



SALES + MARKETING

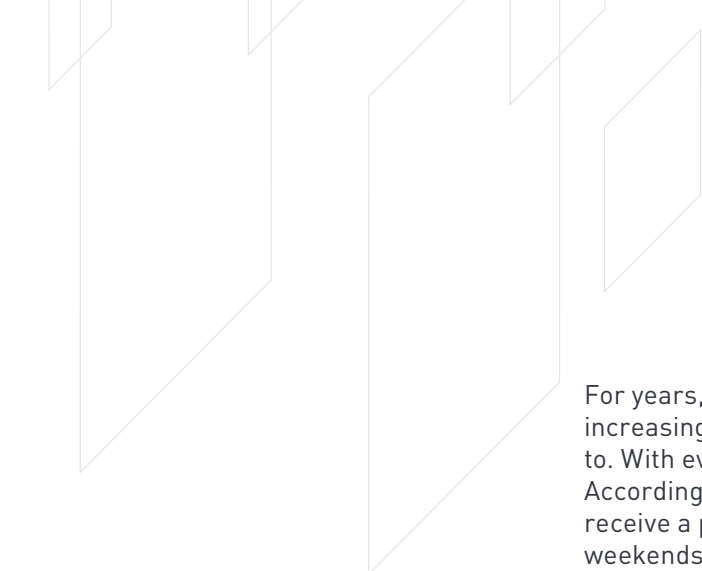
Elevating the Customer Experience With Field Suggestions

The convergence of sales force effectiveness and data science in the pharmaceutical industry

By Saby Mitra



Impact where it matters.™



Based on 2015 ZS Oncology Customer Experience Tracker, Oncology companies can add \$50 - \$75 million in incremental sales for every \$1 billion in current sales by delivering a better customer experience.

For years, pharmaceutical companies have targeted their customers with an increasing number of sales and marketing activities because they could afford to. With every launch of a new product or indication, the noise has increased. According to ZS's AffinityMonitor®, the top 30,000 doctors in a sample set receive a projected 2,700 industry contacts a year, or 7.5 each day (including weekends and holidays). For physicians in certain therapeutic areas that have a lot of overlap among pharmaceutical companies, the number of promotional activities can grow even higher—up to twice as many.

Several pharmaceutical companies recognize that maintaining relevance and access to their customers in this environment requires competitive differentiation and a new approach to customer engagement. To better engage customers, in the recent past many companies have initiated programs that are focused on making marketing more customer centric. While this is a good first step in fashioning a customer experience, outbound marketing constitutes only a portion of the customer touch points, and by integrating just the marketing interactions, it will result in a modest change in customer engagement and, as a result, a modest change in sales growth. With over 60% of industry marketing budgets typically spent on sales activities, it's essential that the sales force is also strategically integrated with multichannel efforts in order to optimize promotional effectiveness and pull-through. Companies that are optimizing the customer experience across all marketing and sales touch points will see significant gains in customer engagement and, ultimately, sales growth.

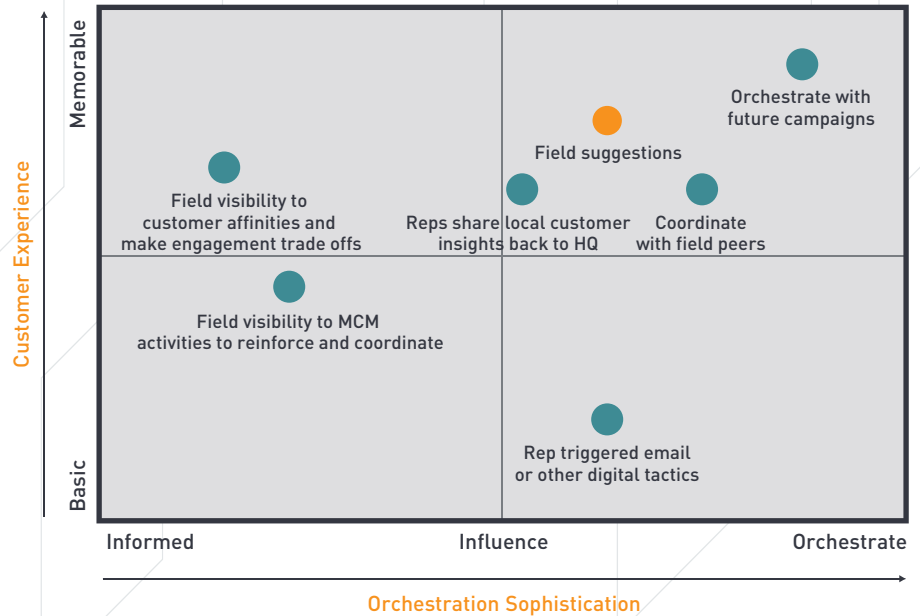
Today, as rep access continues to rapidly erode and customer preferences lean increasingly toward digital engagements, there is a significant opportunity for pharmaceutical companies to amplify their customer-centric agenda by establishing strong integration between sales and marketing and evolving the sales rep into an orchestrator of customer activities, leading to better reinforcement and scale. Creating this linkage between sales and marketing is already underway by some early adopters in the industry.

