

# Beyond One Size Fits All: Enhance Customer Experience Across Diverse Stakeholders



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## Key Takeaways

Fragmented touchpoints erode trust when customers experience pharma companies as different people across functions

Early R&D engagement with payers and regulators prevents costly market access evidence gaps

Patients consolidate all stakeholder perspectives, making patient experience the ultimate engagement quality test

Human expert interpretation prevents data misattribution that misdirects strategy and wastes resources

AI-powered responsive ecosystems enable customers to choose content rather than receive pushed messages

Imagine meeting a pharma company representative who speaks eloquently about patient outcomes, then encountering the same company through customer service where the tone, messaging, and approach feel completely unfamiliar. This jarring disconnect defines the current state of pharma customer engagement. "If you move for example, from sales to customer service, they feel lost our customer experience," Chiara Bolognini explained at Pharma Customer Engagement Europe 2025.

As Jalilah Gibson reinforces,

*"Our customers don't care which company we work for or which part of the function that we work for, but they do care when they get a very disjointed experience."*

### **From Fragmented Touchpoints to Unified Ecosystems**

The pharma industry's traditional organizational structure creates silos that customers experience as disconnected interactions. Sales, medical affairs, market access, and patient support each optimize their own engagement models without coordinating on how the company's identity is expressed across the patient journey. Trust, the foundation of prescribing influence and treatment adherence, erodes when customers cannot recognize consistent company presence.

"It's designing ecosystems where our customers can thrive, where we build the familiarity with them and basically expose them to best attributes of our identity,"



Bolognini emphasizes. This shift from isolated touchpoints to integrated ecosystems requires governance that operates above functional levels, with authority to transfer methodologies across commercial, medical, and patient partnership organizations.

For Kruti Popat, the strategic imperative is clear. "Delivering a seamless customer experience is not nice to have. It's really important strategic imperative. It's a really great differentiator," she notes, particularly in complex environments like the UK's NHS where multiple stakeholders each have distinct needs yet expect coherent company engagement.

The ecosystem approach extends beyond commercial interactions to the earliest stages of development. Yvette Venable describes how AstraZeneca's "Transforming Healthcare" framework orients all teams toward patient outcomes and health system resilience. "It's crucial that we're talking to patients, to payers and policymakers, and also to clinicians very, very early on in R&D in order to make sure we can change those paradigms over time," Venable explains.



This early engagement prevents the costly disconnect between regulatory approval and market access that plagues many launches when evidence generation fails to address payer requirements.

### The Patient as Universal Stakeholder

Patients aren't just another customer segment; they represent the consolidation point of all stakeholder perspectives. Healthcare providers treating patients today become patients themselves tomorrow. Policymakers making reimbursement decisions will eventually navigate the healthcare system as caregivers or patients.

"The patient is the consolidation of all our customers. Each of us in the company, so experiencing the perspective of the patient and the customer experience is fundamental," Bolognini emphasizes. This perspective shift has profound implications for how companies design information architecture and support systems across disease awareness, diagnosis, clinical trial participation, treatment initiation, and long-term management phases.

Yet the industry still struggles to move beyond

transactional engagement models. "We as an industry do so much better today than we ever have on patient engagement, but at the same time, we're still not doing it well enough," Venable observes. The gap lies in viewing patient engagement through the lens of extraction rather than true partnership with mutual benefit.

Structural issues within organizations, where patient advocacy teams, patient support programs, and commercial patient engagement operate independently, create the same fragmentation patients experience externally.

The solution lies in persona-based approaches that maintain message consistency while adapting delivery. "It's understanding what is important to these personas, what's the value, what language resonates for them. You're still using the same content thread, you're not amending the content," Popat explains. For HCPs with high empathy toward patient journeys, the same clinical evidence is delivered with emphasis on patient experience rather than purely clinical endpoints.

### Bridging the Evidence Gap Through Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue

A critical challenge in pharma development is the misalignment between regulatory requirements and payer value recognition. Clinical trials are designed using validated endpoints that satisfy regulatory approval, but health technology assessment bodies and payers often require different evidence, particularly hard outcomes rather than intermediary endpoints.

Venable shared a powerful example from



AstraZeneca's experience with a chronic condition therapy. The regulatory-approved intermediary disease progression endpoint wasn't acceptable to payers demanding solid heart outcomes. However, extending trials to capture those outcomes would take so long that withholding new treatments from patients would be unethical.

"We got the regulators, the payers, clinicians and patients in a room together to have a conversation about how meaningful these endpoints were," Venable recounts. The resulting dialogue revealed striking disconnects, with clinicians sometimes "literally head in hands going, how do you not understand how important this is to clinical practice?"

While the immediate outcome didn't change payer positions on endpoint acceptance, it initiated the long-term process of building shared understanding across stakeholder groups that often operate in isolation from each other. This example illustrates why early multi-stakeholder engagement in R&D is essential.

When market access teams, medical affairs, and R&D collaborate from early development stages, they can shape trial designs that satisfy both regulatory approval and value demonstration needs. The alternative creates costly delays and restricts patient access to innovations.

### **Insights, AI, and the Human Interpretation Imperative**

The pharma industry is investing heavily in data analytics, real-world evidence, and AI-powered insights to understand customer



behavior and optimize engagement. Yet without human expert interpretation, these investments can generate misleading conclusions that misdirect strategy and waste resources.

Venable illustrated this risk with a striking anecdote about real-world evidence analysis. Data showed consistent patient treatment drop-offs at six months, which analysts attributed to intolerable side effects. "You bring a patient expert in and they look at that data and they go, well yeah, you need refrigeration and cold chain and everybody goes on holiday in August," she explained.

The operational reality was invisible in the data itself but immediately obvious to patients living that experience. As Gibson reflects, "Too often we've sat in data point and go, why is that happening without asking actual customers." This gap between data observation and customer validation leads companies to address the wrong problems.

The solution requires building patient expert consultation into data interpretation processes, not just data collection phases.

Roche has developed sophisticated infrastructure to consolidate insights while enabling actionable application. "We have actually created a wonderful insights platform called Before Insights Intelligence, linking to our R&D excellence program to basically identify commercial ability of our molecules," Bolognini describes.

The platform uses large language model interfaces, allowing marketers to request insights for specific strategic needs rather than analyzing dashboards themselves.

### Responsive Ecosystems and the AI Transformation

The convergence of these themes points toward a fundamental transformation in pharma customer engagement. The future belongs to responsive ecosystems where customers choose their own content through AI-powered interfaces rather than receiving pushed messages through predetermined channels. Large language models connected to validated company knowledge bases can provide instant, personalized responses while

maintaining narrative consistency across stakeholder groups.

This technological capability must be balanced with human insight. Emotional journey research, patient expert validation of data interpretations, and persona-based delivery ensure that efficiency doesn't come at the cost of empathy. "Delivering a seamless customer experience empowers accelerated decision making and therefore ultimately patient outcomes," Popat notes.

The companies that will differentiate themselves are those that establish governance above functional silos, co-create narratives across medical affairs and commercial teams, and engage multiple stakeholders from early R&D through market access. Technology enables scale, but human expertise ensures relevance and trust.

The pharma industry's ultimate customer, the patient, navigates a complex ecosystem involving diagnosis, treatment decisions, adherence challenges, and disease management. When companies design experiences that support patients through these transitions with consistent identity, validated insights, and responsive support, they build the trust that influences not just individual treatment choices but entire standards of care. The shift from fragmented touchpoints to unified ecosystems isn't merely operational improvement. It's the foundation for delivering meaningful health outcomes at scale while strengthening relationships across every stakeholder group that influences patient access to innovation.

