

White Paper

# The Art of Balancing Inextricably Linked AI/ML, Automation, and Adoption for Better Outcomes

Why most life sciences companies fail in their omnichannel orchestration initiatives and what to do about it

ALEKSANDRA ILIC, VP, Customer Engagement Solutions, Field Force Operations, IQVIA



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# **Executive summary**

Personalization is changing the way companies engage with healthcare providers (HCPs) and pharma needs to be ready. Seamless omnichannel experiences and personalized customer engagement require orchestration that links AI/ML-driven capabilities with execution that fosters adoption. Yet, building an AI/ML model might prove to be the easy undertaking compared to ensuring it successfully powers personalized omnichannel engagement initiatives.

The challenge is not only making it impactful, productionized, and scalable, but also ensuring it:

- · accurately translates the brand strategy
- optimally considers all relevant clinical and HCP data
- orchestrates activities across different channels and touchpoints in a timely manner
- reinforces adoption and execution of its actionable outputs

Success is not complicated, but requires adopting lessons learned with an open mind. Using integrated next-generation customer engagement, insight generation, and omnichannel orchestrating workflow tools leads to better outcomes.



# Maximizing omnichannel HCP engagement

With change accelerating and HCP access dwindling, every touchpoint counts. While digital solutions are attempting to emulate the sales rep's ability to personalize engagement, and digital investments continue to grow, HCPs still see more value in personal interactions. In fact, increasing in-person interactions is the dominant factor for successful brand launches in the U.S.1 and surveys show that 88% of HCPs would be twice as likely to meet with other reps if their best relationship were replicated.<sup>2</sup>

Field teams personalize their approach with HCPs based on their research and collective activity during the planning process. They further adapt their delivery during their meetings with the HCP using visual and non-verbal cues. But they can do even more by leveraging AI/MLdriven model outputs that provide insights on behavior and preferences, as well as patient-centric engagement predictions by synthesizing vast amounts of available data and producing quality actionable recommendations.3

For digital personalization, maximizing HCP engagement has proven much more difficult as trying to emulate field force personalization is not easy. This is especially true as this requires additional orchestration efforts of all the touchpoints across different channels. Personalized experiences are achieved when data can be consistent and connected across channels and engagement opportunities.



64% of HCPs agree that the volume of digital communications they receive from pharma is too great.



Nearly two-thirds of HCPs agree that the volume of meetings they are invited to join is greater than they have time for.



Almost 8 in 10 HCPs are now seeing a greater volume of information from pharma companies than pre-COVID-19.4

Many companies have embarked on strategic transformation initiatives looking to advance analytical capabilities and optimally link them with channel and content execution. Additionally, some of those companies are shifting their HCP-centric approach to a patient-centric engagement model to focus on advancing health outcomes.

To execute on this, companies need to consider convergence of patient and HCP journeys and how clinical events can inform and improve omnichannel activities. The speed and agility required to stand out today requires an integrated, dynamic customer engagement model powered by intelligence and connected solutions. Coupled with the need for hyper personalization — which is a continuous cycle of optimizing, learning, and adapting it is not surprising that companies are struggling to start, scale, and demonstrate success.

The next generation of patient-centric customer engagement orchestration requires defining what personalization means to a brand and the AI/MLpowered analytical capabilities to execute on this definition. Too often though, companies fail to build a robust, production-grade system and thus, continue to see failed initiatives and poor returns on investment. Even with a successful go-live, companies frequently underestimate the support it takes to drive adoption.

In total, it is no wonder that most digital transformation initiatives focusing on "omnichannel orchestration" are seen as unproven value-adds to already-complex ecosystems.

#### Typical challenges and how to solve them

Today, organizations, engulfed with patient and physician data from internal and external disparate sources, follow a complex and tedious process to operationalize available data for business value. However, generating timely and actionable insights remains a struggle due to siloed technology investments, finite interoperability among platforms, and a complex vendor ecosystem.

