



Transforming healthcare partnerships: Key account management in action

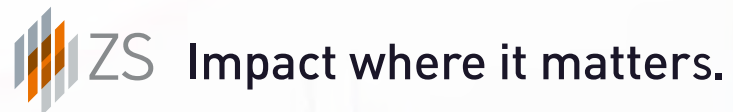
Impact where it matters.



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Our philosophy

Key account management (KAM) is a critical strategy in today's evolving healthcare landscape. As organized customers gain influence over prescribing decisions and access, traditional physician-focused approaches no longer suffice. We believe KAM is an organizationwide business strategy, not just a role. It represents a fundamental shift in how life sciences companies create value, requiring tailored strategies for important healthcare partners.

Successful KAM organizations need to be able to clearly demonstrate their impact and value. While we can learn from other industries, healthcare's unique dynamics require innovative approaches that differ from traditional metrics. KAM metrics differ from sales metrics because they must be broader, focus on a longer time frame, bring together fragmented data and show the impact of a programmatic strategy as opposed to an individual role. Our commitment is to help you measure and demonstrate impact to drive executive buy-in and build support for programmatic investment in KAM strategies. Far too often KAM leaders are left spending more effort measuring impact than creating it. We believe, with the right measurement approach, we can establish the case for pursuing longer-term mutually beneficial strategies with key account customers. Demonstrating and communicating the impact of KAM is essential for sustained investment and focus from executive leaders.



Key learnings

Across four distinct case studies—including both new and established KAM programs—ZS found well-executed KAM strategies consistently drove **50% faster growth** in KAM accounts compared to non-KAM peers. Programs emphasizing preferential engagement and cross-functional partnerships saw significant uplifts, such as a twofold increase in clinical trials and a

50% share shift within just four months.

KAM-supported launches outperformed, delivering 30% more growth and 10% faster uptake 18 months post launch. Voice of customer (VOC) research further reinforced the model's value, with half of respondents naming the KAM-enabled pharma company as their preferred manufacturer partner.

Key takeaways

Programmatic investment. Effective KAM requires more than a capable individual. It demands a coordinated, enterprisewide program. Start by evaluating the full landscape of your key account initiatives, then commit to a roadmap that ensures consistent long-term development.

Strategic intent. Anchor KAM efforts in broader brand and business priorities to avoid drift or disconnect. Build deliberate bridges between commercial and medical teams to create unified, forward-leaning customer engagement.

HQ infrastructure. Invest in the backbone that supports scalable KAM—from B2B marketing engines to cross-functional solution delivery. Legal and compliance shouldn't be an afterthought. Embed them early in the center of excellence and include them in KAM conferences to deepen alignment.

Executive engagement. Your executive team can be your biggest KAM accelerator—or obstacle. Equip leaders with clarity on which metrics matter and when to expect results so they champion the journey instead of questioning the destination.



ZS approach

ZS takes a thorough approach to measuring the impact of KAM that combines performance analysis with client insights to measure growth. Our method includes leadership and KAM interviews along with account segmentation, sales analysis and customer research to identify where partnerships are accelerating growth and where additional investment can create further impact. By analyzing account-level volume and market share data across high-engagement and baseline accounts, we determine which KAM strategies deliver early wins and guide expansion and resource decisions. Our assessments use sales performance data, clinical trial metrics and customer feedback to compare KAM-enabled accounts against peers without the program, highlighting key success factors such as medical-commercial teams and structured headquarters (HQ) support. By evaluating how teams are using KAM models, we help organizations identify the data and analysis needed to communicate their strong results.



CASE STUDY 1

Rare disease KAM impact



A small pharma leverages KAM to forge strategic partnerships and enhance patient outcomes



THE CLIENT

A small pharmaceutical company focused on rare diseases with several inline products

BACKGROUND

In 2022, a rare disease-focused pharma company launched a KAM program with six key account managers covering 50 accounts to address the complex product and patient journey. The goal was to build strategic partnerships that improve patient access, optimize care pathways and drive sustainable growth.

