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Using the Cloud to Transform Sanofi Pasteur MSD's Commercial Strategy



Photo credit: Sanofi Pasteur MSD

Nearly three years ago, Sanofi Pasteur MSD — a European joint venture between Sanofi Pasteur and Merck — took its first steps towards transforming its global commercial strategy.

The company was preparing to launch three new products and decided to harness this opportunity to incorporate new, digital channels for better customer engagement. As one of the largest companies in the world entirely dedicated to

vaccines — it has nearly 1,000 employees across 19 countries — Sanofi Pasteur MSD understood the magnitude of the undertaking.

“Our 2013 product launches were critical for the company, so we proposed to reframe our commercial strategy with new technology. Top management agreed,” recalled Alexandre Gultzoff, Sanofi Pasteur MSD's deputy director of IT.

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Sanofi Pasteur MSD considered a few options before standardizing globally on a multichannel CRM suite in the cloud. Armed with digital capabilities integrated across email, face-to-face and the web, Sanofi Pasteur MSD's sales reps began sending compliant emails directly from the system to customers and personally engaging with healthcare professionals via interactive web presentations. Field teams and brand managers jumped in so enthusiastically that the company tripled the expected adoption rates and did so six months ahead of forecast.

A few months after deployment, Sanofi Pasteur MSD realized it needed to keep pace with increasing demand for digital content. Too, a pattern began to surface: After six or seven weeks, engagement would drop off for a given digital asset. In order to generate the greatest value for its customers, Sanofi Pasteur MSD needed to refresh content more frequently.

“We saw faster-than-expected adoption rates of our new CRM,” Gultzoff said. “It became clear early on that we needed to change content much more often in order to keep customers fully engaged.”

A TWO-PART STRATEGY

In order to improve the speed of content development and distribution, Sanofi Pasteur MSD took a two-pronged approach. First, the company sought to consolidate its agency partners in order to harmonize globally. Second, it adopted a cloud-based commercial content management solution with a digital asset management component.

Prior to its digital remodel, Sanofi Pasteur MSD had been working with more than 15 agencies — at least one agency in every country where it operates and as many as four agencies in markets like Germany and France. Without a way to efficiently share commercial assets from region to region, each country ended up working with its own agencies to develop content in silos. Consequently, duplicate efforts across the enterprise wasted time and money and resulted in multiple versions of similar materials, putting the company at risk of noncompliance.

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Sanofi Pasteur MSD also adopted a new commercial content management solution. Via the system, the company has centralized content production while providing local regions with the ability to adapt content to meet specific regulatory or cultural needs. And because the content management solution is in the cloud, its global agencies have easy access to promotional assets, thus further streamlining development.

“We now have a single promotional content master library where local product managers can access, search, and find what they need quickly,” Gultzoff said. “We expect a return on investment in less than six months due to content reuse alone. And just as important, we can see what asset is being used where, when, and why.”

In order to ease the transition and alleviate concerns from local marketing teams of losing autonomy over content development, Sanofi Pasteur MSD created a global team consisting of marketing reps from each country. This group worked together to design the new core promotional materials as well as configure the system to meet unique needs. “Each region has a voice,” Gultzoff stressed.

CHECKING THE BOXES

Sanofi Pasteur MSD used to require upwards of nine months to bring approved commercial content to market in many of its largest markets. Since rolling out its new commercial content processes and technology, the company expects to cut the time to fewer than six months.

In addition, the company expects to shave time from the medical/legal/regulatory (MLR) review of content. In the first year of use, Sanofi Pasteur MSD projects that it will decrease the number of hours spent conducting MLR reviews from 795 to 494 — a 38% reduction. In years two through five, the company forecasts that number will improve to 50%. Sanofi Pasteur MSD also projects overall efficiency gains of 17% in year one and 33% in years two through five.

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Sanofi Pasteur MSD also projects savings from greater efficiency and less redundant efforts with global content reuse. The company eventually expects centralized control with a complete audit trail that puts brand owners in the driver's seat and ensures that they are accountable for where an asset is being used and for what purpose. Teams will have full visibility into content across regions and partners. And critically, Sanofi Pasteur MSD expects improved compliance with a system that ensures distribution of only the most up-to-date, approved content direct to the field. The company will also be able to retire expired assets immediately so outdated materials are off the market, reducing risk.

“Ownership and visibility are key to ensure reuse control,” Gultzoff explained. “Even if content is approved, we need to see that it has been approved for the specific use. Our new solution ensures that content cannot be reused without the knowledge of the product brand owner.”

Like Sanofi Pasteur MSD, many life-sciences companies want to reengineer their commercial strategies to put the customer squarely at the center. Multichannel engagement is one key part of that strategy — but it's only as powerful as the customer insights it yields. Sanofi Pasteur MSD's overarching objective since it first embarked on its digital transformation has been — and remains — to capture more customer insight about channel preferences, interests, and behaviors to continuously improve engagement and ultimately improve patient outcomes.

“This is a journey for us, and the next crucial step is to gain richer customer knowledge through better use of content and channels so we can customize future interactions and engage with customers in more relevant ways,” Gultzoff said. “We are headed there very fast and can't wait to see what else we can accomplish.”

James Brown is VP and general manager of commercial content at Veeva Systems. Sanofi Pasteur MSD is one of Veeva's clients.

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