Commonly, life sciences companies are using AI modeling focused on two areas of high value: patient and omnichannel predictive models. To help improve patient care, common models focus on finding patients at the appropriate point in their disease and treatment progression to improve patient care. 5 The use of AI/ML modeling is particularly effective in assisting in this work because of its ability to learn from historical patient data to make actionable predictions about the future.

Designing and executing well on this often requires procuring suitable datasets and having the right level of disease knowledge and data science expertise. Different data sources can be applied differently for AI and for patient studies. For example, open claims data (i.e., eLAAD) is a useful source for both patient and HCP targeting for personal and non-personal promotion. On the other hand, closed claims data (i.e., IQVIA PharMetrics® Plus) as well as EMR are recommended for individual studies and positive class for AI. Clinical expertise is required to ensure a problem is correctly defined, cohorts identified, and results interpreted accurately.

Further, companies want to ensure that patient identification can lead to optimized omnichannel activation tactics and determine which performance levers will yield the largest impact to improve a brand's overall performance.<sup>6</sup> Patient-focused alerts and omnichannel orchestration (especially with dynamic segmentation<sup>7</sup>) dovetail to provide a complete AIdriven HCP targeting solution. While patient modeling identifies and ranks HCPs with patients of interest who have a clinical event (i.e., lab test, disease detection, disease progression, or medication switch), omnichannel models prioritize HCPs based on these clinical insights combined with additional behavior information (HCP preferences, channel activities, engagement content, and message tactics).

Achieving all of this presents resource and cost challenges which are not immediately recognized despite transforming the commercial business process and its supporting solutions. As life sciences companies have increased investments in analytics in recent years, there is qualitative value around AI/ML seen in patient modeling and omnichannel promotion. Yet, too often, companies have failed to show a quantitative ROI impact. Large

#### **Identification**



#### **Patient and HCP** identification

Leverage AI/ML approaches to identify and predict patients and HCPs



#### **Patient and HCP** segmentation

Layer additional dimensions (patients treated, payers, etc.) onto HCP ID

#### **Activation**



#### Message and engagement

Prioritize and determine the GTM activity that optimizes uplift/ROI for each HCP across channels, messages and content



#### **Personal** outreach

Optimize rep utilization feeding actionable intelligence into CRM and increase digital adoption through multichannel execution

#### Measurement



#### Measurement and adjustment

Define success: campaign, adoption, attribution, uplift, and more making real-time in-flight adjustments and supporting change management

pharma has invested in teams, technology, and data to drive their own unique data science capabilities but struggle with making it consumable and "fit for purpose."

Additionally, companies fail to consider key areas, including their ability to present insights that generate action, adapt based on model and field feedback, and build scalable systems. Contextually delivering insights is also hampered by technology choices, making the insights appear like a chore or white noise rather than something that is fully integrated in the field force's way of working. To future-proof omnichannel engagement, customer relationship management ("CRM") solutions cannot be treated as a commodity but as central field force orchestration component to deliver personalized HCP experiences and to inform and activate digital activities.

While most life sciences companies have similar personalized engagement visions, their approaches have been quite varied and have yielded dissimilar results. Some companies have invested in internal builds that never met their original goals, while others suffer from "paralysis by analysis" – stuck in never ending trial-anderror cycles. Only a handful of companies have been able to successfully reach widespread adoption by applying lessons learned from previous failed initiatives.

Like the legs on a three-legged stool, success comes down to balancing three equally critical areas:

- 1. AI/ML models: The large amount of data and complexity of managing engagement requires sophisticated AI/ML to leverage the opportunity and manage the challenge
- **2. Automation:** Building an automation process from data engineering to model deployment enhances process efficiency leading to faster coursecorrections, better ROI, and better adoption
- **3. Adoption:** Programs that have demonstrated positive outcomes are predicated on field teams that adopt recommendations, and this can be achieved by nextgeneration customer engagement tools and good change management

While companies may invest a little more in each 'leg' at any given time, it is imperative not to neglect the other two. Each one of these is explored in further detail in the following sections.

