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Introduction

Most pharmaceutical companies define their vision and mission in terms of improving people’s lives. However, historically, product development has taken precedence over other defined targets.

Now, the healthcare sector is rapidly changing. Patients are becoming increasingly engaged in their own healthcare decision-making driven by digitalization; personalized and ambulatory medicine bringing in new healthcare stakeholders; and regulators are encouraging patient involvement in clinical protocols. Considering these trends, healthcare companies must evolve their strategies. As patients move from recipients to participants, the industry needs to align strategies to pull them into focus in future business models. Patients now seek solutions beyond the pill; solutions that help them focus on quality, convenience and cost. Engaging with patients and listening to the voice of the patient is no longer a "nice to have", but a key differentiator and benchmark for future success.

"Patient-Centricity" is generally defined as a goal to achieve better health outcomes and quality of life for patients.

While patient-centricity is a communicated priority for most companies, the definition and scope vary, along with different degrees of direct engagement with patients, as well as how many groups and teams infuse patient innovation and insights into their work.

A patient-centric organization should be one in which all stakeholders are strategically aligned towards better patient care, through improved R&D and better products and solutions, thereby increasing transparency, patient trust and improved patient experience.

Understanding the common themes within patient-centricity and how to empower everyone from the boardroom to the break room to internalize a patient-centric focus in their day-to-day life is the key.
We don’t believe you need to be further convinced that patient-centricity is important. We think you need a practical guide for competing and thriving, where nothing matters more than ensuring the best outcomes possible for patients.

There are common, fundamental building blocks to a successful shift to patient-centricity. It starts by treating patient-centricity as a common organizational vision of cultural, strategic and leadership change. Second, align teams and operations to create the best value and outcomes for patients. And third, constantly improve, through a better understanding of your customers, employee training and most importantly, using vast amount of data to measure outcomes.

A PM Society (Pharmaceutical Marketing Society) survey revealed that 100% of respondents felt that there is more pharma could be doing to engage with patients, with 89% believing this approach was extremely important. To get there, we recommend you master the three building blocks towards patient-centricity.

Through these three building blocks, we will show you how to enable and optimize your people and processes to drive ROI through patient experience. We will provide actionable steps to render authentic experiences that increase value for your patients and your business. This is not easy, but leaders and employees must be willing to fail, learn from past experiences and then try again, because the reward for creating value for patients is well worth the journey. Welcome to the actionable guide to patient-centricity.
1. ENVISION

Patient-centricity cannot be simply another function in the organization. Leaders and senior management in healthcare need to realize this and change accordingly.
Reshape culture & strategy

The organization’s vision and mission must bring patient care to the fore. A cultural shift is imperative. All stakeholders must be made aware of the importance of patient care and align their roles and goals. Leadership needs to be at the board level and this leadership must constantly ensure cultural alignment towards patient care. Leaders must possess the capability to understand patient needs and act accordingly to deliver patient value, but at the same time ensure that strategy is tied to revenue expectations.

DEFINING THE VISION & MISSION – RESHAPING CULTURE & STRATEGY TO ALIGN YOUR PEOPLE

Reshaping culture is a systematic approach of shifting a company’s culture through behavior change. A company’s strategy is driven by its culture and hence if the culture is not set right, the company is at risk of moving away from its strategic intent.

1. The first step is to understand where the organization currently is and where it intends to go and accordingly redefine the organization’s vision and mission. Putting patients first is the critical objective at this stage. Every decision and action, across business units, must be taken considering the needs of the patient.

2. Vision and mission must be strongly and continuously communicated to all in the organization. The new culture must be embedded in the behavior of all employees. Dashboards, newsletters and other forms of communication can be used to remind and align stakeholder behavior to patient-centricity.

UCB and Pfizer are excellent examples of how cultural change has been prioritized as the first step towards becoming a patient-centric organization.

UCB

“FOR UCB, THE TRANSITION TO A PATIENT-CENTRIC ORGANIZATION IS ALL ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY. WITHOUT THAT CULTURE UNDERPINNING EVERYTHING, YOU CAN SPEND A LOT OF TIME, MONEY AND ENERGY MOVING TO A PATIENT-CENTRIC ORGANIZATION BUT IN OUR EXPERIENCE, IT WILL NOT HOLD.” - David Fortanbary, Head of North America Commercial Training

To embed that culture, UCB has instigated a program of change throughout the organization. For example, there has been a very deliberate change in language; the organization now refers to patients as customers and HCPs as their stakeholders. “We no longer refer to HCPs as our customers. Now people don’t give it a second thought. When we refer to a physician or a pharmacist, they are called stakeholders. ‘Customer’ is reserved for the patient.”

