

**INSIGHT BRIEF**

# **Customer-Centric Multi-Channel Pharma Marketing**

## **HOW REDISCOVERING THE SEGMENT OF ONE HOLDS THE KEY TO EFFICIENCY AND IMPROVED HEALTHCARE RELATIONSHIPS**

Liz Murray, Multi-Channel Director, Quintiles, EMEA  
Matthew McCarty, Senior Director for Quintiles Communications

Multi-channel marketing represents the pharmaceutical industry's novel solution to the challenges of achieving improved commercial productivity with increasingly constrained promotional budgets. By combining traditional and remote digital engagement techniques, more cost-effective connectivity with key healthcare stakeholders can be achieved.

However, pharma companies face an additional challenge in terms of rebuilding closer relationships and trust with prescribers, payers and patients. Without this, such key customers will inevitably continue to turn away from the industry; instead relying on the multitude of non-pharma channels that are available for medical and drug information.

In order to address this, multi-channel campaigns must not only be commercially efficient, but also engage with such healthcare stakeholders on their own terms. By planning and implementing customer-centric multi-channel marketing, where the right information is delivered to the right customer in a way that suits them, stronger relationships can be built.

This paper explores how integrated-channel solutions can be designed around the individual customer and successfully implemented to engage with the 'segment of one' – truly personalised and productive use of multi-channel assets for all parties.

Multi-channel marketing is again a hot topic in the pharma industry, with its promise of improved productivity yielding bottom-line commercial benefits. However, the current challenge for the industry is as much about quality as quantity – delivering more personalised interaction with stakeholders that can drive mutually beneficial relationships. In that sense, multi-channel marketing might be what pharma needs to redefine its relationship with healthcare stakeholders, including doctors, nurses, payers and patients.

Implemented in the right way, multi-channel approaches work well on both sides – the customer receives the information they need in a way that suits them, and pharma companies can recognise efficiencies by not wasting resources, which results in much stronger and mutually beneficial relationships.

However, it is only recently that the technology and capabilities have become available to enable the delivery of such highly personalised engagement to each individual customer – an approach we call the ‘segment of one’. These technological advances play a critical role in terms of both the ‘big data’ analytical capabilities to monitor and adapt such campaigns, plus the individual channels for delivery of information digitally, such as two-way interactive edetailing.

Getting it right necessitates a mind shift away from traditional, less personalised approaches and means the customer must be at the centre of the pharma marketers thinking at every stage, from planning right through to implementation. In this white paper, we summarise how to successfully conduct such customer-centric multi-channel marketing through:

- Planning multi-channel, focussed on the customer.
- Understanding how to measure successful customer engagement.
- Identifying critical success factors for customer-centric integrated-channel solutions.

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# PLANNING CUSTOMER-CENTRIC MULTI-CHANNEL MARKETING

Plan multi-channel marketing with your customer in mind

The focus has to start with your customer, by understanding what information they need and how to best deliver it to them. Welcome to a different view of multi-channel marketing – the ‘segment of one’, where integrated-channel solutions are able to deliver an experience that is personalised to each customer.

The key is blending online and offline engagement together in a synergistic way to deliver the right information in a manner (and at a time) that works for your target stakeholders. When implemented correctly, the result is deeper, more personalised and productive engagement that delivers beneficial results on both sides (figure 1).