#### AI/MI to the rescue

Moving to a patient-centric customer engagement model increases the need for better informed, predictive, and actionable insights. And powering those insights with the use of AI/ML will drive value within the company, whether optimizing cost, driving revenue uplift, or both.

#### The need for AI-driven and betterinformed pharma engagement teams

AI/ML-driven actionable suggestions are built upon available and predicted HCP data surfacing new unidentified opportunities directly to the customer engagement teams. These opportunities, coupled with relevant information on how to personalize the recommended engagement through suggested content and messaging, lead to more trusted relationships with HCPs.

IQVIA has observed sales uplift improvements from field reps who adopt actionable suggestions ranging from 2% to almost 40%. Such wide range is predicated on brand lifecycle, inclusion of all the applicable datasets, and combining patient and omnichannel model execution and adoption strategies.

Not only can a well-executed program make measurable performance improvements with inexperienced or underperforming reps, it can also improve the efficiency of top performers by providing actionable insights that they would not necessarily be able to derive on their own. This has been demonstrated with results of up to a 25% increase in productivity and engagement

and multi-fold increase in channel adoption.

"AI won't replace pharma sales reps quite yet, but pharmaceutical sales reps who can use AI will replace pharmaceutical sales reps who will not use AL"8

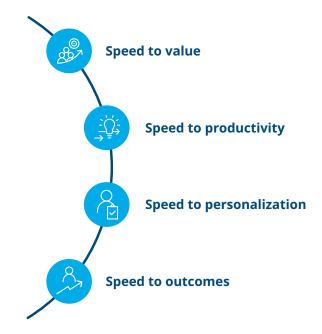
— Arda Ural, PhD, EY Americas Health Sciences and Wellness Industry Markets Leader, Ernst & Young

#### The promise of the omnichannel grail

Coordinating across personal and non-personal channels is currently the biggest challenge in customer engagement requiring more omnichannel orchestration than ever. Testing out new go-to-market models with individual brands does not suffice; a coordinated approach is required to measure and optimize a program's impact.

Based on McKinsey research "customer satisfaction truly matters in pharma, even with great drugs. A study conducted among 600 immunologists in Europe and the United States indicates that when prescribers are fully satisfied with their journey for a particular drug and with the pharma company's contribution to it, they are more than twice as likely as dissatisfied ones to prescribe it."9





Similarly, other 2023 research shows that HCPs' brand preference can be attributed to customer experience factors beyond the product and that this can be as high as 83% for promoters.10

Delivering personalized omnichannel engagement to HCPs can be as simple as expanding the set of provider touchpoints to ensure sales, marketing, and medical channels interact with one another — working to seamlessly drive enhanced HCP engagement throughout their daily, digital lives and not just at their office. But the enablement of personalized omnichannel orchestration requires leveraging AI/ML to:

- Determine best channel, tactic, content, and message level for each customer, including frequency and cadence
- Enable optimal and seamless content-rich experience across channels
- Adjust who to target and the messaging path based on dynamic segmentation
- Enable an efficient content management ecosystem driven by analytics and insights across initiatives, channels, and assets

Achieving the above requires laying out omnichannel foundations, creating deep customer 360 (C360) insights, automating the engagement, and ultimately personalizing the experience.

#### **Omnichannel foundation**

- Invest in next-gen CRM bridging personal and non-personal tactics for better customer engagement, linking embedded end-user workflows and insights
- Expand to NPP solutions connected to C360 CRM ecosystem
- · Define measurement framework, KPIs, and operational readiness

#### **Deeper C360 insights**

- Develop a multi-dimensional customer segmentation combining the relevant qualitative and quantitative attributes based on behavioral, engagement, and prospective profiling and attitudinal information
- Combine the power of advanced and traditional segmentation to enable new customer engagement strategies
- Update segments frequently and inform engagement tactics

