
Pharma CMOs Slow to Realise Potential of Digital Health Movement



A survey conducted by Accenture reveals that only a third of chief marketing officers (CMOs) in the pharmaceutical industry view IT as a strategic partner to business objectives. Compared to other industries like banking and retail, the C-suite executives of pharmaceutical companies are less likely to collaborate, and CIOs are far more likely than CMOs to see a need for more collaboration (80 percent versus 44 percent). The survey involved 22 CIOs and 24 CMOs at pharmaceutical firms.

“The pharma industry is in a period of rapid and deep change, adapting to a changing health consumer, massive advances in digital and a more dominant payer and reimbursement for outcomes environment,” according to the survey. “This is creating an urgent need and opportunity for CMOs and CIOs to collaborate to better meet new customer expectations in a digital world.”

There is willingness of CIOs to align with marketing departments, the report says, although this desire is not always reciprocated among CMOs. Only 58 percent of CMOs expressed an eagerness to partner with CIOs, compared to 91 percent of CIOs wanting to align with CMOs. This 33 percent gap is much wider in the pharmaceutical industry than in banking (16 percent) and retail (19 percent). Greater alignment could pay off with improved marketing strategies and customer engagement.

Analytics and Big Data

The three areas which represent the biggest potential, according to industry CIOs, are analytics, big data and technology spending. When it comes to analytics driving integration, CIOs were far more likely to hold that view than were CMOs (52 percent and 13 percent, respectively). Pharmaceutical CIOs were also about three times as likely as CMOs to want to invest in multichannel analytics; 43 percent of CIOs but just 13 percent of CMOs thought it was a priority.

CIOs and CMOs have different ideas about how to align the functions of IT and marketing. CIOs are about three times as likely as CMOs (38 versus 13 percent) to support co-locating the staff from both departments. CMOs, on the other hand, would prefer to designate an IT leader within the marketing group and a marketing leader within the IT department. Only 19 percent of CIOs favoured such a solution, compared to 38 percent of CMOs.

Spending Priorities: Customer Experience vs. Salesforce Mobilisation

Survey respondents were asked where they have spent the most in applying technology to advance market impact and outcomes. The results showed that 54 percent of CMOs spent the most money on technology devoted to enhancing the customer experience; only 14 percent of CIOs identified that area as a priority for spending. CIOs were more likely to focus spending on mobile enabling the sales force (43 percent of CIOs versus 17 percent of CMOs).

Anne O’Riordan, senior managing director of Accenture’s Life Sciences industry group, commented on why the divide is so wide in the pharmaceutical industry in particular. “The reasons for the difference are steeped in traditional structures, cultures and sales representative-led commercial models,” she said. “We suggest key steps to closing the gap between pharma CIOs and CMOs.”

Source: [Accenture](#)

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