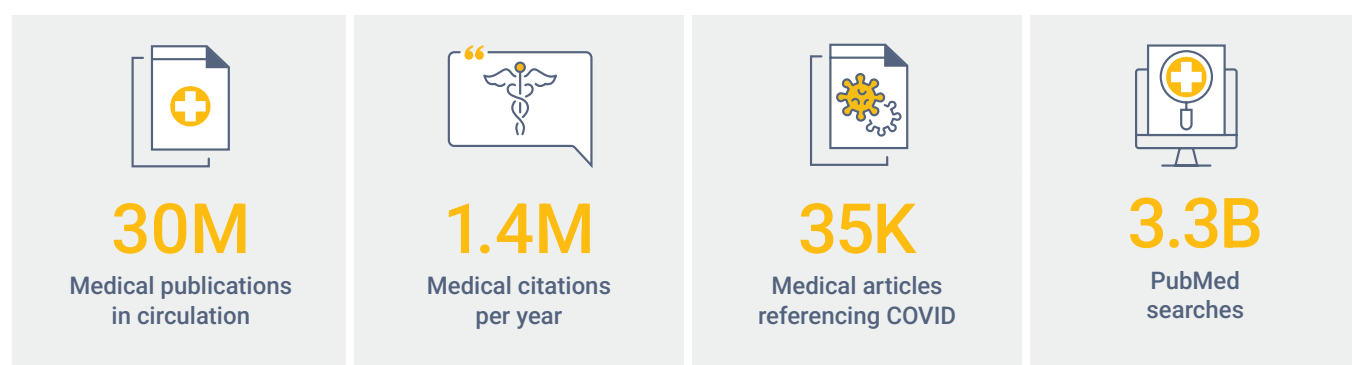
<sup>2</sup> ClinicalTrials.Gov (2020). Trend, Charts, and Maps. Retrieved from [clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/resources/trends](https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/resources/trends)

As the volume of research in precision medicine grows, so does its complexity. The unprecedented pressure of global epidemiology and specialty therapeutics compel pharma to innovate rapidly and along multiple paths. As scientists push the frontiers of medical knowledge, they continually discover new targets, therapeutic classes, new indications, and new diagnostics aligned with specific patient markers.

## The knowledge dilemma and the value of scientific communications

With 2,600 new medical articles indexed each day in the Medline database, it is increasingly complex for physicians to stay current.<sup>3</sup>

### Knowledge Dilemma



Sources: National Library of Medicine, PubMed

This presents a knowledge dilemma for doctors. To keep up with the deluge of scientific advances, health care professionals would need to spend over 29 hours a day reading.<sup>4</sup> Time-constrained doctors simply cannot remain on the forefront of scientific knowledge. Instead, they rely on a limited number of experts in specific therapeutic areas to remain informed about new and better treatment options.

Despite the growing complexity and volume of science, studies indicate that a majority of treatment decisions are made by community physicians. In the oncology space, for example, this amounts to 85% of all decisions.<sup>5</sup> For the novel coronavirus, this number remains near 100% as physicians worldwide collaborate to understand and treat millions of new patients.

<sup>3</sup> National Library of Medicine, Retrieved from [MEDLINE PubMed Production Statistics](#)