#### **Automated engagement**

- Implement automated AI/ML models to produce actionable insights per customer - across all sales, marketing, and medical
- Enable dynamic targeting and call planning based on engagement behavior and preferences with continuous optimization
- · Develop an agile content creation process and purpose messages, content, channel execution

#### Personalized experience

- Hyper-personalize content with dynamic, automated assembly of 'content blocks'
- Leverage AI/ML to automate the content metadata tagging process
- Design and execute customer engagement journeys that incorporate multiple customer types/personas
- Orchestrate delivery, measure and adjust as continuous process

# Automation to improve innovation

As part of their omnichannel transformation initiatives, life sciences companies are investing in data science capabilities often centralized through regional or global centers of excellence. This approach allows for reduced costs through standardization of processes and tools for the most common use cases, leading to faster speed to delivery with a common pool of talent. If executed well, it can lead to broader adoption with more use cases within brands and more total brands and therapeutic areas.

#### In-house builds that never fully arrive

Those life sciences companies that successfully scaled their programs have solved the following challenges through improved processes and optimized automation:



#### Defining questions



#### **Enabling** data



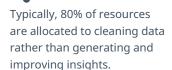
#### Calibrating models



#### Deploying insights

Defining pointed problem statement: this can often prove to be a time-consuming exercise as there might not always be a consensus on what is potentially being addressed and answered by AI/ML, nor what one should focus on in terms of prioritization.

What questions/algorithms will deliver the most valuable insights?



Customers are challenged with making sense of the data to derive insights on patients, providers, and prescribers, building and re-building internal systems to meet various stakeholder needs.

Companies struggle to iterate on their algorithms confidently and often. For most, this process takes too long, resulting in long deployment times or in publishing rushed results.

This also affects resource allocations for updates to existing use cases versus working on new use cases. Insights created and surfaced must drive action, measurement, and adjustment. Low adoption minimizes business impact. Lack of feedback limits ability to adjust.

The majority of these projects fail due to poor end-user adoption. This is often coupled with failure to define success criteria.

Yet, most companies fail to see a return on investment for their initiatives and/or are unable to scale a pilot to other brands and therapeutic areas. This is often because data science teams fail to productize and create the necessary processes for delivering ongoing intelligence to multiple tenants of multiple products at scale when developing AI/ML models.

From struggling to define the pointed problem to solve, to applying the right data science to the business need (i.e., "Should I use a random forest or a neural network to build recurring projections in oncology?"), some teams remain stuck in the **Defining questions** stage.

In the **Enabling data** stage, risks of trying to improve on analytics built on the wrong data can lead to number of different poor outcomes, such as:

- Missing an opportunity by investing in the next listed HCP instead of the HCP with highest opportunity
- Failing to use real world data and other resources to create effective attitudinal and/or behavioral segmentation
- Creating sub-optimal models built only on in-house data limiting their marketplace competitiveness
- · Missing real-time market dynamics to adjust with agility and speed
- Not improving predictive precision by using both clinical and digital data to train the models

Failure can happen at any step, but companies struggle most with the last two: Calibrating models and Deploying insights.

Proving investment value, usually with the first few use cases on selected brands, tends to set high expectations. These expectations invite additional scrutiny which

drives repeated calibration adjustments (perfection versus good enough) which extends timelines and costs, resulting in impacted user adoption and ROI.

Furthermore, productionizing machine learning algorithms involves different team member types with varied skillsets, from business analysts needing to ensure algorithm insights are relevant and localized to brands, datasets, and end users, to ML engineers requiring modern cloud technologies that can scale and optimize data set up. Different models will use different data inputs and may run at different frequencies, and some models may run sequentially while others are done in parallel or have no dependency to other models at all.

One criterion for the successful deployment of algorithms is the degree to which they can be operationalized. This means more than just execution of the algorithm but considers a range of features. Building an automation process from data engineering to model deployment enhances process efficiency, and use of an AI/ML platform opens an easier route for model design from ideas to production. Finally, an automated process delivers the same result more quickly than manual processes, while reducing the cost of labor and eliminating the risk of human error.