UCB believes that this change in mindset naturally feeds into a better commercial approach, and ultimately a better bottom line.
Companies are admired for their products, but the most important success drivers are its people and culture. Pfizer has developed a strong focus on patient-centricity by listening to patients across communities including advocates and opinion leaders. A purpose driven culture has been embedded in Pfizer to bring a positive change in patients’ lives.

"INTERNALLY, SCIENTISTS AND EMPLOYEES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS ARE DRIVEN BY THE PROSPECT OF CHANGING SOMEONE’S LIFE. CULTURE IS RELATED TO AUTHENTICITY, REPEITION AND SYMBOLISM IN OUR COMMUNICATIONS - A CONSISTENT FRAMEWORK TO SHARE PROGRESS ACROSS THE COMPANY’S BUSINESSES"

Create patient-centered leadership

Purpose-driven leadership has been a key factor among companies that have embarked on changing organizational culture. Leaders, including CXOs and top management, drive cultural change by inspiring employees through their thoughts and actions.

Patient-centric leadership could consist of a Chief Patient Officer (CPO) or the like, or a group of leaders – a kind of “P-suite” to stand outside the commercial function. Regardless of the title and chosen structure, patient-centric leaders must be chosen based on specific competencies that would enable patient-centric strategy to be driven forward.

1. Change Facilitators – Leaders must be able to facilitate cultural change in the organization. They must be adept at breaking down organizational silos that are barriers to patient care – especially where people are clear about their own roles but not about overlapping and ambiguous territories. And they must be able to help other leaders infuse the patient perspective in their teams.

2. Strategic Thinkers & Decision Makers – Leaders should be able to refine organization strategies to deliver greater value to patients and ensure that patient wellbeing drives decision making.

3. Empathy Builders – Leaders must be able to listen to and understand patients’ expectations and needs. These needs must then be clearly communicated to the organization. Leaders must also be able to form partnerships with payers and care providers to drive better patient outcomes.

Sanofi was one of the first companies to create a patient focused leadership role.

"ENVISIONING A WORLD WHERE PEOPLE TAKE THE LEAD IN IMPROVING THEIR HEALTHCARE OUTCOMES AND LIVES. WE BELIEVE PARTNERING WITH PATIENTS IS KEY TO OUR SUCCESS"

Sanofi was globally in the first top 10 pharmaceutical companies to appoint a Chief Patient Officer (CPO). The CPO is responsible for facilitating development of healthcare solutions that meet patient needs through development of a global strategy for patient-centricity. The CPO’s responsibility is to further elevate the perspective of the patient within Sanofi and develop patient offerings by understanding and incorporating priorities and needs of patients from early stage R&D to market availability.
2. ALIGN

Align everyone – from your executive team, to your entry-level employees and then implement agile ways of working.
Cross-functional teams

The root cause of poor patient-centricity always stems from the inside, often from cross-functional disconnection. Valuable knowledge, experience and skills are lost through such disconnects. Creating cross-functional agile teams, through operational development is necessary. In order to be truly patient-centric, organizations must undergo an organizational makeover, aligning themselves in a way that makes patient engagement and collaboration easy.

Creation of cross-functional teams rather than the traditional approach of having departments that work without collaboration can encourage creativity and innovation in offerings. A change in organizational model could mean a change in the focus of business. For example, UCB changed its organizational structure from a focus on geographical profit-and-loss to global patient units.

How can cross-functional teams contribute to patient-centricity?

- By enabling knowledge sharing and integration of data which is currently siloed across departments
- Skills and competencies from diverse backgrounds can be utilized to develop highly valued patient services
- Representative/lead members from each department can then act as advisors to their respective departments in relation to patient-centricity
“EVERYTHING WE DO STARTS WITH ONE SIMPLE QUESTION: “HOW CAN WE CREATE MORE VALUE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH SEVERE DISEASES?”

Organizational restructuring at UCB comprised the appointment of a Chief Patient Affairs Officer followed by adjustments to the executive committee.