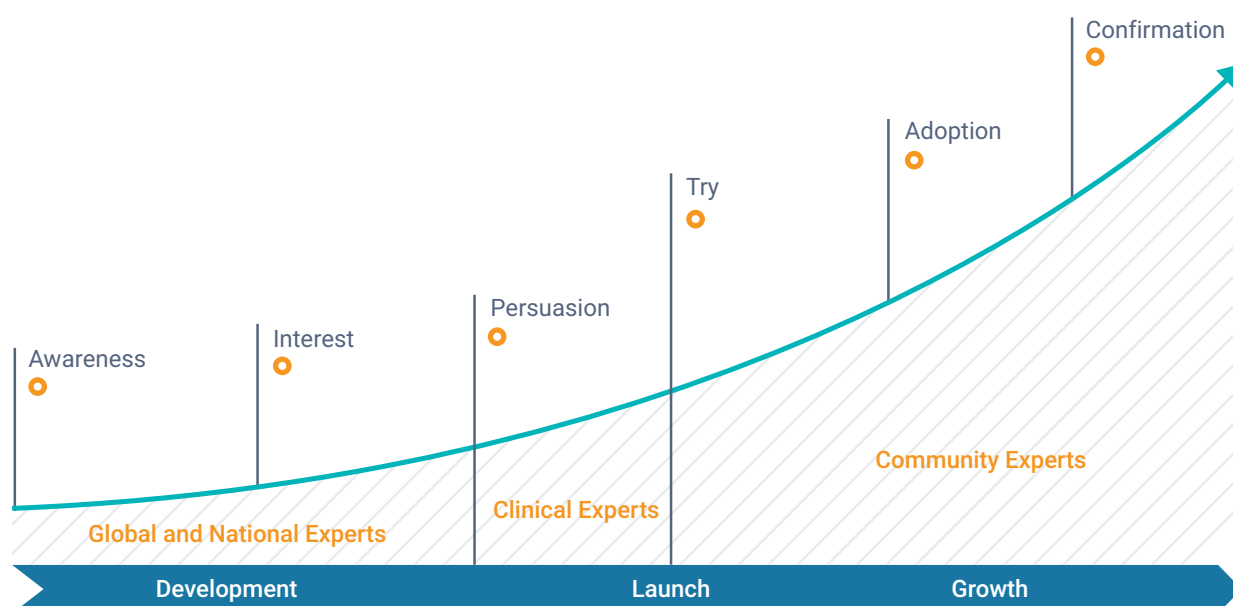
<sup>4</sup> Alpers, E. et al (2004). How much effort is needed to keep up with the literature relevant for primary care? Retrieved <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC521514/>

<sup>5</sup> Veeva Systems (2019). BMS' Approach to Meeting Physician Needs. Retrieved from [www.veeva.com/eu/precision-medicine-podcast-series-bms-approach-to-meeting-physician-needs/](http://www.veeva.com/eu/precision-medicine-podcast-series-bms-approach-to-meeting-physician-needs/)

Following Rogers' principles of the adoption and diffusion of innovation,<sup>6</sup> life sciences companies focus on educating scientific experts during the development and launch phases of a drug's lifecycle. Companies rely heavily on data and real-world evidence to deliver actionable information related to the right treatment for the right patient at the appropriate time.<sup>7</sup>

In turn, experts are willing to engage deeper with biopharma companies that deliver scientific evidence and personalized content relevant to their needs. Whereas a commercial sales rep may be fortunate to get one or two minutes with a doctor, experts actively seek MSL interactions.

## The Value of Scientific Communications



Source: Theory of Diffusion of Innovation (Rogers)

Prior to the pandemic, scientific experts in the oncology space averaged approximately seven interactions with life sciences companies per month, and the top 20% indicate having 11-20 monthly interactions.<sup>8</sup> These encounters typically last more than 30 minutes, meaning that most experts dedicate 3.5 hours per month to pharmaceutical interactions, and up to 10 hours at the high end.

Scientific content is effective when it is tailored to specific stages along the physician journey. We need to focus on the needs of the physician at that particular moment.

– Fabio Ferfoggia, Incyte Pharmaceuticals

<sup>6</sup> Rogers, E. (2003). Diffusion of Innovations, 5th Edition. Simon & Schuster. ISBN 978-0-7432-5823-4.

<sup>7</sup> Veeva Systems (2019). Driving Scientific Engagement in the Era of Precision Medicine. Retrieved from [go.veeva.com/oncology-white-paper](https://go.veeva.com/oncology-white-paper)

<sup>8</sup> Veeva Systems (2019). European Oncology Expert Survey.



**Just Send Me  
the Email**

### COMMUNICATING IN THE HCP'S PREFERRED CHANNEL

Research indicates that a new generation of digitally savvy physicians prefers digital communications over face-to-face meetings. This is validated by Dr. Enrique Grande, head of oncology at the MD Anderson Cancer Center Madrid, who values the rapid delivery of new scientific resources in a more efficient digital channel: "Proactive MSLs that send articles and [clinical] resources are extremely useful to me. They are saving me time and making my life a little bit easier. Let's save time and money. Just send me the email."