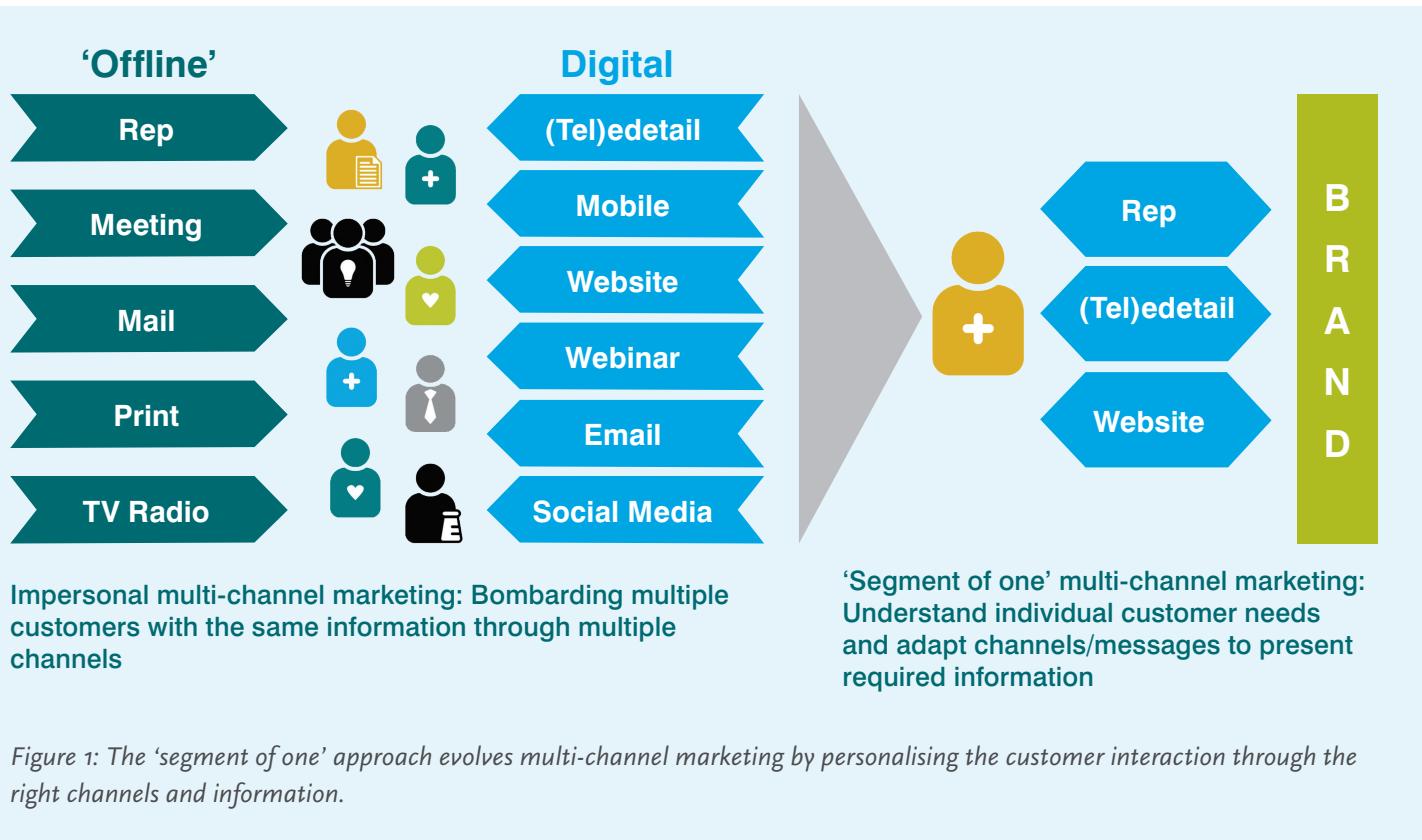


Figure 1: The ‘segment of one’ approach evolves multi-channel marketing by personalising the customer interaction through the right channels and information.

A good starting point is therefore to think about the different potential components of a multi-channel campaign not solely as digital versus ‘offline’, but to consider their relative strengths in terms of how they meet customers’ needs around receipt of information. This is the essence of ‘pull’ marketing – allowing the customer to quickly receive the information they want on their terms.