Besides labor and cost savings, automation promotes additional benefits including:

- · Faster and more efficient data preparation and manipulation
- Easier and faster modeling allowing for time to innovate
- More value-added use of data science resources

Productionizing is a multi-step process that is key to turning ML pilots into realized business value.

#### **Automation facilitates scalability and** improves reliability

From its own experience, IQVIA has seen improvements and significant savings due to the use of automation:



Over 70% in time savings due to automation and making the process less error prone



Two-fold increase in team members who can run and/or validate models



Five times faster model development and (re)calibration



Increased time spent on analysis, insights, and innovation

For some time, we have seen off-the-shelf AI/ML solutions that are not modular, do not promote innovation, and have models that are too opaque ("black box") to understand. Thus, it is not surprising that customers have resorted to in-house builds to have greater control of the overall process. However, there are emerging new off-theshelf solutions that are modular, flexible, and scalable.

Such solutions provide a platform for standardized data access using high-performance data engineering modules. These platforms provide scalable AutoML approaches with rigorous quality assurance and validation frameworks. Additionally, they include flexible user interfaces that allow for democratizing the use of the models by less expensive resources.

IQVIA has years of experience in creating custom AI/ML solutions and automating that work to ensure quality delivery and scalability. Companies can jumpstart their AI/ML initiatives by making use of IQVIA-provided accelerator models, its platforms, and its algorithm libraries. The algorithms can be trained and operated with a higher resolution because of the granularity and diversity of IQVIA proprietary data assets — providing companies with more value through more accurate algorithms, and removing bias to customer-only data.

The figure below provides a perspective on the value IQVIA can provide with its accelerator models and offthe-shelf platforms versus what companies have done with an in-house only approach.

#### What successful companies do

Based on IQVIA's research, successful life sciences companies that are looking to augment their internal data science teams with supporting platforms look at these key criteria:

• Tangible demonstrations: Companies are looking for tangible product demonstrations. They want to understand the quality control and validation behind the data analysis and scope, as well as the limitations of the product (e.g., data sources, therapeutic areas - e.g., oncology may be more complex vs. low science therapy areas).

	SCALABLE PLATFORM DEVELOPMENT	ALGORITHM BUILDING AND TRAINING	MAKING INSIGHTS ACTIONABLE	соѕт
IN-HOUSE	2 years typically for hiring resources, platform development, and set up	6 months typically to build a single algorithm, plus significant re-alignment of expectations to what a ML algorithm can do	3-6 months typically needed to build out scalable orchestration of insights and automated delivery	From \$1.5M
WITH IQVIA	1-3 months depending on scope	Algorithms can be trained and released in weeks using accelerator models	Configuring pre- built connectors allows for 1 week	Fraction of in-house costs

- Using their own data: Companies want to use AI/ML models on their own data and not on third-party data. This increases the level of confidence on the algorithms as companies understand their own data better. Unless companies are confident of the quality of data going in, they see limited value in such products.
- Easy to explain: Companies prefer open glass-box solutions versus black-box solutions, so they can explain the analyses to their customers. Glass-box solutions provide the additional benefits of building in-house knowledge surrounding the data and systems used, leading to more engaged and capable employees.
- Building trust: While customers understand that the optimization of omnichannel through AI/ML is an evolving space, they want to employ the operationalized models which enable repeatable and reproduceable analysis. Companies are worried about garbage-ingarbage-out scenarios and need steps to ensure that quality and integrity concerns are adequately addressed.

Due to poor adoption results, low ROI, inability to scale, not trusting the outcomes, or just not being able to attribute the potential outcomes, it is common for companies to try different programs in different markets and brands only to never deploy or to be stuck in a pilot mode.

This is true for those working with different vendors and building in-house capabilities. It is recommended to approach these types of programs with an agile mindset and the ability to fail fast to learn and progress. Unfortunately, most companies take longer than necessary to realize that they are not meeting their goals and continue to repeat many of the same mistakes in future initiatives.