A digitally connected ecosystem using a centralized scientific content management system helps companies ensure that they can cater to the requirements of experts like Dr. Grande.

As physicians increasingly request answers to complex scientific questions, the medical affairs team must ensure that it is able to deliver the most current approved scientific content in any channel. MSLs can optimize their one-on-one time with experts if they have relevant new information and their content is delivered in an organized and consumable manner.

To maximize the opportunity to educate experts, medical affairs teams can:

- Centralize global scientific content
- Unify business processes
- Manage assets in a connected digital ecosystem
- Generate data-driven medical insights that will help drive medical strategy

## Personalizing content along the HCP Journey

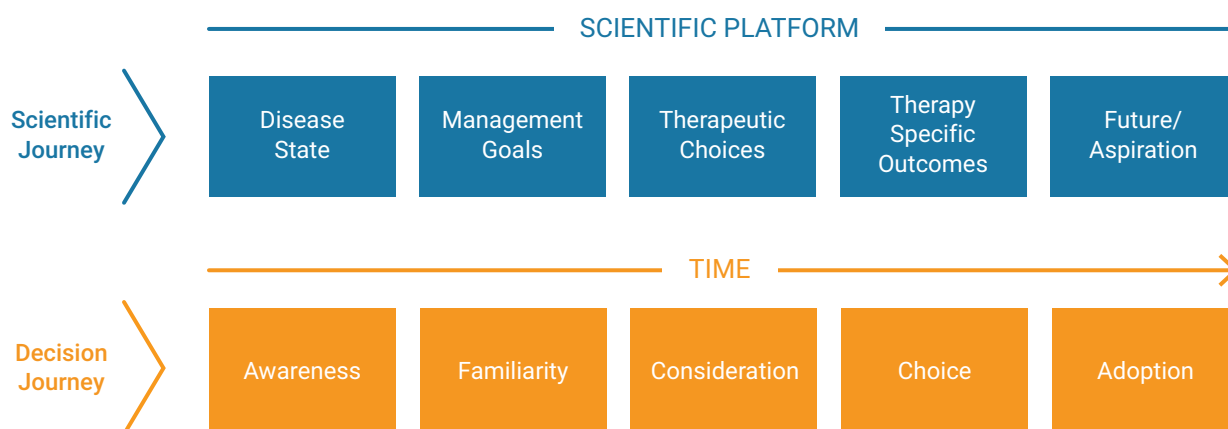
Life sciences organizations can use HCP journeys to maximize the impact of scientific engagement. Similarly, content needs to be reflective of both the individual HCP's preferences as well as their particular stage along the journey.

A new multichannel paradigm for medical affairs (including medical CRM, email, remote meetings, and events) gives companies the opportunity to better collaborate with experts and other stakeholders. Home office can gauge scientific needs and interests by tagging and reporting on the evidence that is consumed, and how it evolves over time.

Strategic insight from HCP's consumption of evidence over time and across channels can deepen relationships by guiding decisions on the cadence and focus of engagement. This information spans the full spectrum of the journey, from fundamental disease state education, to management goals, therapeutic choices, therapy-specific outcomes, and future goals.

For instance, engagement with “awareness” level content can indicate a need for education or outreach around safety and efficacy. As engagement continues, the HCP’s scientific journey can be quantified and visualized. The progression along this spectrum maps to the consumer decision journey, from awareness to familiarity, consideration, and finally adoption.

### Progression of the Scientific Journey



Aligning to the HCP journey enables companies to maximize the use of scientific content along the progression from scientific need to advocacy. The value of disease state information may diminish over time and medical teams can focus on delivering outcomes evidence instead.

## Measuring the value of personalized content

Scientific communication is designed to diffuse evidence-based ideas into clinical practice. The rapid, widespread adoption of new ideas requires delivery of the right scientific content at the right time. Medical affairs teams understand that personalizing content is critical to getting expert adoption. “Scientific content is effective when it is tailored to specific stages along the physician journey. We need to focus on the needs of the physician at that particular moment,” says Fabio Ferfoggia, associate director of European medical affairs operations at Incyte Pharmaceuticals.

Many organizations choose to delegate this responsibility to their field teams instead of centrally managing the process. “Personalization works when MSLs do it themselves. They know the HCP better than anyone,” says one senior director of medical excellence at a top 10 European pharma.

