

PHARMA CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

20 SECRETS TO
10X YOUR CX AND
BOOST PATIENT
OUTCOMES



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20 Secrets to 10X Your CX & Boost Patient Outcomes

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The book is dedicated to the people who work in pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. They are now the heroes to the world as they help us get past the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, for decades they have helped people live better and long lives. Heroes now and always, thank you for everything you do!

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INTRODUCTION

More than once, pharma has literally saved the world. As I write this in July 2021, there have been three vaccines approved in the US for COVID-19, one by Pfizer, one by Moderna, and one by Johnson & Johnson.

Another COVID-19 vaccine, this one by AstraZeneca (and Oxford), has been approved in the UK. And there are several more vaccines on the horizon that will help the world get past this pandemic.

Each is doing their part to let us feel hopeful again. Hugging a parent? Going to a ball game with friends? Seeing your favorite band in concert? Yes, yes, and yes!

Pharma is making all of it possible. They should be heroes to the world! And yet, most people are indifferent at best. It's not that pharma companies are faceless brands that consumers can't connect with as they do with Apple, Spotify,

and Peloton. But according to The Harris poll, only 53% of consumers hold a positive view of pharma.

And a recent Gallup poll on consumer perceptions found pharma rated *below* electric utilities and oil and gas!

But why?

Because pharma does not emotionally connect with its ultimate customer, the patient, like great consumer brands do. Let me explain.

The best consumer brands are completely obsessed with the customer experience, and the entire company is focused on it. These companies first create each customer experience with intention. Nothing is left to chance. They meticulously map every aspect of the customer experience—from first engagement to first purchase to continued usage over time.

And everything in between.

Everything.

The great consumer brands emotionally connect with the customer. Over and over again.

And they do that by delivering experiences that customers value, remember, and share with others.

Pharma does not do this. At least not consistently.

But they can. And, more importantly, they must if they want to continue to thrive. Patients who have positive experiences with pharma are more likely to join clinical trials, successfully onboard to new medications, adhere over time, and enjoy positive medical outcomes.

And better experiences provide pharma with the opportunity to connect with underserved populations and help the people in those populations live longer, better quality lives. Put another way, a great patient experience means *all* people have a chance at better medical outcomes and better lives.

Why am I qualified to write about this topic?

The company I founded in 2001, PeopleMetrics, has been working with pharma companies since we started. We have helped pharma understand stakeholders' needs, wants, and experiences.

Up until 2015, most of this work was traditional market research type work, primarily with physicians and other Healthcare Professionals (HCPs)—sales force effectiveness, market landscape, segmentation, message testing, you name it.

And then in 2015, we got a call from a client who asked us

if we had measured the experience with “patient support services”? We asked, “What in the world are patient support services?”

We learned quickly. Patient support services, also known as “patient support programs (PSPs),” are game changers for patients. These services help patients with access to their medication, improve adherence, better manage their disease, reduce complications, provide financial assistance, and more.

Then in 2017, a client asked us if we could help them measure the patient experience in a global clinical trial. This was new and incredibly exciting territory. A better patient experience in clinical trials impacts the ability to recruit and retain patients (including those from underserved populations), informs design for future trials, and provides an indication to the effectiveness of different trial sites.

We started to understand that being patient-centric applied across commercial *and* clinical.

Hmmm.

At the same time, the customer experience (CX) space was exploding, with nearly every industry embracing the concept and investing heavily to better engage with their customers. There even appeared a new category of software

called “experience management,” which helps companies measure and manage the customer experience. Analysts like Forrester and Gartner cover this space regularly.

This got us thinking, how does customer experience, or CX as we call it, apply to pharma?

And “pharma CX” was born.

In 2018, I wrote a book entitled *Listen or Die: 40 Lessons that Turn Customer Feedback into Gold*. I wrote that book because customer feedback about their experiences is the foundation for emotional connection between companies and customers.

Indeed, customer experience remains the only true differentiator in most industries.

Yes, even in pharma. Especially in pharma.

This is easily the most important work my company has done or will do.

It is one thing helping a hotel measure and improve the checkout experience or helping a telecom company improve their customer support.

But it’s quite another to help a pharma company make it

easier for a new patient who has cancer to get the treatment they need to live a longer and higher-quality life. Or help a pharma company recruit and retain patients for a clinical trial that results in a new medicine that saves lives that can't be saved today.

So, we got to work.

This book is about mindset more than anything else. Specifically, it's about pharma changing its mindset from one focused on developing products to one focused on delivering experiences. I want to shift pharma's approach to model the companies that cultivate not just customers, but advocates and raving fans, over and over again.

I am writing this book to share twenty secrets that my company, PeopleMetrics, has learned in helping pharma companies focus on the customer and create exceptional experiences. Each secret falls within one of four sections.

The first section introduces three secrets that lay the foundation for pharma CX. The second offers four secrets that introduce how pharma CX applies to both clinical and commercial teams. The third section contains ten secrets around patient support services, the front-line for commercial pharma CX. The final section includes three secrets that are key to implementing a successful pharma CX program.

And at the end of the book, there is a bonus section, which takes a peek into the future.

Let's dig in.



