

Pharmaceutical REPRESENTATIVE

REAL-TIME REP



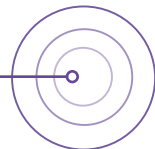
Technology is increasingly enabling the field force. Here's a look at what the future might look like

By Matt Wallach

Life sciences sales representatives have evolved many times over the years. At one point, many reps were medical experts, often holding medical degrees, who worked closely with their physician customers. Back then, to-be blockbuster pharmaceutical brands were newly patented so generics were not yet a threat, and consumers didn't have widespread access to medical information so they accepted their doctors' advice without question. Over time, these things started to change and so did the reps, who were eventually replaced by polished college graduates with business rather than science degrees. This generation gained the physician's ear on the golf course, while dropping off free samples or

gifts, and over meals at five-star restaurants.

Today, reps are morphing again as is the industry. Increased regulations have practically eliminated many of the promotional giveaways and fancy dinners. Consumerism and patent lives expiring have upped the ante for sales. And, with the adoption of new technology, the old sales model is being flipped inside out. Now, reps are connected. Whether it is from their laptops, their PDAs or their mobile phones, pharmaceutical sales teams have the ability to connect with medical affairs, clinical teams, payers, managed markets, hospitals, expert opinion leaders, marketing, and each other. In fact, these links—digitally or otherwise—are critical to success.



Being connected has opened up new doors, but also has created unique challenges. Technology has made it easier to find potential customers but harder to get in the door. It has made it easier for reps to find medical information about a drug and its indications but it also has made physicians more skeptical about what reps say. Fortunately, tomorrow's hi-tech reps will finally have access to the flexible, mobile tools that they need to do battle in today's world. From the 4G network to new sampling technologies to CRM applications, advancing technology is giving birth to the Real-Time Rep. Let's jump forward a few years to see how reps might be selling in the future.

Goodbye Laptops, Hello 4G Phones

It's November 15, 2013. You are one of the top sales reps at your company and have extensive medical training so you're as comfortable using technology as you are discussing new drugs with physicians. At 6:00 AM, you wake up, get dressed and check in with the office. In an instant, you check your messages, connect to the CRM system and open a list of all the calls you need to do today.

All without ever booting up your laptop.

Just a few years from now, hi-tech reps will give up their laptops, tablets and PDAs. They won't need to lug around boxes of written materials or a trunk full of samples either. All of these sales support materials and devices will be replaced by one simple tool—a mobile phone on a 4G network.

"Today, there's a limit to how much information can be stored on a PC or is accessible by a laptop," said Jeff Wessinger, president of Skura, a leading provider of closed loop marketing software for the life sciences industry. "But, the 4G network will provide seemingly limitless bandwidth, providing reps with instant access to anything: medical science liaisons, sample ordering forms, digital brochures or streaming videos. The 4G phenomenon is starting to roll out in urban pockets through pilot phases already. It may be pervasive in as few as two or three years."

Pervasive wireless resulting from a 4G network will make it dramatically easier to deploy, maintain and enhance all software applications because nothing will be stored locally on individual laptops and PCs. All applications and data will be stored on secure servers and accessed remotely through smaller and smaller devices, such as mobile phones.

The 4G network is coming. Just ask Verizon Communications, which is currently investing billions in its long-term evolution network (a major step forward in the march toward full 4G wireless) and testing it in major markets across the U.S. A 4G network will upgrade existing communication networks and is expected to provide a comprehensive and secure IP-based solution where voice, data and streamlined multimedia will be provided to users on an "anytime, anywhere" basis and at much higher speeds compared to previous generations. In simpler terms, it's like having a high-speed broadband connection through

your mobile phone.

According to *PC World*, "the increased bandwidth of 4G networks will enable mobile users to participate in video conferencing from anywhere in the world." It goes on to say, "the evolution away from cellular technology to an all IP-based mobile connection also opens up whole new realms of functionality for roaming employees who need access to network resources. The improved security of IP networking combined with the increased bandwidth of LTE/4G will allow users to work more efficiently and increase their productivity even if equipped with nothing more than their mobile phone."

How Can I Help You?

It's 9:15 AM. You just arrived at your first destination (according to the route automatically mapped out for you via your CRM system's GPS and sent to your mobile phone), the office of Dr. Smith, a gastroenterologist in Dallas, Texas. Dr. Smith greets you with a complex question about a new indication in infants for an acid-reflux suppression drug of yours that he has been prescribing to his teenage patients for months. Due to FDA regulations, you are not authorized to discuss this personally, but with one-click from your phone to headquarters and videoconference in an MSL. Question answered; opportunity seized.

In an always-connected 4G world, life sciences sales reps will use their mobile phones for all business activities and will always be working in real time. There will be no more working offline or syncing only at night. You'll be completely up to date at all times; perpetually synced, so to speak. And, instead of saying to your physician customer... "that's a great question, I'll get back to you later with an answer," sales reps can say "that's a great question, I'll get you an answer immediately from an expert at my organization."