UCB created ‘Patient Value Units,’ which are teams located in all major UCB therapeutic areas. This has facilitated the growth of cross-functional teams that are responsible for patient value practices, patient value operations, and patient value functions.

Astellas

“EVERY EMPLOYEE, WHETHER IN COMMERCIAL, WHETHER IN DEVELOPMENT, NEEDS TO FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT PATIENT-CENTRICITY MEANS TO THEM INDIVIDUALLY. ONCE THIS IS DONE, THE IDEAS WILL START TO GENERATE.”

Employee surveys and focus groups determined that, while 85 percent of Astellas employees felt this was an area of potential strength for the organization, 50 percent had no idea how it could become more patient-focused. They could not define what it meant to them: “they don’t see patients on a day to day basis”.

The company abides by guiding principles to include a stronger focus on the patient; a small core team was established, involving members of the leadership.

Astellas is also considering having patients in the room for strategic planning meetings. This would ensure that long-term plans are consistent with what the patient is looking for, they believe.
Operational development

Operational development through adoption of agile ways of working is the next step. Scaling to enterprise agility will inevitably defy any organization’s existing rules, traditions, and practices. The most successful transformations involve proactive and incremental steps that shift how decisions are made and how leaders lead.

An adaptive approach to operational development that enables the incremental adjustments necessary for agility:

1. **Craft a Narrative**: By crafting a narrative of your organization that conveys leadership’s clear sense of direction, a compelling vision, and near-term goals. Enable leaders to role-model new mindsets and behaviors that favor authentic conversations over scripted talking points. Consistently reinforce and celebrate successful demonstrations of these behaviors across the organization.

2. **Engage Everyone**: Develop middle manager leadership competencies to support the new model and ensure they are fully supporting the new processes and the new mindset within their departments. Communicate roles, responsibilities, and incentives that will enable the change. Create immersive experiences based on behavioral design techniques to overcome human tendencies to procrastinate or stick with the status quo.

3. **Improve Together**: Invite impacted employees to participate in writing your organization’s new narrative, creating multiple channels for employees to meaningfully engage (e.g. focus groups, town halls, electronic feedback channels, and cross-functional retrospectives that include employees in impacted business units). Promote consistent, fair, and transparent decision-making processes. Give employees easy visibility into the leadership’s top priorities and how those priorities connect to their work. Recognize that leaders will need to support parallel “modes” (i.e., Agile and legacy) during this transformation and define leader behaviors needed to support multiple operating modes.
3. PERFORM

Get to know your patients, empower your employees, measure performance and effectively manage data
Know your patients

Understanding patient behavior is crucial for any organization. Organizations need to know why patients make certain decisions and interact with their business to provide excellent experiences. Develop and execute a digital strategy to engage with existing and potential patients and improve patient engagement. Utilize existing assets—surveys, social media, complaints, reviews — and organize around patterns. From there, get out in the field. Answer calls, speak with patients, conduct interviews. Spend time connecting with patients and you’ll have immediately actionable ways to improve. Then look ahead. Utilize proprietary research, balanced between qualitative and quantitative results, to develop foresights into what will matter to patients in the future.

THEN

MAP YOUR EXISTING PATIENT JOURNEYS TO DEFINE OPPORTUNITIES TO DELIVER REAL, LASTING ENHANCEMENTS TO THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE.

Many companies are gathering in-depth patient insights, but few are converting that into real patient experiences. Doing so requires:

1. First, develop detailed patient personas and journey maps.
2. From there, dive deep. Identify patterns, pain points and opportunities.
3. Use those markers to develop insights. Hone in on the greatest areas for improvement, both immediate and long-term.
4. Then, produce a roadmap. Start by identifying quick wins with products and propositions that meet and exceed your patient expectations. These quick wins serve the purpose of demonstrating value to the patient and building momentum for your team.
5. With momentum harnessed, co-create with your patient. It isn’t a research-derived best-guess at what the patient wants, it means actively bringing patients to the experience design table. Companies are demonstrating the power of co-creation by bringing patients to the table at the right point of innovation.
Sunovion’s ensures that the patient is always visible in front and centre. Peppering the walls of the company’s physical campuses are its digital intranet site and various events with patient quotes and pictures.

Sunovion conducts patient experience programs for their employees to help put patient-centricity into a common language and to create greater alignment and unity around key priorities of the company’s vision of patient-centricity. These programs have defined patient-centricity and helped the employees understand the commonalities and unique differences across the patient experience.