THE BEST INVESTMENT YOU CAN MAKE

**As demand for patient support services
skyrockets, savvy pharma companies
are investing more in this area on
the front lines of pharma CX.**

In “Why Pharma Companies Can’t Ignore Patient Services,” Accenture points out that 76% of patients expect their pharmaceutical provider to offer patient support services.

And according to another Accenture report titled “The Patient Is IN: Pharma’s Growing Opportunity in Patient Services,” 85% of pharma companies are expected to dramatically raise their investment in patient support services in the upcoming years.

In a PeopleMetrics study on patient support services among rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients, we found strong momentum for patient support services, including:

- 52% of RA patients being aware that patient support services were available
- Awareness of over 60% for patient support services offered by leading RA medications Orencia (63%), Enbrel (62%), and Actemera (62%)

As more pharma companies provide patient support services, these services will be the price of admission for all products. For example, a 2020 study by Human Care Systems with pharma executives found that *93% of pharma executives agree that customer experience with patient support services is a top priority for pharma* (emphasis added).

It's clear that patient support services are on everyone's mind, but to further increase awareness for these services, pharma needs to promote them as if they were brands within the company and communicate about them through the same channels they're already using to address the patient.

HCPs have become a primary target for awareness programs around patient support as they usually inform patients that these services are available. Efficacy is always going to trump support services for HCPs, but these ser-

vices can make the HCP feel better about prescribing the medication.

Yet, for some of our clients, awareness of patient support services is still a big challenge. It comes down to obtaining a budget and specifically allocating dollars to promote awareness of available patient support services. Some patient-support-services leaders express frustration about getting these services on the radar of the sales team members who visit HCPs. For example, it can be hard to know how much time a sales rep spends talking about patient support programs when they visit an office. Plus, staff are often overwhelmed at HCP offices, and there is often a lot of attrition. The bottom line is that understanding how much the patient support services message is being conveyed at HCP offices continues to be a challenge for many.

Given all of this, it's important to take a step back and understand what is important to consider when designing a patient support services program in the first place.

INSOURCED, OUTSOURCED, OR BOTH?

Pharma companies are experts in their therapeutic area, but that doesn't automatically translate into providing world-class support services for those medicines.

Deciding whether you want to insource or outsource your

patient support services team is an important decision, with pros and cons on each side. No matter which option you choose, taking the time to think about what experiences you want your customers to have with support services is key. The creation phase applies to both insourced and outsourced options.

Insourced teams allow for full control over the customer experience. It's easier for internal teams to build internal expertise for complex disease states, and you directly control the patient experience that you are creating. For example, if you want to create an intimate experience for your patients, providing access to assigned case managers is an excellent option.

Patients often experience an emotional bond with their case managers, who are often part of insourced teams. In fact, we find a strong correlation with overall program satisfaction and case manager satisfaction in pharma clients who specialize in rare disease medications. Most of the time, patients have a better experience when a case manager actually cares about them and their journey managing a chronic disease. However, controlling the patient experience comes at a cost. You will likely have to build your own call center operations with case managers, and scaling that as patients onboard can be challenging.

Outsourced teams trade control over the customer experience

for scaling and operational expertise. Hubs are experts in providing call center operations, platforms for managing patient access and scaling. However, keep in mind that you still own the patient experience even when the Hub is providing the support services. *And you still must intentionally create the experiences the Hub is going to deliver.* Plus, patients are not cases; they are people. You risk losing that personal touch with your patients when you outsource to a Hub. It may be worth it for certain therapies, but others require the personal touch. In any event, a strong partnership with your Hub is key, so you have input into how the Hub interacts with your patients, complete transparency into the experiences your patients have with the Hub, and the ability to proactively manage these experiences.

The good news is that you don't have to pick one or the other. A hybrid model can strike a balance between controlling the experience and getting the benefits of scale.

WHERE TO BEGIN PHARMA CX IN PATIENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The pharma space is unique in that patients interact with a network of providers to get care (doctors, pharmacies, insurers, etc.), and many of these interactions are outside of your control.

Start with moments of truth within patient support services

that you own—such as patient onboarding or first infusion. Refining and improving these key experiences will provide quick wins early on that can be shared internally and act as a first step in building pharma CX within your company.

The next secret focuses on how digital offerings are key to driving patient satisfaction with patient support services.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SEAN MCDADE has been helping companies optimize customer experiences for over twenty years. He is the founder, CEO, and visionary of PeopleMetrics, a leading provider of experience management software and advisory services. Sean has worked with leading pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies such as AstraZeneca, Sanofi, and Novartis. He has created PeopleMetrics pharma CX solutions, including the Patient Hierarchy of Needs framework for patient support services that is featured in this book. Sean's first book, *Listen or Die: 40 Lessons that Turn Customer Feedback into Gold*, was an Amazon bestseller. He holds a PhD in Business Administration and Marketing Science from Temple University and has published eight articles in peer-reviewed scholarly journals. A recipient of Philadelphia Business Journal's 40 Under 40 award, Sean is also an active angel investor in the Philadelphia region. Sean resides in Philadelphia and spends as much time as possible in Brigantine, NJ, during the summer with his two sons, Ben and Henry.