CHALLENGES

The client faced significant challenges inherent in the rare disease market that prompted the adoption of a KAM strategy:

- Navigating the intricate protocols and purchasing processes associated with rare disease treatments
- Breaking through traditional barriers in patient experience by accelerating diagnosis and treatment initiation
- Recognizing the necessity of building deeper, strategic relationships with key accounts to overcome market complexities and improve patient outcomes

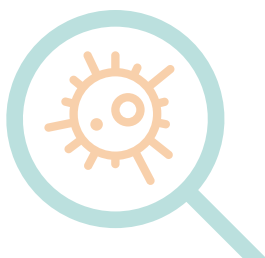


CASE STUDY 1

Rare disease KAM impact

KEY MILESTONES AND SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED

Launched a scalable program with six managers, initially focused on elevating patient access and outcomes, optimizing care pathways for patients and securing formulary access. Implemented a customer engagement process and account planning tools to improve internal coordination and create a customer-centric approach. Also established KAM performance metrics based on leading and lagging indicators and VOC feedback, visualized through key performance indicator scorecards.



IMPACT

50%

faster growth achieved by target KAM compared to large non-KAM over two years

60%

growth for a new rare disease product in KAM, compared to 30% in non-KAM 1.5 years post launch

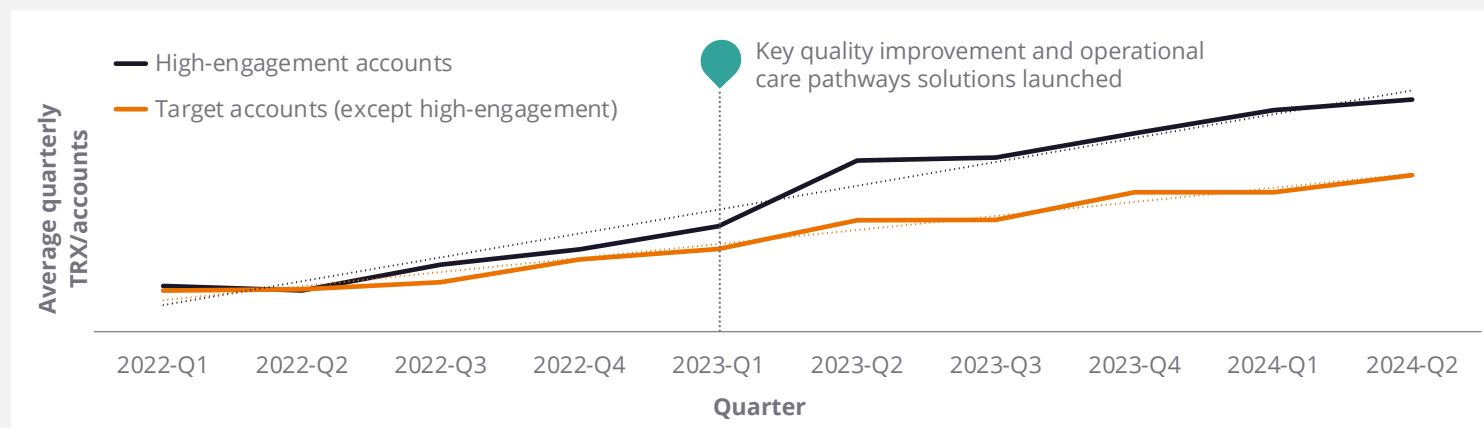
26%

quarterly growth in high-engagement accounts compared to 19% in other accounts during 2023

50%

selected the client as preferred manufacturer, ahead of the next competitor at 30%

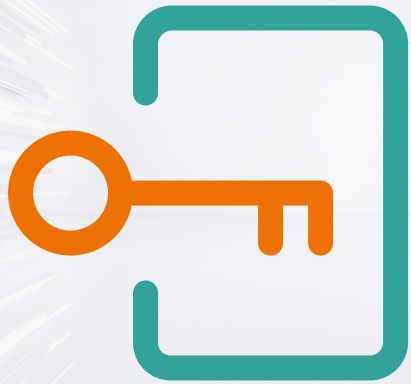
FIGURE 1: Overall sales at high engagement compared to other target accounts





CASE STUDY 2

First U.S. asset launch



**A pharma newcomer
to the U.S. market
employs KAM to drive
growth and secure
formulary access**



THE CLIENT

A pharmaceutical company launching its first asset in the U.S. into a competitive market

BACKGROUND

In the third quarter of 2020, a pharma company launching its first U.S. product initiated a KAM program with four customer account directors covering 120 accounts, later expanding to 15 key account managers. The program sought to gain competitive advantage through market access insights and strategic partnerships to improve formulary positioning and contract performance.

