STRATEGY & DECISIONS

Life Sciences Roundtable Insights: Sometimes Furiously Frustrating – But Always FAST

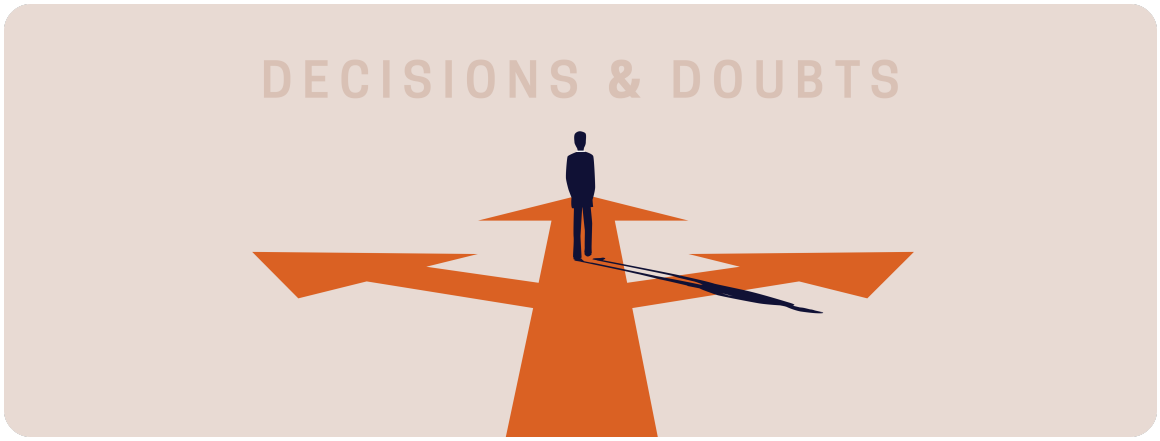
BY **MCCHRYSTAL GROUP**

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Editor's Note: In April 2023, (the team) Chris Fussell,Will Smith, Ryan Flynn, and Danielle Tenconi convened a roundtable of Life Science executives to discuss their assessment of the most urgent issues.We accented this with additional in-depth interviews and resources in order to share these valuable insights with people working in the industry.

Everything in the Life Sciences moves fast, with the imperative to improve and save lives while adhering to rigorous safety standards as the north star for the industry. But with fierce competition and steep regulatory hurdles, the process of taking a new product or therapy to market is daunting for even the best teams. As a part of McChrystal Group's research into high-performing teams, we sought to understand more about the challenges teams in Life Sciences are facing today, and what's right around the bend.

Here's a summary of what we heard, by category, and some questions that will need to be answered by Life Sciences leaders:



Life Sciences are dealing with multiple intense and competing priorities at once and still assessing what changes from the pandemic will remain — and which will reverse. Balancing the Quadruple Aim of population health, patient experience, cost reduction and care team well-being is a daunting task.

The consistent targets for pre-launch marketing used to be respected physicians who were key opinion leaders in their field and reaching them effectively typically ensured success. Now there are multiple variations in advanced care providers, pharmacists with expanded licensure, insurance plan navigators, and public health officials.

There are new consumer influences to contend with such as social media trend influencers, celebrity endorsements, and holistic practitioners. Life science organizations struggle to build trust in a crowded, noisy environment that promotes distrust of traditional medical solutions.

- **How can you manage your efforts to match the changing influences on healthcare decision making?**
- **How can you stay ahead of trends while still addressing multiple competing factors?**
- **How can you make decisions that are targeted, thorough, and swift?**



High churn rates for experienced pharmaceutical talent makes staffing up difficult, and maintaining a positive, trusting team dynamic is challenging. Scaling up a launch team that doesn't trust or respect each other can be disastrous.

Hybrid work environments require different leadership skills to maintain (or exceed) the effectiveness of traditional in-person dynamics. Generational expectations and changing definitions of leadership are affecting corporate structures.

“There are historically a lot of layoffs as pharmaceutical teams expand and contract, and potential hires, particularly in sales get offered a lot of money upfront to get in on the ground floor. Specialty experience is critical in some roles, where there might not be time to train them up and the needs dictate the type of talent required. But what people want has changed, and it needs to be a bespoke approach to attract them and retain them.”

MEDICAL DEVICE HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

From quiet quitting to The Great Reshuffle, healthcare is struggling to keep its dedicated experts from burning out in the face of more transactional and less relational environments. Staff needs to be qualified and experienced, but time to “train them up” creates an automatic lag time.

“We’re at a pivot point in wanting to increase diversity but having trouble with how we do it. Diversity in staff helps increase diversity in patients,

and we need more ways to reflect on our systemic barriers."

PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY HR DIRECTOR

Increasing diversity and belonging efforts in organizations requires constant commitment and refinement, as well as breaking down traditional obstacles to success. Increased focus on inclusive hiring, bias training, leadership development, and culture assessments have spurred some changes, yet without continued investment and top leadership buy-in, results may stall as other priorities capture time and funding.

Teams' incentives are often not tied to launch outcomes nor designed to keep the team appropriately focused over a long-term launch cycle. Compensation and benefits matter more, but so does a well-seasoned and fully staffed team, with flexibility in how they work and recharge, which is challenging given the time limitations.

- **How can you build a team that can navigate a noisy and dynamic landscape without getting sidetracked?**
- **Will remote work have unintended consequences for privacy, culture, productivity, and loyalty?**
- **Can companies juggle the needs of people with expertise and experience while keeping the same pace and productivity?**
- **Who are the leaders of the future in this industry and who is selecting, cultivating, and mentoring them? Are they diverse enough now, and if not, how will they scale up in time?**



The current premium placed on health equity and the complexity of achieving it influences all aspects of the launch lifecycle. Scrutiny on the optics of pharmaceutical activity, particularly related to drug launches, includes multi-dimensional considerations about race, gender, ethnicity, age, religion, and sexual orientation – challenging to address at the same time for different audiences, or vice versa.

> *"Teams go from one project to another so quickly, that it helps to have a reliable process. But startups are building the plane while they fly and it's unsettling to people who come over from more traditional organizations. They want to know where the SOP is, and there just isn't one."*

MEDICAL DEVICE MARKETING MANAGER

Populations in need vary and research into needs, gaps, and barriers to access must be refined and targeted, while still positively impacting patients' lives on a large scale. These concepts also reflect the need for diverse clinical trial participation, addressing historical barriers, and access to medications for broader ranges of people, particularly for socio-economic equity.

Advocacy groups play a more active role – including through investment – and provide pressure to ensure drugs are delivered equitably to historically disadvantaged communities. Even if treatment access routes are mastered, treatment adherence continues to be elusive.

- **How can you harness empowered patients, health outcomes data, and sophisticated communication tactics to reach the people who need your product most?**
- **How do you stay relevant, aware and responsive to evolving diversity needs, definitions and training while using your expertise to consider the needs of diverse markets, patients and populations?**



“It’s hard to tell if there’s a market opportunity or not…we need to define the risk, assess the pace of change and evaluate the potential benefits. If the risk of failing is critical, how do we prioritize that in our organization? What about with our third-party partners and vendors?”

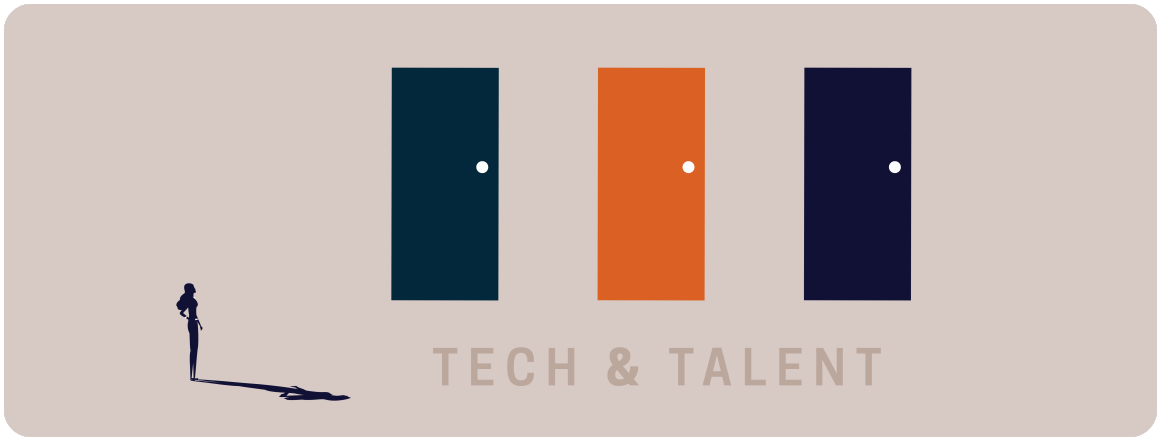
PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY EXECUTIVE

Battles for healthcare market share are extremely competitive, as companies increasingly compete across traditional industry lines. Complexity in treatment centers, demand generation, modes of administration, costs, and access add to the challenges.

Large multi-product companies are actively courting early-stage collaborations to increase their portfolio of therapeutics and technologies, but there are increasing numbers of start-ups willing to seek venture capital funding and the associated risk of solo launching.