Life sciences companies should consider partnering with vendors that offer modular and flexible glass-box platform solutions that can be used to jump-start, adapt to specific requirements, and scale 80% of the most common use cases companies are looking to enable.



# Adoption makes or breaks successful outcomes

In addition to working to deliver automated AI/ML insight at scale, companies struggle to present insights that lead to measurable action and to quickly adapt models based on feedback and measurement results. Couple this with typical 4+ month company build cycles and it is not surprising that adoption is an afterthought.

When this happens, companies are missing a critical success factor for any omnichannel customer engagement project. In addition to investing in good change management,<sup>11</sup> there are three major actions that drive high adoption:

- **1. Make suggestions contextual:** Quickly switch on and contextually embed in a daily workflow AI/MLdriven actionable insights for the field team to engage customers in person as well as through digital channels.
- 2. Build for user input: Rapidly and dynamically adapt recommendations to reflect change in tactics and to incorporate field feedback ensuring their needs are heard and addressed.
- 3. Measure and improve: Regularly measure and share results facilitating the dissemination of the program's impact, fostering better initiative uptake and better ROI.

#### Deliver insights that drive adoption

To create a connected customer engagement model, organizations must link analytical with execution capabilities using different customer interventions. This is done by understanding customer preferences to activate insights at the point of execution in a contextual way that facilitates adoption and uptake.

A vision of an open, flexible, and extendable technology ecosystem for customer engagement and omnichannel orchestration is driven by the need to drive intelligent and personal engagement across different points of the customer journey. Yet providing insights is half the battle... the other half is engagement activation.

The premise of a good, actionable insight is to build trust in what is being suggested. Often overlooked, but equally important is where and when a suggestion is presented. For example, seeing a suggested action during pre-call planning as part of the provider profile information will influence adoption and interest more than relying on a user to navigate to separate areas to review and act on suggestions.

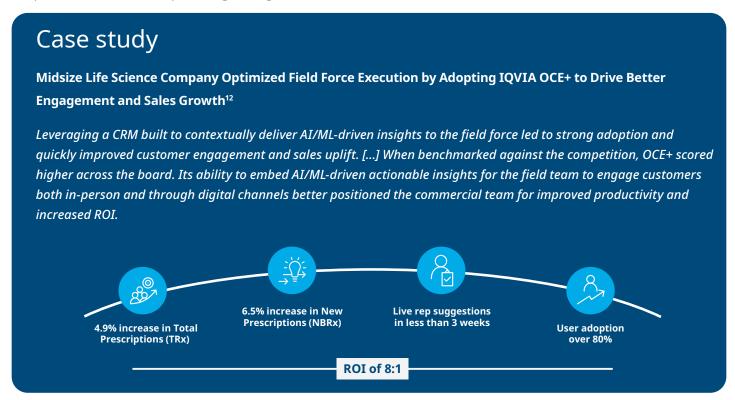
Next generation customer relationship management (CRM) technology focuses on optimal user experience, adaptable workflows, and providing intelligence

when and where it is needed. IQVIA's CRM solution — Orchestrated Customer Engagement (OCE) — links embedded, end-user workflows and insights to help commercial teams receive the right insight at the right time to accelerate agility and increase success rates. With OCE, field teams can access the suggested actions at any time and from anywhere in the platform, leading to improved call planning, execution, and expanded digital engagements.

#### Use feedback to make suggestions better

Creating algorithm feedback loops is critical to sustained improvements by improving recommendations which in turn improve overall utilization and program impact. Additionally, the ability to quickly update parameters and make changes helps ensure a program's longevity and alignment to tactics and strategy across the omnichannel ecosystem, further solidifying value and driving adoption.

As mentioned previously, digital is attempting to emulate the sales rep's ability to personalize engagement, but it is even more important to have sales reps emulate other successful sales reps. Those who action on suggestions drive positive impact outcomes: productivity and uplift.