CHALLENGES

The client was launching its first product into a crowded U.S. market and needed a strategic approach to gain traction and establish its presence. Key challenges included:

- Differentiating a third to-market product and gaining market share against established competitors
- Effectively driving product growth, increased market share within organized providers and contract performance
- Improving the product's formulary positioning by demonstrating value, particularly through health economic propositions



CASE STUDY 2

First U.S. asset launch

KEY MILESTONES AND SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED

Started with four account directors focused on growth, contract performance and formulary positioning. Expanded to 15 managers by the fourth quarter of 2024, allowing the program's best practices to scale across 370 accounts. Delivered personalized clinical and economic insights, cultivated real-world evidence (RWE) partnerships and deployed teams aligned to each account's unique needs. Engaged accounts on topics including pathway implementation, data partnerships, staff education and operational efficiencies.



IMPACT

36%

higher growth achieved by initial KAM compared to other provider organizations between 2020 and 2023

1.3

times faster market share growth for initial accounts in 2023 compared to others

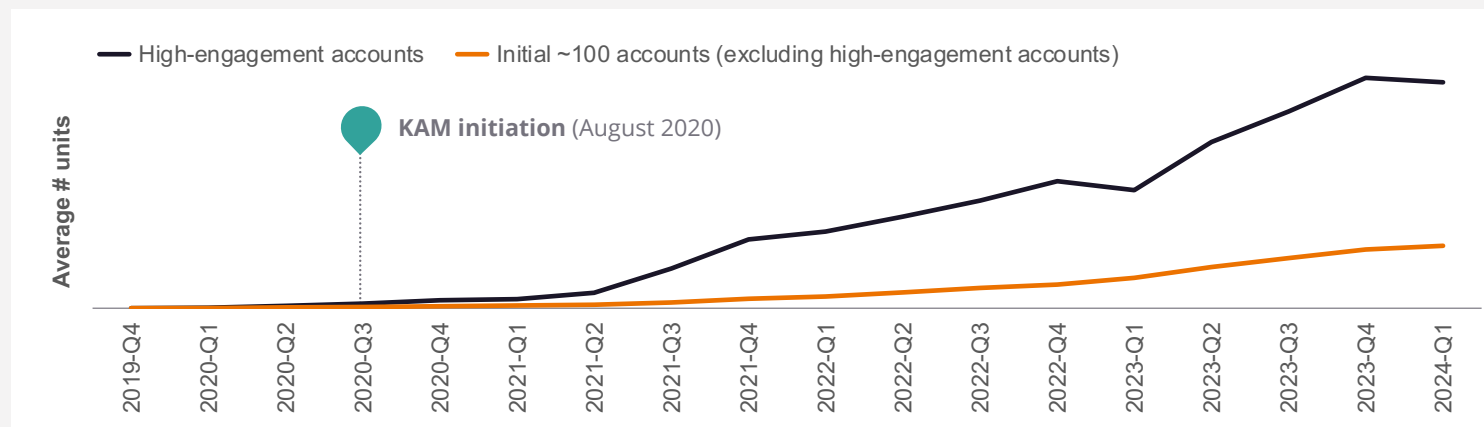
5.9

times higher average volume at high-engagement accounts two years post-program initiation

~100%

market share secured within a large integrated payer-provider network through the RWE partnership

FIGURE 2: Overall sales at high engagement compared to other target accounts





CASE STUDY 3

Oncology KAM program impact



A large oncology pharma uses KAM to become a preferred partner and boost launch success



THE CLIENT

A large oncology pharmaceutical company operating in the U.S.

BACKGROUND

A large pharma company launched a focused KAM program starting with five provider accounts and expanding to nine in the second year. The initiative aimed to support product launches, strengthen industry partnerships and lay a strong foundation through medical tandems and HQ support.