Introducing Rep Orchestration

In an environment where delivering an exceptional customer experience is a strategic imperative, the question becomes, How do we integrate sales and marketing and elevate the sales rep to drive orchestrated customer engagements? The vision of rep-enabled orchestration can be achieved through a set of business capabilities as shown in Exhibit 1, which can collectively enhance customer experience. As customer access continues to decline and customers engage across multiple company assets, sales organizations need to work smarter than before, and sales reps need to coordinate more purposefully with marketing channels. Given the change in customer preferences for channel, content and cadence, field suggestions through the use of workflows and data analytics will serve as a key lever for tailoring an experience for each customer and, thereby, stronger competitive differentiation.



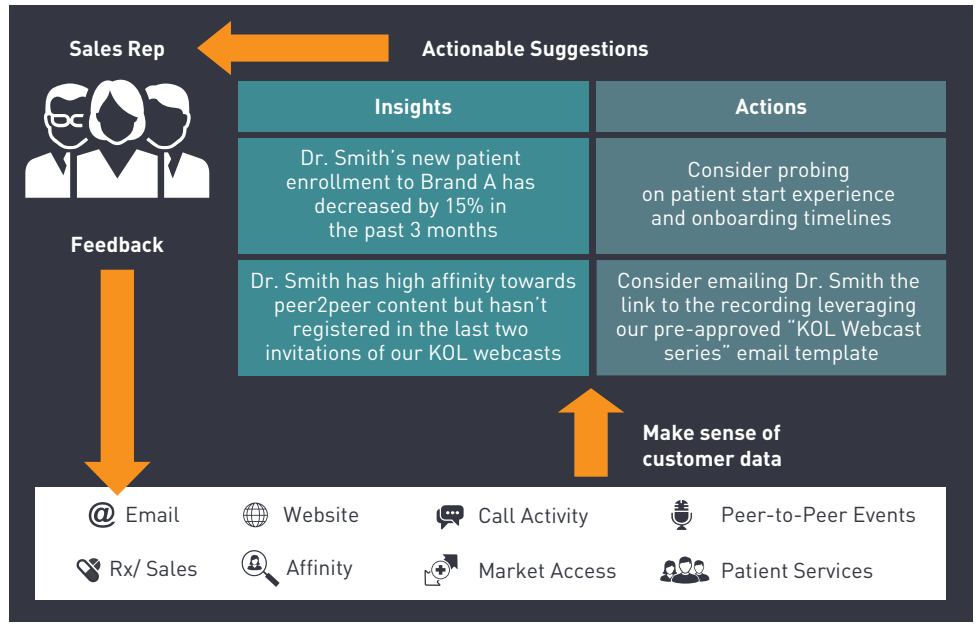
EXHIBIT 1



What Are Field Suggestions?