The real-time rep will have one-button access to everyone in the company through their 4G networked mobile phones, enabling voice-over-IP conversations anytime and anywhere. Already, Cisco's Expert on Demand application operates over a high bandwidth network and allows reps to see through their mobile phone who is available at the call enter to talk to a physician instantly. Wait time? Zero.

Real-time reps will be able to provide physician customers with immediate answers to questions on just about anything, from the current formulary status of a particular drug to the date of the next upcoming conference. Want to discuss the protocol about an existing drug trial with a clinical research associate? Easy. Brand managers, managed markets experts, clinical research associates, medical science liaisons and more will be "on call" as needed. This will set the bar for customer service and responsiveness. Nothing less will be acceptable anymore.

"There's a growing shortage of life sciences sales reps today, which means that the reps who are in the field will have to be able to do more, know more, access more. For example, they'll need to be more consultative with physicians and



know six or seven therapeutic areas rather than just two or three. More bandwidth makes this possible,” said Skura’s Jeff Wessinger. “Bandwidth allows sales reps to invite an MSL or PhD from the medical affairs department to join a sales meeting virtually through a simple device without any technology problems interrupting the stream... that is very powerful.”

Simple Samples

It’s now 11:00 AM and you’re walking into the next office on your list, carrying nothing other than your mobile phone. Dr. Brown is impressed with the two-minute promotional video on your latest food allergy medication. He wants samples for a few of his patients. You smile, and in the time it takes to say “no problem,” you have already selected the right number of samples to ship to his office based on real-time prescription data. With one more click, you can select the pharmacies where Dr. Brown can electronically send sample vouchers on behalf of his patients. Done.

Sampling is an important yet expensive aspect of a sales rep’s job but for the real-time rep it will be simpler, faster and cheaper. Already, companies are using lower-cost sampling methods such as direct-to-physician sampling, which is likely to become a preferred method in the near future. Direct-to-physician sampling on a 4G network will not only improve efficiency, but it will also ensure that sampling allocation will become much more scientific.

“With hand-carry sampling (commonplace today), there is an element of conjecture to allocating the samples. Sometimes reps may inadvertently leave too many or too few samples, not appropriately meeting the needs of the physician’s practice,” said Roseanne Branciforte, managing director of Pharmagistics, a provider of customized sample management and logistics. “Today, some companies are deploying sample optimization technology, which uses qualitative and quantitative data to determine the optimal amount of samples for each physician. This takes the guesswork out of sampling, maximizes resources and meets patient needs.”

Reps who have real-time access to this data—typically based on prescription writing habits—know exactly how many samples to give each physician. Sampling allocation optimization applications can feed into data-agnostic multi-tenant Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) CRM applications. There are other advances, too. WebMD, for example, recently announced plans for an application called SampleMD, which claims to offer a downloadable virtual drug sample cabinet that allows doctors and staff to print or electronically send sample vouchers and copay coupons right to pharmacies directly from their desktops or mobile devices. This minimizes the need for physician offices to manage and store physical drug samples by offering a more convenient and efficient way to allocate, administer and report needed samples and copay savings to their patients.

“Another trend on the rise is alternative sampling, where

pharmacies distribute samples to patients directly rather than physicians,” continued Branciforte. “Coupons, vouchers and copay cards are another option for starting patients on new medications. Both help to improve quality control and tracking. Automated electronic communications are also driving this trend of taking samples digitally from the sales rep to the physician to the pharmacy and on to the patient.”

This is the future. Someday soon, physicians won’t have to wait for a sales rep to visit to get their samples, they will simply place an order online or with their mobile phones. Conversely, sales reps won’t have to waste upwards of \$300 just to drop off samples with a customer. Instead, they will be able to redirect their attention to reaching out to other physicians that they haven’t had time to connect with in the past. You can’t do this using old technology. You need high speeds, connectivity and the reliability that will come with a wireless broadband network and new SaaS sampling applications.

The Social Rep

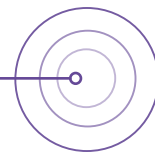
It’s 11:45 AM. You saved enough time at Dr. Brown’s office to swing by another office that you never had time to visit before. You look the physician’s name up using your mobile phone and, within seconds, have a complete profile of Dr. Sheila Steiner, cardiac specialist. You’re also alerted to the fact that last night she blogged about your company’s most-prescribed heart disease drug—she’s questioning its efficacy.

Social media is nothing new to the consumer and entertainment markets, but for life sciences this phenomenon is slower to catch fire. The biggest roadblock to an otherwise social media frenzy in life sciences is, of course, government regulation. To date, the Food and Drug Administration has not provided the industry with any clear guidelines about what is acceptable and what is not when it comes to the use of social media sites like Twitter and Facebook.

However, increased industry pressure and growing popularity of online media tools has caused FDA to schedule a public hearing to discuss ‘issues related to the promotion of FDA-regulated medical products using the Internet and social media tools...this meeting is intended to help guide the FDA in making policy decisions on the promotion of human and animal prescription drugs, biologics, and medical devices...’