CHALLENGES

The company aimed to address the following needs through its KAM initiative:

- Improve its standing and relationships to become a preferred industry partner
- Enhance the adoption and uptake of new product launches
- Strengthen medical engagement, particularly with clinical trials, education and research partnerships



CASE STUDY 3

Oncology KAM program impact

KEY MILESTONES AND SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED

Launched with five accounts and expanded to nine one year later, allowing managers to deliver more individualized, high-touch support to each account. Critical investments were made early on in account selection, defining ways of working, ensuring HQ support and establishing a medical tandem model that scales individualized medical engagement. Deployed five commercial managers and three medical leads, developed RWE and health economics and outcomes research partnerships, supported clinical trials and created provider and patient education programs. Ensured dedicated legal and ethics, risk and compliance support with expertise in the program's vision.



IMPACT: COMMERCIAL

~2

times annual sales growth for two recent product launches compared to similar non-program accounts

50%

more growth in KAM: 12% growth in priority portfolio sales for KAM compared to 8% for similar accounts

IMPACT: MEDICAL AND R&D

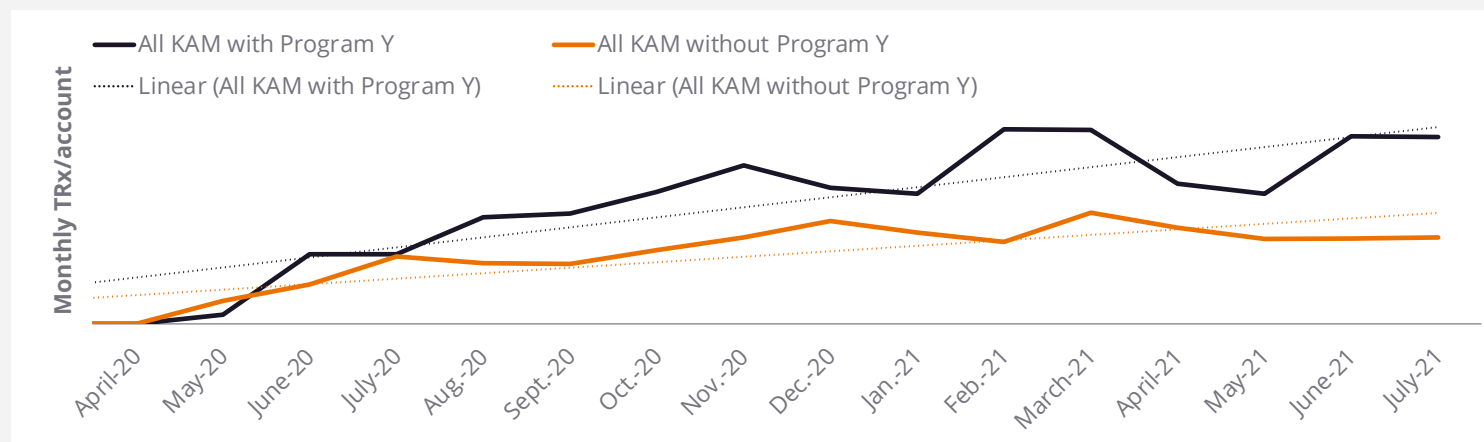
~2.4

times increase in clinical trials for the expansion accounts

~1.5

times increase in average yearly clinical trials post-program launch

FIGURE 3: Launch product no. 2 sales trends





CASE STUDY 4

Multi-therapeutic KAM growth



A major pharma company harnesses KAM to fuel business growth and improve health outcomes



THE CLIENT

A large pharmaceutical company with an established KAM program supporting multiple primary care products across various therapeutic areas

BACKGROUND

A large pharma company launched a KAM program with 60 key account directors managing 280 accounts across multiple therapeutic areas. The program evolved to emphasize strategic account selection and pathway standardization, with a reduced but more focused team of 40 key account managers by early 2025.

CHALLENGES

The primary objective driving the KAM program was to strategically partner with leading health systems to drive both business growth and improve health outcomes.



CASE STUDY 4

Multi-therapeutic KAM growth

KEY MILESTONES AND SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED

Launched with 60 directors covering 280 accounts, expanded in 2021. Established a center of excellence two years after launch. Delivered solutions related to standardizing care pathways, updating EHRs and integrating risk stratification and patient ID programs—partnering closely with informatics leads to drive adoption. Focused internally on removing long-standing obstacles to account engagement with clear processes, streamlined legal and compliance processes and more robust B2B marketing capabilities. Invested in KAM data to track performance, prioritize account decision-makers and align brands with long-term strategy.