With the help of activity-based training and education, they get employees thinking about their role and how they are ultimately contributing to the patient. The content from these training programs is also being incorporated into the organization’s new hire on-boarding program so that every employee has gone through that initial training and helps bring patient-centricity in the organization’s DNA.
Train your employees

EMPOWER YOUR EMPLOYEES

If a call center operator must obey a decision tree and follow a script with no personal discretion, then his or her “human voice,” the basic honesty in listening, assessing and diagnosing a real human issue with candor, is ultimately wasted—it is no longer an asset. Harness the realness, passion and humanity of your workforce and put it to work for your brand. Train your employees and let them engage personally with patients. Personal motivations can lead to patient-centric innovation and success.

Employees with a set of shared values and behaviors are critical and can have a major impact on both strategy and overall culture. Once the leadership and top management has set the direction, it is the employees who will really drive and build momentum. Some initiatives aimed at employee training include;

1. Training Programs – programs on how employees could understand patient needs and evolve offerings to meet such needs. Employees should be allowed to think out of the box and ideas must be heard, appraised and rewarded.

2. Information-sharing Summits - Employees from different teams can come together and share experiences on patient-centric initiatives.

3. Patient Engagement Sessions – Employees engage directly with patients to understand their lifestyle and how these patients cope with diseases.
LEO Pharma Canada started an initiative with their employees called “Engaging for Better Patient Care – What’s Your ‘Why’?” which highlights and links the personal motivations of employees with the goal of helping patients.

"ENGAGING FOR BETTER PATIENT CARE – WHAT’S YOUR ‘WHY’?” A Training Program and Reward System

A quarter of LEO Pharma’s employees, from Admin assistants to the CEO participated in the EngageRx mobile training program and live workshops, and 100% were very satisfied with the outcome. LEO continually provides training for employees to develop their own ideas and figure out how those ideas can be quantified.

Another project involved engaging with potential patients within their social circles to form a personal connection. The aim is to understand the personal motivations of employees with the goal of helping patients.

LEO also formed a separate company, The LEO Innovation Lab, which is committed to finding innovative solutions for psoriasis patients beyond products.

Rewards and recognition programs or incentives for patient-centredness, 20% of LEO Canada’s sales bonuses have been behaviour-based. Part of their bonus is computed based on how many best practices and insights are shared with others in a coaching program called ‘best practice sharing.’

Structural change involved creation of a cross-functional team with employees from all departments whose mission was to help evolve the culture.

LEO Pharma Canada was also recognized as having one of the “Most Impactful Emerging or Global Initiatives” at the eyeforpharma Philadelphia Awards, proving that engaging and allowing employees to figure out their personal motivations can lead to patient-centric innovation and success.
Measure what matters

**MEASURE AND MODIFY WHAT MATTERS**

Measuring patient-centricity can be challenging. However, one needs to define a key set of KPIs or metrics, which are not necessarily in terms of sales, and use these to understand if patient-centric initiatives are successful.

More importantly, use the results from measuring these metrics to further refine culture and strategy.

**KPI-SETTING & PERFORMANCE**

Several key metrics or KPIs, both external and internal, can be identified and used to measure patient-centricity:

1. **Patient Feedback** – Actual patient feedback from patients and carers on their experience with the company’s offerings and their image of the company. This can be done through surveys, Net Promoter Score, QOL surveys,

**Boehringer Ingelheim**

An example of measuring patient-centricity is Boehringer Ingelheim which defines six core principles of patient-centricity and uses these principles as metrics of measurement.

**The six core principles of patient-centricity:**

**OPEN**

Seeks out and listens to the voice of patients

**RESPONSIVE**

Takes on board what patients are saying and makes changes accordingly

**PROUD**

Produces quality work and wants to tell people about how it is helping patients get better outcomes

**EMPATHY**

Strives to understand what patients might be going through, through their entire patient journey

**COMMITMENT**

Can demonstrate several longer-term collaborations with all stakeholders

**TRUST & RESPECT**

Can demonstrate the previous five core principles of patient-centricity and has evidence of how standard processes have been changed to further trust & respect.
2. Access, Adherence and Outcomes – These could include clinical outcomes, increase in patients being diagnosed, better health resource utilization, reduction in disease transmission, better employment status and reduced income loss.