#### BEST PRACTICES FOR EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS WITH SCIENTIFIC CONTENT

- Tailor to the HCP
- Promote high scientific exchange
- Enable data visualization
- Deliver multichannel access
- Provide non-branded resources
- Embed data
- Focus on patient-centricity

Medical affairs leaders almost universally agree that when it comes to scientific content, quality is much more important than quantity, though most believe that the medium needs to be updated for the digital age. Medical departments still rely heavily on slides for disseminating information. One large pharma company conservatively estimates that each single slide costs about \$600 to create, leading to slide decks that cost tens of thousands of dollars. Meanwhile, another company's internal audit indicated that of the hundreds of assets they had developed, MSLs only used 25 specific content pieces. Clearly, there is an opportunity to optimize the process.

Considering the cost and effort required to deliver scientific content, medical affairs leaders need to understand whether their content is valuable to physicians. Albano, et. al. (Pfizer) argue that this can be measured in terms of helping HCPs make better clinical decisions, ultimately leading to improved patient outcomes (such as adverse events avoided, treatment adherence, reduced hospitalization days, quality of life improved, etc.)<sup>9</sup> Key metrics in this model include the number of HCP interactions and the percentage of physicians who used the scientific content to make a treatment decision:

$$\text{NUMBER BETTER DECISIONS MADE} = \frac{\text{(NUMBER OF HCP INTERACTIONS)} \times (\% \text{ WHO USED INFORMATION FOR CLINICAL DECISIONS})}{\text{...}}$$

## Evolving scientific communications for the digital age

Adapting content to digitally minded physicians requires evolving beyond text-based information. "Commercial teams are developing a lot of new visual content while medical affairs everywhere are stuck on the 'death by PowerPoint' approach," comments Glen Morris, worldwide field medical business solutions lead at Bristol-Myers Squibb. "Medical just doesn't have the same budgets [as commercial] but has to manage the additional protections required by compliance." James Richards, head of medical information technologies at GlaxoSmithKline adds, "Fortunately, compliance can be built into digital tools and that's how we are moving towards more graphical content."



### Industry Leaders Speak

#### HOW DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION CREATE HIGH-VALUE SCIENTIFIC CONTENT?

"When we create patient-friendly information, experts tell us that it is helpful. But ultimately the important thing is to base our content development on scientific insights."

"We found that content must be consumable within seconds. That's why we moved towards infographics. They are attention grabbing but still meet our compliance criteria."

"I have seen one company experiment with a joint approach between commercial and medical to share content. Compliance is a partner. It allows them to avoid duplication while identifying high-value assets."

<sup>9</sup> <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2168479016640019>

## Generating actionable insights from your content

Decisions need to be made on the basis of the latest available data, with evidence-backed processes to gather and disseminate scientific insights. By leveraging a centralized global system, companies can gather actionable data across the medical content lifecycle. From operational metrics, such as content volume and approval times, to strategic insights, like trending topics and most utilized fulfillment documents, medical affairs teams can ensure that they are both effective and efficient in meeting expert needs.



### VEEVA'S TIPS FOR EVOLVING SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION FOR DIGITAL EXCELLENCE:

1. Create a global knowledge management hub for medical affairs
2. Create scientific content aligned to the customer journey
3. Optimize content creation for consumption in multiple channels
4. Promote content reuse to create consistent global message and reduce costs
5. Evaluate content utilization and impact to reduce under-utilized content assets

## The connected medical affairs ecosystem

Best-in-class medical affairs departments also centralize scientific content and medical inquiry management in one connected ecosystem, significantly improving the delivery of scientific information while also ensuring compliance. It enables global teams to unify various independent medical affairs business processes. Groups such as the medical information team can now be aligned much more closely with the rest of the medical organization.

These companies are able to enhance scientific communication while leveraging actionable data to generate new scientific insights.

## Embracing a digitally enabled scientific communication posture

Veeva Vault MedComms is the central source of truth for managing global medical content. Used by leading pharmaceutical companies around the world, it is the modern, cloud-based system that helps ensure that your content is always current, accessible, and compliant.

See Veeva Vault MedComms in action: [view the demo](#).