#### Measure and improve

Selecting the right key performance indicators to measure the success and impact of the program depends heavily on sales objectives, brand stage, and what optimizations are possible. Many companies look at engagement (how many suggestions are accepted or declined), quality (how they are accepted), and adoption (of those accepted, how many were actioned).

The key to driving adoption is demonstrating the value of recommendations to reps and brands: suggestions lead to better results. Investing in measurement and promoting results allows the change management team to motivate and continuously communicate the progress of the program — making it relevant to users and, in turn, increasing adoption.

Driving adoption efforts must focus on the human-AI team, with a core emphasis on the human factors.

#### **Proactive change management**

- Ensure across-role involvement from outset; along with peer champions
- Demonstrate value and assess impacts
- · Evaluate engagement teams and organizational readiness

#### Integration and justification

- Minimally impacting processes (i.e. rep)
- Embed in daily tools (i.e. CRM) in contextual way
- Provide sufficient recommendation justification to ensure adoption



#### Continuous improvement

- Deploy with phased approach with supporting training and support
- Ensure active feedback collection
- Processes explicitly designed for agile change over time

#### **Measurement framework**

- Understandable approach to measuring the success of the program
- Easily identify areas for improvement and quickly adjust

### Conclusion

The vision of seamless omnichannel experiences and personalized customer engagement requires orchestration linking AI/ML-driven automated analytical capabilities with execution capabilities fostering adoption.

Operationalizing omnichannel needs to (i) take advantage through AI/ML of patient and HCP data; (ii) benefit from capital optimization by using a product or accelerators instead of building it; and, (iii) require adoption of the suggested action based on discrete measurement.

Life sciences companies struggle to keep their threelegged stool balanced and have had a failing record running and maintaining their patient identification

and omnichannel orchestration programs. The recipe for success is not complicated, but it requires adopting the lessons learned (their own or others) with an open mind — which means considering modular and flexible off-the shelf capabilities for insight generation and/ or orchestration, and investing in next-generation customer engagement tools leading to better outcomes.

IQVIA has invested in such platforms and tools, representing the next step in the customer engagement evolution, for its ease of use, integration of data and tools enabling optimized field force execution, and for bridging personal and non-personal tactics for better customer engagement and experiences. IQVIA has helped companies master the art of AI/ML, Automation and Adoption.

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#### About the authors



**ALEKSANDRA ILIC** VP, Customer Engagement Solutions, Field Force Operations, IQVIA

Aleksandra has more than 20 years of experience working with life sciences companies, focusing on solutions and services optimizing customer journeys. In her current role as vice president of Customer Engagement Solutions for IQVIA FFO, she develops business solutions to commercial

business and technical problems and brings to market new value propositions.

She works on solutions for omnichannel orchestration and personalized customer engagement to support customer, HCP, thought leader, and patient-centric initiatives combining data, advanced analytics, technology, and advisory services. This includes next-generation engagement tools, AI/ML-driven actionable intelligence, orchestration of personal and digital journeys, and more, addressing the business and technology challenges currently facing pharma companies.

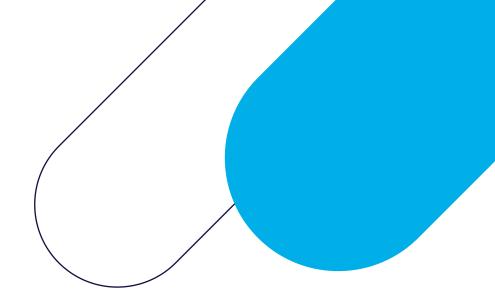
In her previous roles, Aleksandra engaged her broad cross-section of relevant experience and unique perspectives to lead practices and COEs ranging from Digital and Data Management to Customer Engagement.

## Contributors

CINDY WEBER, Sr. Principal, Artificial Intelligence (AI) Solutions COE, IQVIA

WILL O'REILLY, Assoc. Director, Product Management and Strategy, Orchestrated Analytics, IQVIA

DAN GANSE, Sr. Director and General Manager, Field Force Operations COE, IQVIA



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