

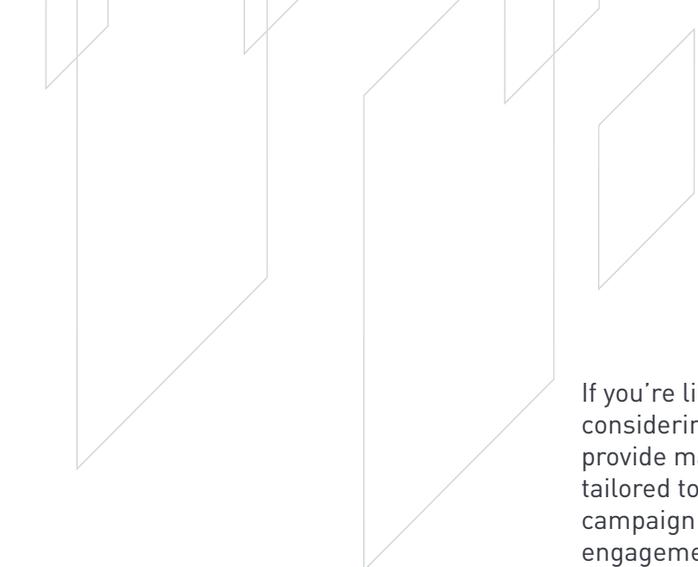


SALES + MARKETING

Three Common Challenges When Launching a Marketing Automation Tool—and How to Overcome Them

By James Anderson

Impact where it matters.



If you're like many other pharmaceutical executives, you're either seriously considering or have recently purchased a marketing automation tool. These tools provide many benefits to pharma: They allow you to design complex campaigns tailored to your customers' needs and preferences, save time by automating campaign deployment, and, when fully implemented, can increase customer engagement and promotional ROI. In fact, we've seen that pharmaceutical companies that deliver customer-centric campaigns typically experience between a 5 and 10% increase in revenue.

Yet given the power of these new tools, it's interesting to see that many pharmaceutical companies are still developing and deploying marketing campaigns the same way that they always have—in a siloed and tactic-centric manner—meaning that the power and promise of these new tools aren't being realized. After working with several pharmaceutical companies to implement campaign automation tools as part of their broader customer-centric marketing initiatives, we've found a few challenges that can keep you from realizing the full potential of your campaign automation tool. Here's a closer look at three of them, along with tips to overcome them.

1 Inability to “Plug and Play”

Campaign management tools were originally created to meet the needs of industries outside of pharmaceuticals, such as retail, financial services, consumer packaged goods and travel, so pharmaceutical companies often can't plug and play these tools like other industries can. Since sales and marketing coordination is just now becoming a reality for many pharmaceutical companies, it can be difficult to know how to take full advantage of a campaign management tool.

While the pharmaceutical industry struggles to change its business model to match the current market environment—where customers expect a more personalized and harmonized experience—the industry often is faced with using new technologies in an old paradigm. However, even if your organization is still delivering siloed promotions by brands or tactics, marketing automation tools can still improve promotional activity with healthcare providers in the following areas:

- + Enabling promotion to be responsive to a healthcare provider's engagement (changing content, timing and channel) in an automated fashion. For example, if an HCP shows an affinity for email by opening a headquarters email on product efficacy, you can trigger that customer to receive supporting messages via headquarters email, as well. You can also change the delivery cadence of each supporting message to optimize that customer's engagement with the campaign.
- + Providing an integration point between personal and non-personal promotion to create a continuous experience for the customer. In fact, we've seen that integrating marketing and sales can deliver a 6% increase in the number of new prescription writers, compared with using marketing or sales alone.

- + Creating operational efficiencies and eliminating manual processes, such as automating your target email lists for each campaign.

As your organization evolves and begins planning promotions around customers, not brands or tactics, marketing automation tools can be leveraged to their fullest potential, enabling a customer-centric approach that is actually felt by customers. Customers will:

- + Receive coordinated messages across brands that are relevant to them and served up through the channels that they use most. We've even seen life sciences companies experience up to a 35% increase in customer engagement by synergizing messaging across tactics.
- + Feel as though each interaction is responded to in an appropriate fashion.
- + Feel that the company's communications are improving over time with less and less spam.
- + Enjoy a less disjointed experience between their discussions with a rep and the information that they receive through the mail and other channels.

In order to realize these goals, start with designing your customer's promotional experience within a brand. Create a message flow and channel approach to learn your customer's preferences, or purchase channel affinity data that provides insights into which channels each customer is using, then create your promotional experience around that.

Once you're able to do this effectively, and if you find yourself in an environment that is becoming less brand-siloed, begin by looking at the overlap of your targets across brands. Once you understand the experience that your customers are receiving from you across brands (perhaps unintentionally), use historical analysis to begin designing this experience moving forward. If you're capturing customer engagement data and leveraging it to influence future campaigns along the way, your customers' experience will improve as you learn from their behaviors.

2

Lack of Customer Engagement Data

Many pharmaceutical companies lack a strong process for collecting and validating customer engagement data. And as you've probably realized, customer engagement data is the fuel needed for an automation tool to run. Automation tools use this information to identify the next activity and message to launch for each customer. The more robust and accurate your customer engagement data is, the greater the benefits you'll receive from your automation tool.