## Combine internal and external factors in the channel plan

### So how is this applied in practice?

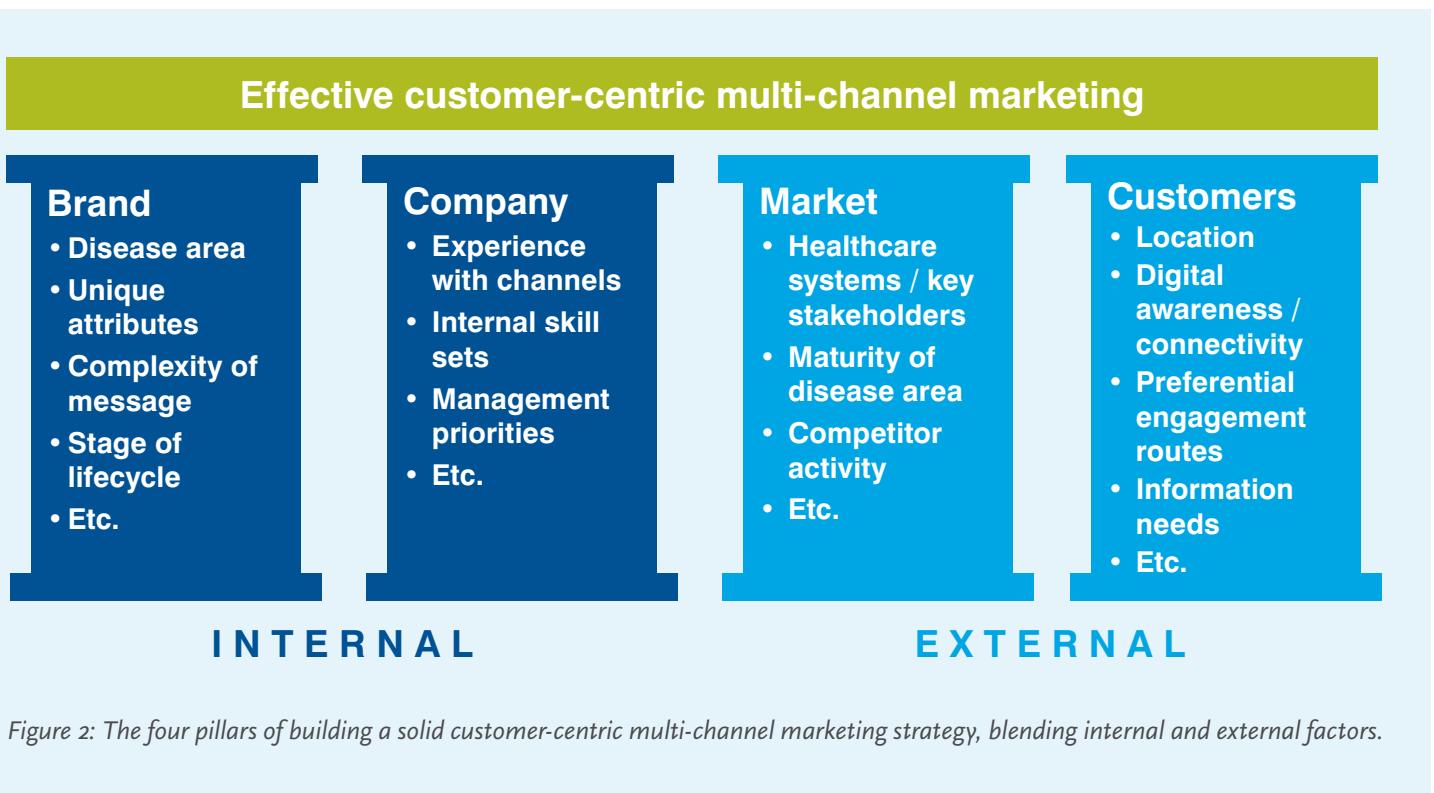
Before considering the specifics of the right approach, the strategic fundamentals of good marketing should always be applied. Namely, to understand how valuable different groups of customers are to your business and to carefully consider what you are trying to achieve in your engagement with them (not always direct sales!).