Onboarding new reps quickly, reducing the time that reps spend searching for data, and coaching reps are some of the top priorities of sales organizations today. However, today’s pharmaceutical sales reps are inundated with multiple reports, and are typically left connecting the dots between data from CRM systems, sales reports and multiple other data cuts to piece together meaningful customer insights. This slows down even the most efficient reps in the sales team. Additionally, while traditional sales reports provide visibility into customer trends, they do not offer insights to diagnose the root cause of the issues and help reps adapt their engagement approaches. Field suggestions, if designed right, address this problem by first integrating multiple data sets across sales, marketing, market access and other functions, and then assembling a provocative and easy-to-digest combination of business insight and action plan served to the rep in a single location, as shown in Exhibit 2. These suggestions enable better pre-call plan preparedness for reps by surfacing critical insights about why customer behavior is changing so that reps can fix the “right” problem with each customer, prioritize sales opportunities and improve customer performance. From a marketing organization standpoint, a field suggestion is an incredibly powerful vehicle to influence rep pull-through and scale engagements based on a brand’s strategic priorities, and learn about customer preferences through suggestion-usage trends.

EXHIBIT 2: FIELD SUGGESTIONS CONCEPT







Field suggestions can be classified into three broad categories ranging from simple business rules to those that are more advanced and analytically derived:

- + **Business-rule based:** This type of suggestion is generated when a trigger condition meets a static threshold value (for example, generating a suggestion when 50% or more market volume flows through unfavorable managed-care plans).
- + **Event-based:** This type of suggestion is generated based on an event in the customer journey or when a customer performs a specific action (such as when a customer registers as a member in a peer-to-peer network or conducts a valued action on a website).
- + **Data-science-based:** This type of suggestion provides reps actionable insights based on changes in customer behavior by combining multiple sources that will be otherwise difficult to identify through traditional reports and business intelligence techniques (for example, generating suggestions by identifying changes in a customer's market share, customer engagement score, and managed care favorability altogether).

While the core design of suggestions may remain unchanged across commercial models, some variability is expected between primary care and specialty therapeutic areas. For example, in promoting specialty portfolios, such as oncology, reps will need to navigate institutional accounts (for example, group practices, healthcare systems, integrated delivery care networks), orchestrate heavily with other field peers (such as medical science liaisons or reimbursement specialists) and closely follow patient dispositions. However, sales performance data may not be always available at an individual customer level. In that case, special sales attribution techniques may be necessary to generate individual customer-level insights. Suggestions can also be more predictive in nature in specialty businesses to empower sales teams to closely follow new patient opportunities. For example, generating suggestions when the doctor orders a biomarker test, or when the doctor enrolls a patient into a competitor’s clinical trial.

Pharmaceutical companies in the U.S. typically have access to a wide variety of customer-level data to inform deeper customer insights and suggestions. However, in ex-U.S. markets sales data may be available only at a brick or nano-brick level as in Europe, or other data sets may not be readily available in all market archetypes, as shown in Exhibit 3. Nevertheless, high-impact suggestions can be still be generated through the use of sales and marketing activity data, and smart design of business rules that integrates with other activities in the customer journey. In some ex-U.S. markets, the sophistication of suggestions and, thereby, field effectiveness can be further enhanced through the integration of additional analytical processes and assets (such as attribution of sales data, estimate customer affinities, etc.).

EXHIBIT 3: COMMERCIAL DATA AVAILABILITY AND GRANULARITY MATRIX

Suggestion Topics	 US	 EU	 Japan	 China
Sales	HCP or Account	Brick/ Nano-Brick	Account	Account
Face-to-face Interactions	HCP	HCP	HCP	HCP
Managed Care	HCP			
MCM Engagement	HCP	HCP	HCP	HCP
Patient Statistics	HCP			
Customer Affinity <i>(e.g. ZS's AffinityMonitor®)</i>	HCP	HCP		
Account/ Group Practice Dynamics	Account		Account Listing	Account Listing