By creating a repository of customer data, or a 360-degree customer database, you gain a holistic view of your customer's historical activities and preferences, and you can use this information to develop better promotions. If you've been building a 360-degree customer database, take a minute to see if you're capturing the following information at an HCP level:

- + Sales calls
- + Samples dropped
- + All non-personal promotional activities (delivered and engaged with)
- + Speaker programs (invitations, registrations and attendance)
- + Rep emails
- + Engagement with electronic detailing
- + Website activity
- + Costs of promotional activities at the tactical level

While this isn't an exhaustive list, it should provide you with strong insights into what your customers are receiving and engaging with. Through some quick analytic exercises, you can identify which tactics (or combinations of tactics) lead to the most scripts. You'll be able to identify how frequency, cadence and sequence impact your customers. Not only will this information allow you to optimize current and future campaigns, but also it will allow your marketing automation tool to trigger communications with content, channel and timing based on your customer's actions.

3

Barriers to Content Development

We all realize the challenges experienced by our industry with respect to content. There are lots of regulations for layout and verbiage, and the internal review process is difficult due to delays, last-minute changes and inconsistencies from one week to the next. These challenges can make delivering effective and customer-centric marketing campaigns difficult, and can nearly eliminate the benefits of a marketing automation tool. While we're not going to solve all of these issues immediately, there are some approaches that can help.

- + **Create full campaigns before deployment begins.** Similar to how many pharmaceutical companies approach adherence programs for consumers, you can fully develop content for HCP programs before deployment begins. This approach allows you to use collateral at the time that it's needed based on the experience that you've designed for your customer, not based on when it was approved by the review committee.
- + **Utilize templates.** While personalizing messages with the addressee's name and correct salutation has become commonplace, this same use of templates can be applied to paragraphs that highlight a product's attributes: for example, highlighting efficacy (and the associated legal verbiage) to customers who respond to that message versus a safety message for other customers. This approach reduces overall creative costs, allows for personalization of messaging and helps with efficiency through the review process.

Up and Running: What Comes Next?

After you've made your business case, gone through implementation and rallied your stakeholders—and you've actually started seeing some success—what comes next? The most common challenge is to avoid reverting back to your old ways.

Change is hard, and although it can be fun when you're trying something new, people often tend to go back to how they used to do things once the novelty wears off. Product managers get promoted and new ones come in from the field or, worse yet, positions remain open for an extended period of time. When all positions are filled and the day-to-day operations of campaign management start back up, there's a lack of focus on using analytics to improve campaigns, and the "batch-and-blast" process becomes the standard again. Now you're essentially using your well-designed cannon as a pea shooter.

What's the solution? Continued communication and innovation. Have your well-oiled presentation at the ready, and don't get bored of sharing it, even when some have heard parts of it before. Seek out the new stakeholders who have replaced your previous champions and get them excited about the vision. For your friends who are now continuously using the tool, have a list of more complex, innovative ideas that you can share with them on a periodic basis. These can include new triggers (based on market events, brand-specific data, etc.), a proven sequencing of touch points, new ways to integrate your promotions with the sales force, or any number of other ways that they can use the cannon to its fullest potential. They'll be excited to be at the forefront of the industry using this technology while significantly increasing revenue, and you'll be accomplishing your goal of ensuring that the organization reaps your promised rewards on the technology investment.

- + **Employ a separate review committee.** Unfortunately, the sheer volume of material that needs to be reviewed for all promotional activity can sometimes cause non-personal promotion to fall to the bottom of the priority list. Since it's difficult to argue that promotional items needed by the most expensive resource (sales reps) should wait until an email campaign is reviewed, perhaps a good approach would be to create a review committee that has responsibility for non-personal promotion for multiple products in a franchise. The committee could work from the guidelines set up by the main review committee but focus their efforts on non-personal promotion tactics. As they become adept at working with templates and understanding non-personal promotion, the backlog can be eliminated.

Overall, marketing automation tools can be effective at deploying personalized promotions based on the data that you collect from your customer interactions. In fact, we've found that the right promotional sequence can increase prescriptions generated from a campaign by 25%. If you take the time to design your customers' promotional experiences, collect as much granular engagement data as possible and employ approaches to efficiently develop relevant content, you can begin to realize the full potential of marketing automation tools as enablers.

About the Author



Jim Anderson is a manager at ZS's Princeton, N.J., office and specializes in the customer-centric marketing solution area. He has more than 17 years of experience in the pharmaceutical industry, and focuses on developing strategies and driving multichannel solutions that provide incremental revenue and positive ROI throughout the product life cycle. Jim's expertise includes building and implementing competitively superior promotional strategies—including personal and non-personal promotional tactics—in the cardiovascular, multiple sclerosis and oncology markets.

Prior to ZS, Jim spent 11 years at Bristol-Myers Squibb Pharmaceuticals working in sales, marketing and engineering. He has a B.S. in mechanical engineering from Drexel University.



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 4,500 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:**

ZS Associates
+1 855.972.4769
inquiry@zsassociates.com

www.zsassociates.com