Changing regulations at multiple levels and a more reactionary culture to healthcare topics create uncertainty from all sides. Precision medicine, cell and gene therapies, and digital health are important and innovative, but the regulatory environment isn't keeping up with the pace of development. Regulatory complexities are compounded by environmental shifts such as digital health products, classification of services and devices, and prescribing environments.

- **How can you do meaningful, bold work without getting paralyzed by political uncertainty or caught in a PR nightmare?**
- **How can you innovate within the bounds of what's approved and likely to be approved while balancing the risks with the benefits in the pursuit of novel and relevant products?**
- **How can you communicate clear, accurate, trusted messages that cut through the noise and generate action?**



Technology adoption is inconsistent and as a result, people decline new portals and fail to adapt to newer technology, instead reverting to more reliable tech and social backchannels. Teams can use technology for collaboration, but uneven usage, training, adoption, and even broadband access may affect the ultimate tone of collaborative teamwork.

Electronic medical record transitions have not brought the promised streamlining and instead have disrupted workflows for prescription fulfillment. Those investments and improvements are still in process, unequally across healthcare providers and systems.

> *"We thought that consistent, comprehensive, shared health information would be a reality by now, and that's just not the case. We have wildly varied internal systems with different capabilities. That's an*

entirely different situation that involves multiple levels where there should be convergence but it's just not here yet."

HEALTH SYSTEM EXECUTIVE

Organizations are navigating how to leverage emerging technologies like AI and ChatGPT ethically and to achieve organizational outcomes. It's unknown whether these will be game-changing or just the latest trend, until it's applied and measured successfully.

- **How can shared technology create smooth and efficient ways of working?**
- **What shortcuts can be used to fill technology gaps while we invest in technology solutions that unite our workforce, providers and patients?**
- **How can we embrace technological change without wasting time on options that may not endure?**

The Drug Launch Formula: Success Still Rests on the Same Foundation

Although each of their organizations is unique, participants discussed the common qualities of successful launches. Let's explore what it means for a drug launch to be successful in today's operating environment:

- **Achieves Positive Patient Outcomes:** Newly launched drugs provide safe, clinical benefits to patients, and those clinical outcomes translate to

quality-of-life improvement.

- **Comprehensively Addresses the "5 P's":** The launch successfully meets the demands of patient, payer, prescriber, pharmacist, and policymakers.
- **Promotes Equitable Impacts:** Channels, awareness, HCP education, and other launch components ensure patient trust and access.
- **Creates Business Value:** The timing, market, and efficacy of the drug ensures that it meets a market need and generates financial returns that can be reinvested.

The conversation also incorporated observations about what elements enabled a launch to maximize value. Among the key drivers of success were:

- **Strategy Alignment:** The entire launch ecosystem is focused on common direction and has simple guiding principles that inform day-to-day decision-making and prioritization.
- **Effective Internal Communication:** Communication feedback loops bring information from the "edges" to the "center" to maintain shared consciousness. No one gets surprised by information from external sources, and there exists a general understanding of the metrics.
- **Team Adaptability:** Equipped with a common purpose and effective communication structures, teams are empowered to adapt to dynamic conditions without losing alignment. Priorities shift frequently, and that expectation is part of the company culture.
- **Organizational Learning:** Key learnings and after-action reviews inform process changes that continuously build organizational effectiveness and

position future success. Internal structures for governance and communication are continually assessed for effectiveness and efficiency.

- **Meaningful Impact:** Providing tangible value to patients, caregivers, and families is also one of the ways that the industry proves its importance to stakeholders including staff, investors, and the global community.

There is no question that teams working in Life Sciences are facing multiple, intense challenges. So, the real question is:



The roundtable reinforced McChrystal Group's belief that Fusion Cells can accelerate launch teams' alignment, communication, and trust to enhance the outcomes for your patients and other stakeholders. We have tools designed to meet the needs of complex organizations and teams, with a variety of options to customize for your team.

Learn more about how Fusion Cells can be purpose-built for Life Science organizations looking to accelerate, align, and enhance a drug launch.

For more information on how McChrystal Group are helping organizations build stronger, better and fasters teams email us directly at contact@mcchrystalgroup.com.



McChrystal Group

Organizations Perform When Teams Work

McChrystal Group helps you drive the results that matter by unleashing the power of your teams. That's why we've been helping organizations get their teams working better, smarter, and faster for over a decade. Forged in combat and proven across industries, we use our Team of Teams® framework to help you get the most out of your teams, turning them into powerful engines of meaningful change.

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