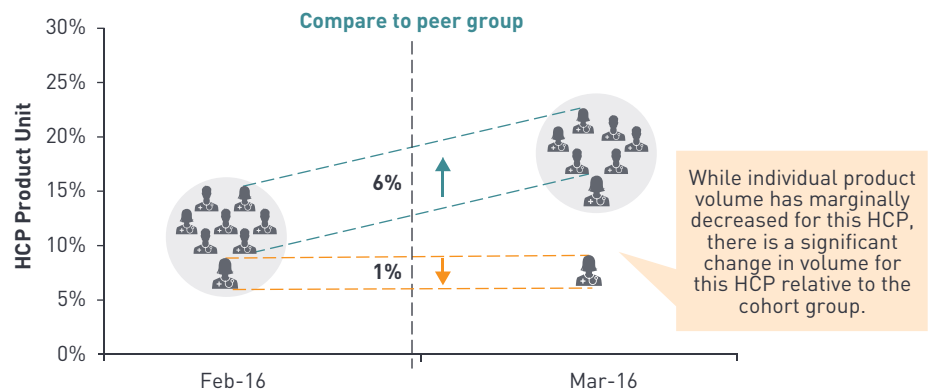
HCP = Health Care Provider

The Role of Data Science in Driving Sales Force Effectiveness

Some pharmaceutical companies may choose to take a staggered approach in the implementation of the field suggestion's capability and initially focus on suggestions based on simple business rules and light data science, and then eventually increase the intensity of the program by graduating to more advanced data-science-driven suggestions. Others, who may have already invested in robust data management capabilities, may choose to take advantage of richer data science at the outset. Regardless, as companies mature their field suggestions capability, sophisticated data management and data science techniques will play a critical role in producing high-quality suggestions at scale. Algorithms can be developed and automated to deliver four major types of functionalities:

1. Detecting statistically significant change in individual customer behavior relative to historic trends versus using static business rules and threshold values, as shown in Exhibit 4. This enables predictive and timely identification of opportunities to help reps to develop engagement approaches.
2. Leveraging combined intelligence of multiple related metrics and systematically link an underlying diagnosis that is difficult to derive manually to help reps address the "right" issue.
3. Prioritizing suggestions that factor in the brand strategy and rep inputs to facilitate stronger linkage between brand strategy and field execution.
4. Learning and adapting to customer behavior and rep preferences, and become smarter over time through machine learning, enabling stronger rep adoption and personalization.

EXHIBIT 4: STATISTICAL TEST COMPARED TO PEER GROUP





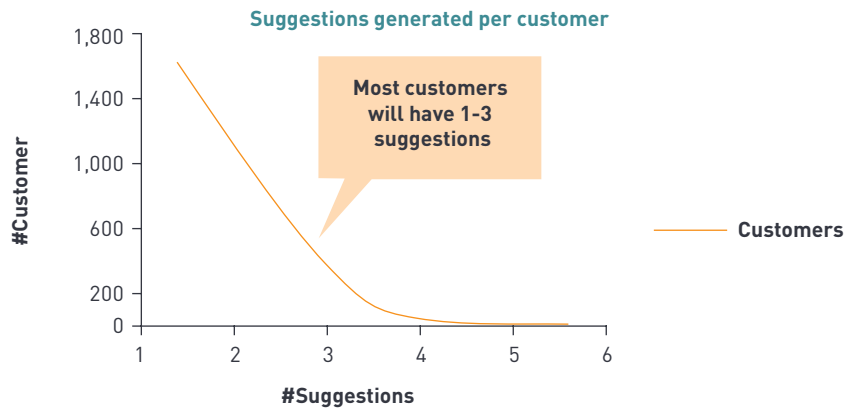
There are three key data science techniques and considerations that become important to enable field suggestions:

- 1. Suggestion-trigger design:** This entails identification of certain triggers, such as change in market share or change in multichannel engagement score. The design must also consider the time period that will be used to trigger the suggestion. The choice of time period can significantly vary based on the brand life cycle to optimize customer coverage.
- 2. Sensitivity analysis:** Statistical sensitivity analysis is conducted to derive appropriate thresholds (confidence interval) for each suggestion trigger (metric) based on historical data as shown in Exhibit 5. Applying human judgment becomes important in this analysis when choosing the optimal confidence interval based on brand maturity.