3. Internal Practices – Periodic evaluation of changes in internal practices aimed at patient value creation as a result of patient-centric initiatives and improvement in capabilities.

A steering committee, which meets at the end of each year and comprises representatives from internal members (project team lead, sales & brand teams, corporate affairs, etc.) and external members (patients, carer organisations, media, etc.) then evaluate the principles based on frequent examples of evidence within each of the six principles.

For example, when the steering committee comes to evaluate BIUK’s patient-centricity for the past 12 months for the principle “Proud”, the question would be asked, “What examples can they as a company demonstrate where both BIUK and a patient group or charity have publicly demonstrated that they have collaborated on a project jointly, for the benefit of patients?” If this is a true company strength, they will be able to demonstrate at least five recent examples where their work with patient groups has been highlighted to the general public through channels such as social media, the national and local press, parliamentary reports and perhaps even awards nominations.
Data is the key

DATA GOVERNANCE

Data Governance is the overall management of the availability, usability, integrity and security of data used in an organization. Data governance maximises value for pharma companies through protecting sensitive data and data integrity.

- Various regulatory agencies across the world - MHRA, EMA, WHO, PICS and TGA - state that a data governance system is being considered as a regulatory expectation as one of the core quality system policies.

  For example, the MHRA, UK draft data integrity guidance additionally states: “Senior management is responsible for the implementation of systems and procedures to minimize the potential risk to data integrity, and for identifying the residual risk, using risk management techniques.”

- Ensuring data integrity requires a holistic approach. A comprehensive data governance policy includes:
  - Ethical code of conduct
  - Employee training
  - Systems and procedures regarding the control and security of raw data
  - Internal audits by quality assurance personnel
  - Regulatory agency notification
  - Investigation of suspect data integrity breaches
  - Data integrity with respect to outsourced services

- To be effective, a data governance policy must drive personnel behaviours and actions, including that of senior management. A data governance committee should be formed to ensure sustainable data governance.

HEALTHCARE DATA MANAGEMENT

Healthcare data management is the process of storing, protecting, and analyzing data pulled from diverse sources. Managing the wealth of available healthcare data allows organizations to create holistic views of patients, personalize treatments, improve communication, and enhance health outcomes.

However, the healthcare sector faces a major challenge in the form of silos. Information is often scattered across departments. Integration of IT systems, software and other devices using digital or CRM platforms enables quick, secure and accessible health data management.

Pharmaceutical and life sciences companies are turning to technologies like advanced analytics platforms, Big Data, cloud-based resources, machine learning, artificial intelligence, etc.
DATA ACCESS

Often, access to healthcare data is restricted. This is mainly due to information security issues. However, providing access to relevant data to all stakeholders – external, internal and especially patients is crucial. A data governance committee should set in place a strategy to achieve this, and in the most effective manner in collaboration with those responsible for data security so that lengthy decision making is avoided.

MASTER DATA MANAGEMENT

Over time, as pharma companies mature in their management, usage and access of data, the data governance committee will steer the definition, encourage usage of and resolve conflicts in master data management. The role will cover standard use of algorithms such as readmission criteria, calculating length of stay as well as coded data standards, both local and regional.
Conclusion

THE TIME IS NOW

Three building blocks: Envision - organizational culture and strategy, Align - teams and operations, and Perform - mobilize the organization.

These building blocks are your foundation, but they are not the end game. Patient-centricity is not a destination. It is an evolution requiring the regular reevaluation of priorities and strategy. It permanently places the patient at the center of organizational thinking and requires companies to constantly demonstrate their commitment to perfection.

The Experience Economy is not a passing trend. It is part of a shift in the marketplace in which nothing else matters more than your ability to deliver a superior experience. Not your product, not your pricing, not your marketing. True, sustained success will come down to your ability to turn patient insights into improved experiences that are delivered seamlessly by empowered employees. The time for redesigning and transforming your organization to achieve growth through patient experience is now.

Our ability to help organizations articulate and mobilize their patient centric strategy is unique. We integrate diverse competencies to design and deploy compelling patient experiences for many of the world’s leading organizations, while simultaneously partnering with our clients to build and embed lasting organizational patient-centric capability.

If you want to check your degree of patient-centric maturity, call us for an assessment, or if you know where you are – here are some examples of our services.
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