Once that has been defined, there are some important internal and external considerations around the brand or portfolio and commercial capabilities that will shape the right multi-channel mix:

- **Therapy area and product:** A key determinant of the right channel mix is the brand itself and the therapy area it resides in, as this dictates the target audience and how best to engage with them. A specialist niche product for a rare disease will inherently require a different marketing approach to a mass market primary care portfolio.
- **Stage of lifecycle:** Multi-channel marketing is often perceived as an approach that is most useful beyond initial sales rep activity at launch, but it can be equally effective at every stage of the product lifecycle, if applied in the right way. For example, high reach digital channels can be used to deliver personalised information to valuable customers during launch who are not readily accessible to the rep.
- **Complexity of message:** how complex the marketing message is, and the desired outcome from engagement, has a bearing on the right channels to use. Considerations here include the complexity of the therapeutic areas involved, types of stakeholders, disease burden, market competition, safety issues and level of existing awareness.
- **Implementation capabilities / skills:** This factor cannot be underestimated, as many carefully planned strategic marketing programs fail due to incorrectly assuming the right skilled resource is available to implement them. Being realistic about what can be achieved should not be ignored. For example, trying to run edetailing campaigns using field-trained reps that have no experience in remote engagement is unlikely to provide the best results.

“Multi-channel marketing might be the medicine that pharma needs to redefine its relationship with healthcare stakeholders”

Such considerations must then be blended with the individual customers' needs, including their preferred routes for receiving and absorbing information, to form four key pillars underpinning the strategy, as outlined in figure 2.



One caution though around preferential engagement routes – ask a thousand doctors how they like to receive information and they may well say 'via an Apple iPad®' or 'on my mobile'- but does this mean they actually engage better via those routes? Understanding what this means in providing engaging information is important here if you are to facilitate customer access to exactly what they need, when they need it, in a way that works for both sides. This will also change over time so the plan must be adaptable. In reality, the company is looking for the optimum strategy that aligns its messaging and available capabilities with how the customer wants to receive information.

## Key considerations in multi-channel planning

Whilst there are often no ‘magic’ solutions to tell you what the ideal channel mix is, the following steps are critical in planning successful integrated-channel solutions:

- 1. Be customer-centric:** Start by segmenting your customers to understand their information needs and appropriate engagement routes to personalise your campaign to reach the ‘segment of one’, making every customer feel the message is relevant for them. A good customer experience that also imparts the key marketing messages is likely to be successful.
- 2. Learn from prior campaigns:** Understand what has worked for products in similar therapeutic areas and geographies, either by scrutinising earlier internal initiatives or drawing on external support and experience.
- 3. Tailor information to the channel:** Simply taking a detail aid and transferring it to other channels will not work. Make sure you adapt how information is presented for each channel so that it can be effectively consumed. This may require more work at the start but will pay off over time.
- 4. Focus on skills:** Understand the skills required for delivering messages via multiple, diverse channels. Without the right attributes and training, do not expect sales reps to efficiently deliver messages via online channels, so either invest in training or acquire skilled resource from outside.

Finally, it is important that all involved in planning the multi-channel campaign, especially senior management, are aware that the activities will need adjusting over time. If you are to make your activities truly customer-centric, you need to be ready to adapt based on how they are received in the field.

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# ADAPTING MULTI-CHANNEL AS A RESULT OF CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR

Even a perfectly planned strategy aligned with customer markets is not static, and it is important to measure and adapt on an on-going basis. It is therefore vital to know how to measure whether your campaign is successful and how to develop a constructive feedback loop that allows integrated-channel solutions to scale up in the right way. Remember - if you are facilitating productive two-way engagement feedback is inevitable, which can be used to strengthen commercial relationships.

## Adapting correctly when the only constant is change

Whilst careful consideration of both external (market forces and customer-centric aspects such as business value, information needs and preferential engagement routes) and internal (brand and portfolio positioning / complexity of messages and available skills / expertise) factors are critical to getting your multi-channel campaign off to a good start, preparing for adaptation is equally vital. This includes tempering management expectations around 'getting it right first time,' and instead ensuring they see the start as just that – an initial pilot approach that will be adjusted and scaled over time.