EXHIBIT 5: SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS OUTCOMES

Sensitivity Analysis

Confidence Interval	85%	90%	95%
#of Customers analyzed	9,839	9,839	9,839
# Customers qualifying for one suggestion or more	3,579	3,081	2,720
% Customers qualifying for one suggestion or more	36.4%	31.3%	27.6%



- 3. Suggestion validation:** This analysis ensures that suggestions generated have good customer coverage and biases are minimized. Data science helps understand how many suggestions that reps will view per brand in a given cycle, if the results are skewed in favor of certain geographies, or if there is a reason for prescriber value bias.



Ensuring Success

The success and organizational adoption of field suggestions will depend on the implementation of five key change levers.

- 1. Start small, test and learn.** Institute an “early experience program” by rolling out the capability to targeted franchises (or markets) initially and then refining suggestions based on test and control group activities, rep surveys, etc. before scaling across the enterprise. Additionally, some companies may purposefully start with simpler but high-impact suggestions through business rules and light data science. Then move to richer field suggestions through the integration of multiple data sources and use of prioritization algorithms, as well as develop suggestions for marketing to formulate optimal tactic sequences.
- 2. Establish championship and value proposition.** Strong senior management support and clear articulation of how field suggestions can enhance efficiency for high-performing reps and maximize effectiveness of an average rep will be needed to secure leadership support. To enable the transformation, companies will also need new incentives and metrics that motivate employees to buy into the customer-centricity culture.
- 3. Assess for data readiness.** Field suggestions will have quicker time to value if organizations have already started collecting data assets across the enterprise, including those from third-party marketing agencies. Implementing field suggestions capability is also an excellent catalyst for many organizations to accelerate their data procurement and integration plans.
- 4. Emphasize behavioral training.** Training needs to be focused on not just the tools but also upskilling the rep, and educating them on how to leverage insights from the field suggestions to elevate customer engagements. Additionally, training should include first-line managers who need to coach their sales teams on how to capitalize on the suggestions.
- 5. Set up a cross-functional administration committee and impact metrics.** Cross-functional committee comprised of sales ops, marketing, business analytics and IT can help with co-creation and management of suggestions, facilitation of field communications, and maintenance of business rules. In pan-European or other regional implementations, the operating model that may be already established to manage ongoing CRM programs can be extended to support field suggestions. The impact of suggestions must be measured in multiple forms and at multiple time periods to help assess rep adoption, customer engagement and sales impact.

As sales organizations strive to work smarter than before and use deep customer insights, field suggestions will be a key lever for customizing customer engagements and realizing stronger differentiation.

The promotional environment for the pharmaceutical industry is far more complex than in the past, and it's getting more so every day. A positive customer experience will be critical to building strong and enduring relationships in the increasingly crowded and complicated market across therapeutic areas. Given that challenge, companies will win big by using field suggestions to enable sales and marketing integration, and field force effectiveness. Beyond delivering core messages about the product's clinical benefits, sales organizations that can also orchestrate a cohesive customer experience based on integrated insights and field suggestions will drive stronger differentiation, better customer access and higher portfolio sales.

About the Author



Saby Mitra is a principal at ZS in Evanston, Ill., and is a leader in ZS's Customer-Centric Marketing practice. He has more than 16 years of experience in advising and helping clients shape their commercial organizations through CRM and Multichannel solutions in the U.S. and Europe. Saby's expertise includes designing and implementing global transformation programs in several customer-centric transformation initiatives, including sales force automation, multichannel customer engagement and closed-loop marketing solutions in the life sciences industry and other industry verticals.

Saby has a B.E. in electronics and telecommunication engineering from Jadavpur University, India and an Executive MBA from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank ZS experts Jaideep Bajaj, Pratap Khedkar, Pete Mehr, Mohit Sood and Ankush Gupta for their contributions to this article.



About ZS

ZS is the world's largest firm focused exclusively on helping companies improve overall performance and grow revenue and market share, through end-to-end sales and marketing solutions—from customer insights and strategy to analytics, operations and technology. More than 5,000 ZS professionals in 22 offices worldwide draw on deep industry and domain expertise to deliver impact where it matters for clients across multiple industries. To learn more, visit www.zsassociates.com or follow us on Twitter (@ZSAssociates) and LinkedIn.



**For more information,
please contact:**

Saby Mitra
Principal
+1 847 492 3552
saby.mitra@zsassociates.com

www.zsassociates.com