“Most life sciences companies have the basics—a Facebook page and Twitter presence,” said Sheli Gupta, president of Semantelli, developers of a social media-monitoring application for the life sciences industry. “But, that’s about the extent of it right now because they are not sure how to navigate these uncharted waters. It’s clear, though, that once the FDA provides some guidelines for life sciences, that social media will flourish as it has in so many other industries.”

Regardless of how life sciences companies end up utiliz-



ing social media tools for promotional purposes, their reps will soon be able to use these tools to strategically eavesdrop or listen in on their physician targets and customers. Early research suggests that most physicians have already embraced social media and are blogging and tweeting on everything from prescription drugs to insurance carriers.

“Social media has become an outlet for overstressed, overworked physicians,” continued Gupta. “Interestingly, we’ve found that many physicians are boldly speaking out on social media sites and digitally conversing with bravado on their blogs. This is a huge opportunity for life sciences sales teams to gain some insight and intelligence on the true opinions of their target customers.”

Currently, some pharmaceutical companies rely on advertising agencies to help them monitor web traffic and maybe a few key blogs, but this is spotty, at best, and does not enable continuous web-wide social media monitoring. Semantelli’s SaaS application promises to track social media comprehensively and provide uncensored data on physician preferences, problems, needs and wants. Because it is system- and device-agnostic, the application will also be able to feed this data into any CRM or SFA system that will always be accessible to the future real-time rep via mobile phone, of course.

“In the future, social media will be another thing to track just like any other channel or activity but a 4G network will make this possible in real time so reps never miss an opportunity or a chance to make a save,” added Gupta.

Lay The Groundwork Today For Tomorrow

It's 3:15 PM now and a Friday so it's almost time to quit. At your last visit, taking Dr. Steiner out to lunch was just what the doctor ordered. The one-to-one relationship is still a critical aspect of this job! But, showing her a streaming video presentation about our product and giving her a few minutes to videoconference direct with an MSL expert on the heart disease drug also helped (a lot!) to change her misperceptions about the product. One last stop at your oldest customer's office for a little face time and I'll call it a day... a very good day.

Real-Time Rep may sound like a character from a science fiction movie, but many experts agree that sales reps that are always connected and working in real time will be the way of the not-too-distant future. In fact, the 4G network may be a reality for some major cities in as little as 18 months. But only those companies that start laying the groundwork today will be able to catch the 4G wave as soon as it starts to crest.

In order to be prepared to leverage the speed and capacity of an always-connected, totally mobile 4G network, companies must start replacing their inflexible client/server application dinosaurs with systems and applications that are maintained off-site and accessed online. Only

SaaS solutions and SaaS applications that run in the cloud fit the bill.

Here’s why: Conventional application software like on-premise client/server CRM systems that still dominate in the life sciences industry today cannot be easily accessed over the Web. Hosted applications architecture based on the same old models, too, are not built for the on-demand model that is required to leverage 4G connectivity. None of these aging technologies have been built to run purely over the web like multi-tenant SaaS applications. They don’t have the same economies of scale, agility or extensibility, and their implementation-centric architecture makes them incapable of delivering equivalent business value.

Any vendor that takes its existing software and simply delivers it as an online service just doesn’t get it. Simply put, they are selling the same old software, as a service. There is no easy way for traditional software vendors to legitimately convert their products into multi-tenant SaaS solutions. Some have tried. To date, all have failed.

SaaS is where it starts for tomorrow’s real-time reps. A recent survey conducted by Forrester of 1,017 software IT decision-makers in North America Europe found that SaaS adoption is growing globally at double-digit rates; nearly two-thirds of those surveyed said they were already using, or were interested in using or piloting, SaaS software solutions.

CRM, in particular, was being used by 36% of respondents. The evidence attests to the fact that the technology itself, not the hype, is already having a major impact on life sciences. They see the writing on the wall with the 4G world rapidly approaching. Now, every vendor in this market is trying to capitalize on the allure by saying that they have a SaaS offering even when their products are merely SaaS in wolf’s clothing.

Don’t be fooled. In order to become a company of real-time reps in a 4G world, authentic multi-tenant SaaS applications must be your technology backbone. Only these applications will allow life sciences companies to reap the benefits of a 4G world where business moves faster, better and at less expense than previous generations.

Here, instead of calling on 200 doctors a year, real-time reps will be able to hit 250 or more doctors in half that time. Instead of occasionally reading a few doctors’ blogs, real-time reps will respond to product concerns being tweeted on twitter or blasted on blogs the minute they post. Instead of being slowed down by aging technology, real-time reps will provide physicians with the answers they need precisely when they need them—and consequently, earn their business.

Just remember: none of this will be possible tomorrow without getting the right infrastructure in place today.

Matt Wallach is executive vice president and general manager at Veeva Systems. For more information go to www.veevasystems.com