**“The information that your customers require and the way in which they wish to receive it can change quite rapidly”**

After all, local environments for brands can shift overnight as new products are launched, generics enter or payers react to new evidence. Likewise, the information that your customers require and the way in which they wish to receive it can change quite rapidly, even in the absence of sweeping market changes, as new technologies influence their working practice. Consider, for example, the infiltration of smartphones over just a few years and how few physicians are now without them. Equally, internal capabilities do change over time, which can shape commercial activities just as much.

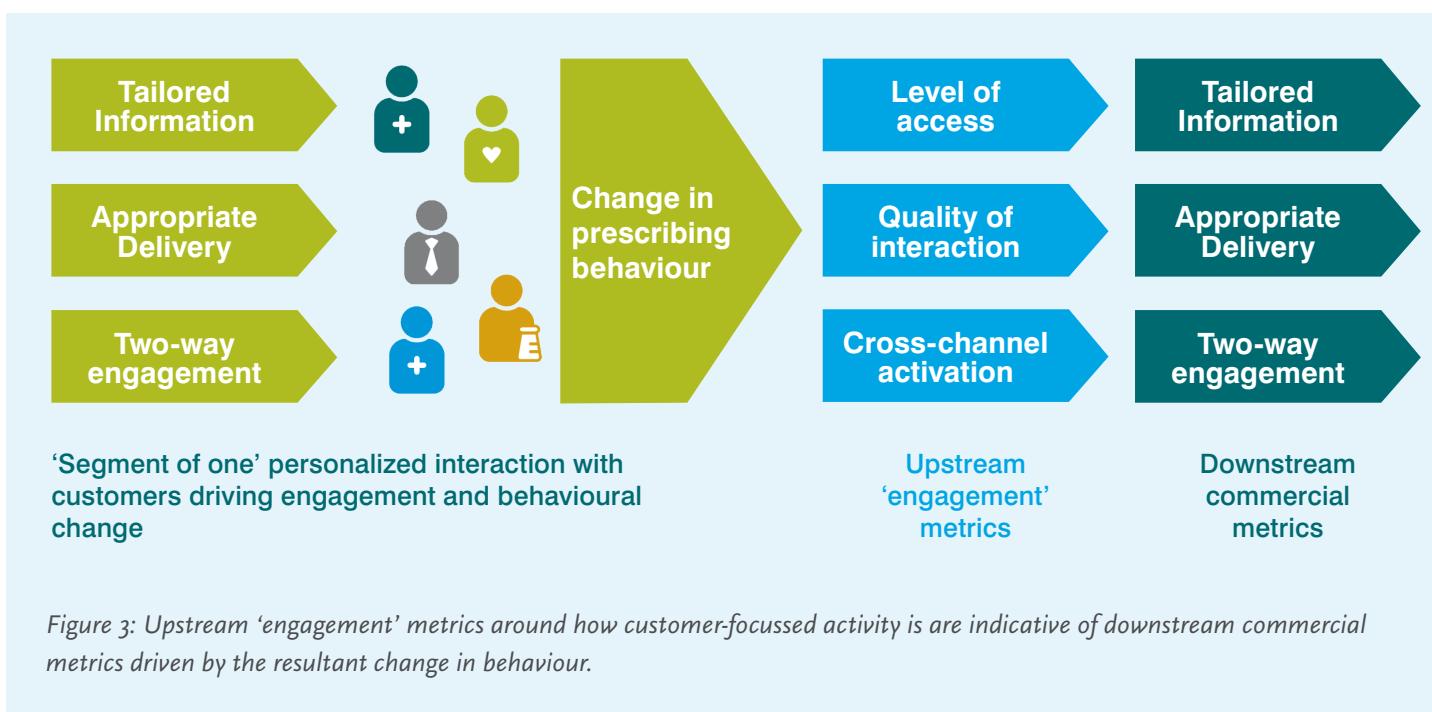
Amidst the only constant being change, the key is tracking the right metrics to inform change and ensure a strong customer-centric focus is at the heart of any modification.