IMPACT

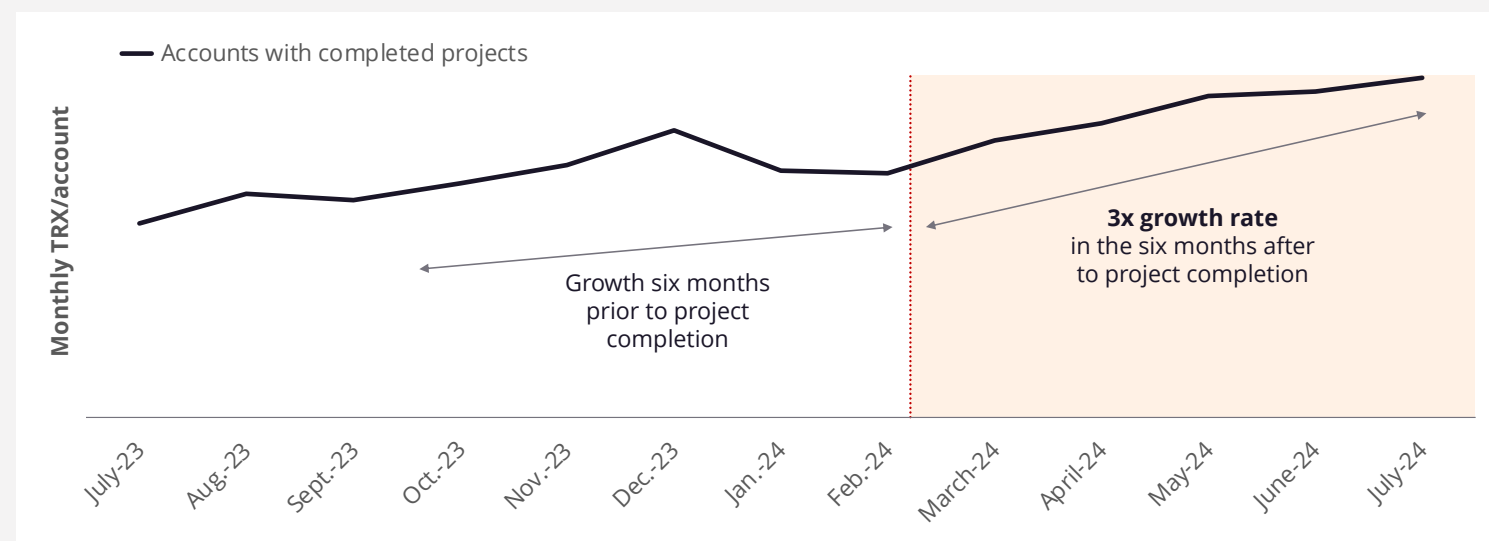
15%-20%

higher growth for two brands in 30 high-engagement KAMs compared to remaining accounts

3

times acceleration growth rate in 16 KAMs with completed projects in the six months after completion

FIGURE 4: Completed projects for Brand A with 16 accounts





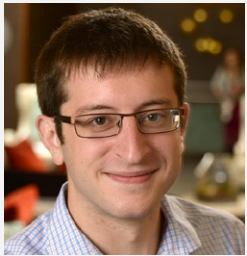
Meet our experts



Namita Powers

Namita is a principal in ZS's Philadelphia office and the commercial solutions lead. Namita helps drive commercial strategy for major healthcare manufacturers and is a board member of the Strategic Account Management Association.

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Alex Simon

Alex is a principal in ZS's Evanston office and the KAM solutions lead. Alex focuses on engagement and planning processes to help organizations become more effective and efficient with their KAM teams and has led KAM work with ZS's pharmaceutical and medtech clients.

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Amelia Summerell

Amelia is a manager in ZS's Philadelphia office. Amelia brings a research-driven approach to helping clients and has authored multiple ZS studies. She focuses on strategy, go-to-market models and KAM program evolution.

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About ZS

ZS is a management consulting and technology firm that partners with companies to improve life and how we live it. We transform ideas into impact by bringing together data, science, technology and human ingenuity to deliver better outcomes for all. Founded in 1983, ZS has more than 13,000 employees in over 35 offices worldwide. To learn more, visit www.zs.com or contact us [here](#).