## Measuring the right metrics for adaptation

So here is the real challenge with running dynamic multi-channel campaigns – how do you know when you need to change or scale up and in what areas?

It all comes down to measurement, and the most important question is ‘what should we be measuring?’ The purist will, of course, say ‘sales,’ and commercial teams are often armed with sophisticated dashboards that can track sales, prescription or market share outputs against simple inputs, such as number of contacts, proportion of targets ‘seen’ and volume of engagement activity.

These systems are useful as improved sales is the ultimate endpoint, but there are earlier markers and a wide range of process metrics, which are equally useful at identifying whether integrated-channel solutions are really engaging in a customer-centric way and can therefore be treated as ‘leading markers’ for downstream changes in prescribing habits, as illustrated in figure 3.



### > Level of access

The ever decreasing level of access to doctors, and other key stakeholders, by direct contact has historically played a role in driving the development of alternative engagement channels through multi-channel marketing. If a particular stakeholder is an important customer for your brand, you need to find a way to engage with them and it is not uncommon to find that, for example, doctors who will never see a sales representative are not averse to engagement through other channels, such as remote detailing or online initiatives. By engaging with your customers via channels, and on broader terms, that suit them, you will inevitably secure more access time, which facilitates more valuable engagement.

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#### > **Quality of interaction**

Quality of interaction, or the degree to which the customer actually engages with the information offered, is absolutely vital for changing downstream behaviour. For example, detail follow-ups (DFUs) can be used to provide such qualitative feedback on direct customer interaction above and beyond simple quantitative metrics around call rates. Equally, for online initiatives, metrics such as duration of interaction are more powerful for assessing quality than simple metrics such as website hits or social media followers. Also, satisfaction surveys or other online questionnaires can be used to capture customer views and feedback. Ultimately, if the right information is provided in a way and at a time that suits the customer, the quality of interaction is likely to be high.

#### > **Cross-channel activation**

Cross-channel activation is the essence of good multi-channel marketing – the fact that using any single channel in isolation might not engage the customer in the right way, but by bringing them together the sum is more than the parts. Think, for example, of a doctor taking part in some professional development through an eLearning platform that provides CME credits, which then results in them taking part in a peer-to-peer webinar around a particular disease area and, ultimately, requesting direct contact with a representative for specific product information. This is a good example of customer-centric pull marketing that utilises multiple channels.

As a final cautionary note around success metrics, whether they are traditional or more ‘customer-focussed’, be wary of using benchmarks derived from different channels or markets. If all you have is a benchmark for sales rep engagement, it might not prove useful for measuring other channels, so prior experience and trends over time are as important as absolute metrics.

## Efficient feedback loops drive successful adaptation

Establishing appropriate monitoring systems to assess the success of your multi-channel campaign on a dynamic basis is just as, if not more, important as planning the right initial approach. However, unless the right metrics are being assessed vital information might be lost that can provide early warning of failing activities that can undermine commercial success. So, be open-minded to what can be measured through newer channels.

Such tracking systems have to take account of how well the campaign is working from the perspective of the customer – your ‘segment of one’. If your customers are not responsive to your approaches and are not being driven to seek further engagement with your brand then the right information is not being delivered on their terms.

Measuring this and listening to customer feedback is critical for early adaptive response, by flexing the channel approach, messaging or way in which information is delivered.

# IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER-CENTRIC MULTI-CHANNEL CAMPAIGNS

The right planning and incorporation of measuring appropriate metrics for dynamic adaptation is a good starting point, but effective implementation is often the major determinant of success. Getting this right encompasses taking account of potential blocks in the strategic planning phase and understanding areas of risk out in the field.

Here are what we define as the critical success factors for delivering effective integrated-channel solutions that resonate with customers and yield commercial results.

## > Think like your customers

The fundamental building block of successfully engaging with your customers through a multi-channel approach is to put yourself in their position. Think about what information they need, how it is best received (at what time, through what channels, etc.) from their perspective and how they can procure additional information, when required.

Focus on providing the customer – whether they are doctors, nurses, specialists, payers or patients – with what helps them make decisions and you will find that levels of engagement are higher, information is more readily taken on board and prescribing behaviours are changed more quickly, plus you are building stronger relationships for the future.

## > Define clear objectives

As with the simplest single-channel marketing programme, the starting point for any multi-channel activity is to define clear objectives around what needs to be achieved. This is the foundation for building both a strong strategic plan encompassing customer segmentation, messaging and channel mix / resourcing and also for providing an overarching reference point for whether the campaign is delivering. It might sound contrary to the next point around planning for change, but objectives can be amended over time only if they are clearly defined in the first place, e.g. engaging with 10% more target customers, improving engagement time by 50% or increasing market share by 2%.

## > Plan for change

The complexities and newness of multi-channel campaigns in pharma, combined with the fact that every brand and market is unique in some aspect, mean that the 'perfect' plan is unlikely to ever be developed on data alone. Instead, experience and market data can provide just an educated starting point.

Setting up your activity to be able to measure key indicators of success right from the start, and being nimble enough to adapt based on those indicators, will quickly become the major determinant of success as the initial plan is adapted. Conversely, inability to change could result in being stuck doing the wrong things.

**“Unless the right metrics are being assessed vital information might be lost that can provide early warning of failing activities”**

#### > **Secure management support**

Multi-channel marketing requires a different way of thinking, especially around the fact that adaptability is key and small 'failures' are acceptable, provided they inform future activity. However, in the large corporate environment even such small failures that allow campaign adaptation can be perceived badly if expectations of senior management are not managed upfront. In addition, sufficient resource, investment and training must be procured to give any multi-channel campaign the chance for success and cross-functional working is critical, which is much easier with high level endorsement.

#### > **Focus on message delivery, not the channel**

A really good example of failing to take account of this factor has been seen with the recent excitement over new technology such as the Apple iPad®. When new channels, or communication enablers (such as mobile tablets) emerge, the tendency is to focus on the channel itself and forget that any channel is simply there to enable communication.

Where this is forgotten and insufficient attention is paid to how a message is being delivered through a channel the result can be counter-productive. For example, whilst some see the Apple iPad® completely replacing the paper detail aid, without the right information being presented in the right way to a customer via such mobile devices (and with personnel who are appropriately trained in using them to enhance the detail) the results are unlikely to be positive. The technology may get the blame, but it is the approach that is wrong.

#### > **Encourage collaboration**

Healthy competition is productive within the corporate environment, but ensuring the right mentality and incentives to drive collaboration is necessary for cross-channel activity to be conducted in a synergistic way. Although some pharma companies have developed specialised personnel for working across silos to drive multi-channel activity, all commercial managers must take responsibility and plan for such coordinated team working.

#### > **Identify and react to skills gaps**

In addition to new skills around collaborative working, different channels require different skills and it is important that any gaps, either within teams or more broadly in relation to particular channels, are identified and addressed early. As illustrated in the first article, delivering remote engagement through mechanisms such as edetailing is a different environment to face-to-face meetings with a doctor. Assuming transferability of sales and marketing skills in such instances could be detrimental to the outcome. As such, additional training may be required or sourcing of new skills externally.

**“The fundamental building block of successfully engaging with your customers is to put yourself in their position”**

# BRINGING MULTI-CHANNEL MARKETING BACK TO THE CUSTOMER

Ultimately, the very terminology around multi-channel marketing can lend itself to a misconception that it is about just pushing information out to customers through multiple routes, effectively maximising the level of noise for the available budget.

However, effective multi-channel marketing is also about bringing it back to the individual needs of the customer to provide deeper, more personalised engagement through efficient delivery of the right information in the right way. In doing so, the customers each become a 'segment of one' (figure 4) that have a strong relationship with the brand and whose behaviours will be shaped by that interaction, as indeed they shape the engagement routes themselves.

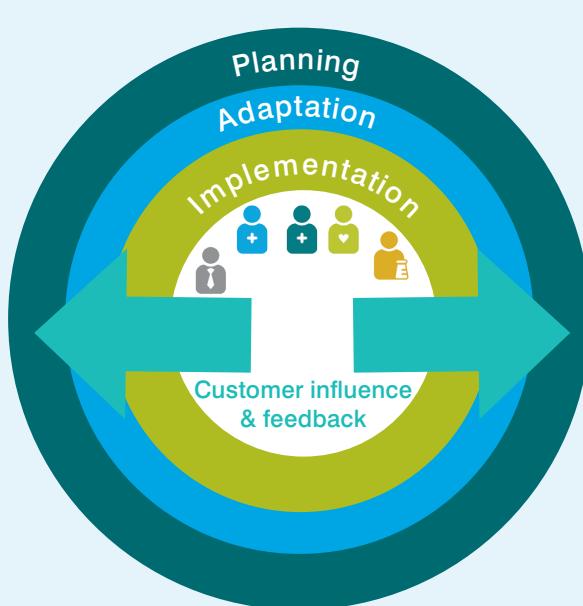


Figure 4: 'Segment of one' multi-channel marketing factors the customer into every stage.

In summary, customer-centric 'segment of one' multi-channel marketing is about:

- **Planning** with the customer in mind, in addition to external market factors and internal capabilities.
- **Adapting** to account for changes in the internal and external environment, especially changing customer preferences around engagement.
- **Implementing** effectively through recognising and accounting for critical success factors, both at the planning and adaptation stages.

Done incorrectly, multi-channel marketing can be a draining beast that delivers limited value. But the reward for those pharma organisations that get it right, by focussing on the 'segment of one', through an integrated channel approach, will be improved customer relationships and better communication of brand messages, leading to mutually beneficial outcomes.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



### **Liz Murray**

#### **Multi-Channel Director, EMEA, Quintiles**

Liz Murray is Multi-Channel Director, EMEA for Quintiles and has been with the company since March 2011. Liz's insight on multi-channel comes from a customer strategy perspective as well as practical experience in selling edetailing solutions in the UK.

Prior to joining Quintiles, Liz worked at Pfizer for almost 13 years, particularly within the UK, but also at Europe / Global level, in a variety of roles and specialist areas covering sales, marketing, account management, market access, business effectiveness and customer strategy / effectiveness. Before that, she worked in the NHS, as a physiotherapist for over 7 years, and as a Senior Manager for over 7 years.

Liz has an MBA from Manchester Business School and also worked as an Associate Lecturer on the Open University (Open Business School) MBA programme for 10 years, until May 2011.



### **Matthew McCarty**

#### **Senior Director for Quintiles Communications**

Matthew McCarty is Senior Director for Quintiles Communications and joined the organisation after 11 years of experience running a business which delivered multi-channel communications solutions for customers across a number of industries including healthcare.

As Senior Director of Quintiles Communications, Matthew now leads global teams to design and deploy communications programs for biopharma pre and post launch with an increasing focus on digital media. Matthew has been instrumental in developing Quintiles digital platforms and solutions to engage with patients, physicians and other healthcare professionals and key stakeholders.

## ABOUT QUINTILES

Quintiles (NYSE: Q) is the world's largest provider of biopharmaceutical development and commercial outsourcing services with a network of more than 27,000 employees conducting business in approximately 100 countries. We have helped develop or commercialize all of the top-50 best-selling drugs on the market. Quintiles applies the breadth and depth of our service offerings along with extensive therapeutic, scientific and analytics expertise to help our customers navigate an increasingly complex healthcare environment as they seek to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of better healthcare outcomes.

### Contact us:

US Toll Free: 1 866 267 4479

US Direct: +1 973 850 7571

Non US: +44 203 564 4649

[www.quintiles.com](http://www.quintiles.com)

[commercial@quintiles.com](mailto:commercial@quintiles.com)

