



The case for change:

Preparing for the future state of CRM
technology in an evolving customer
engagement environment

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Introduction

Disruption is coming to the CRM environment, and doing nothing is not an option. Nearly every pharmaceutical company will have to redeploy their CRM in the next few years as two major players emerge, Veeva Vault CRM and Salesforce Life Sciences Cloud. Whether migrating an existing Veeva solution or forging a new path with Salesforce, this moment represents a much larger opportunity than simply choosing a technology platform. Companies can holistically reexamine the ways in which they want to engage with customers in the future and how their CRM can help them to meet their strategic goals.

In late 2022, Veeva and Salesforce announced the expiration of their partnership in 2025, with a full shutdown of the joint system in 2030.¹ With the partnership ending, both companies are developing their own offerings. Veeva will continue to offer its core suite of life sciences products and, in the coming years, will add new omnichannel capabilities to its Vault product as part of the transition.² Salesforce will launch a new range of life sciences products hosted on its Life Sciences Cloud solution (LS Cloud) to deliver the world's No. 1 AI CRM, leveraging IQVIA's Orchestrated Customer Engagement (OCE) platform,³ to pharma and medtech organizations.⁴

Choosing which CRM platform to adopt—and how to implement it—will have a significant impact on the global commercial operations of life sciences companies. Regardless of the chosen platform, companies will need to invest tens of millions of dollars and tens of thousands of hours to navigate the transition. The decision will affect customer engagement for years to come.

Doing nothing is not an option. Life sciences leaders must decide how they will respond. Will they view it as a crisis or an opportunity?

Instead of viewing this event as a problematic disruption, life sciences companies have an opportunity to reflect holistically on the effectiveness of their customer engagement. Proactively building new engagement strategies and refreshing their technology stack to align with those needs can accelerate growth. Leaders will need to evaluate their unique business priorities, context, and capacity to develop short- and long-term customer engagement strategies.

2030 might seem like a long way off, but companies can't afford to wait on this decision. With support for the joint offering already sunsetting, 2025 will be the de facto deadline for choosing a new path forward. Since this type of digital transformation often takes two to three years, there is an urgent need to assess the situation now to avoid complications when Veeva and Salesforce's current joint offering is no longer supported. As part of this transformation, companies will need to gather both business and technology stakeholder input and develop effective cross-functional strategies to take timely action.

Taking stock of the current customer relationship landscape

In some ways, the CRM changes couldn't come at a better moment for the life sciences community. As consumer expectations rapidly shift in an ecosystem increasingly driven by value and personalization, legacy approaches to customer engagement are no longer as effective as they used to be.

A recent Deloitte survey of more than 240 global health care providers (HCPs) and pharmaceutical executives found a persistent gap between pharma's outreach activities and customers' needs.

While more than 80% of pharma executives are satisfied with their current customer engagement strategy, less than 35% of HCPs feel like pharma's customer-facing resources are meeting their needs well.

Nearly half (47%) of HCPs harbor concerns about the scientific validity of communications from sales representatives and question the authenticity of these resources. Most (67%) of the time, HCPs prefer to get their information from non-pharma company channels, especially since 37% believe that medical

science liaisons (MSLs) are not available when needed and don't offer enough engagement when they are present.

With the industry falling short of its responsibility to deliver satisfactory customer experiences, the imperative to adopt new technology in 2025 is a golden opportunity to reevaluate how the next generation of CRM tools can support more effective communications with HCPs and other high-value customers and partners.



Anchoring technology choices to a strong strategic framework

To close the engagement gap, life sciences companies must understand what messages they wish to convey, how to best share them, how to gauge the effectiveness of these messages once delivered and, above all, how these activities fit into the overall strategic direction of the company.

The process starts by developing a clear understanding of what the business aims to achieve in the next three to five years.

Executive leaders should ask themselves:

Who will the primary customers be?

- How will regulatory, technological, and financial stressors change the customer environment and create new types of health care delivery networks
- How will this limit or expand the target customer base for new and existing products?

Where will revenue come from?

- Is the company focused on maximizing the impact of the existing portfolio and footprint, or will new therapeutic areas be a top priority by 2030?
- How does the company plan to manage the risks and rewards of each segment to ensure continued financial sustainability?

What business constraints will affect the ability to grow and compete?

- How will the company address margin pressure and any resulting limitations in terms of engagement model design, field force size, profitability, structure, or scalability?

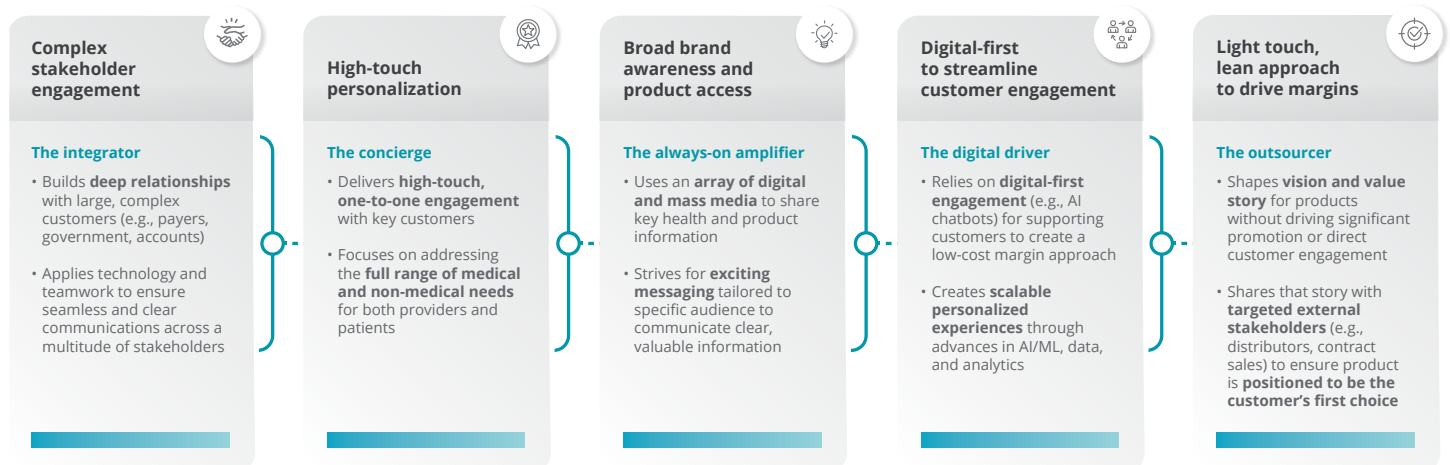
Once the executive team has adequately defined its vision for the future of the business, cross-functional team leaders can take a more informed approach to setting their priorities for engaging the right audiences at the most impactful point in the customer journey.

Some companies may wish to focus on high-touch personalization, while others might benefit more from generating broader brand awareness. A light, lean touch to drive margins could be appropriate for certain enterprises, but others might want to go all in on digital engagement through multiple channels with AI-driven tools like chatbots or predictive analytics.

Marketing leaders, in particular, may start to recognize this prioritization process as the foundation for building customer personas that can then be used to inform decision-making. While they may be more accustomed to defining these attributes for their external target audience, applying the same tactics across their own organization can assist with engagement model and CRM technology choices and align investments with the programming that will return the highest investment over time.

The five customer engagement models to transform the future of pharma

To assist life sciences companies as they embark on this journey, Deloitte has defined five research-based customer engagement models that bring together business and technology capabilities in a transformative way. Each maps back to an engagement priority, which in turn should align with the overarching strategic roadmap for the enterprise.



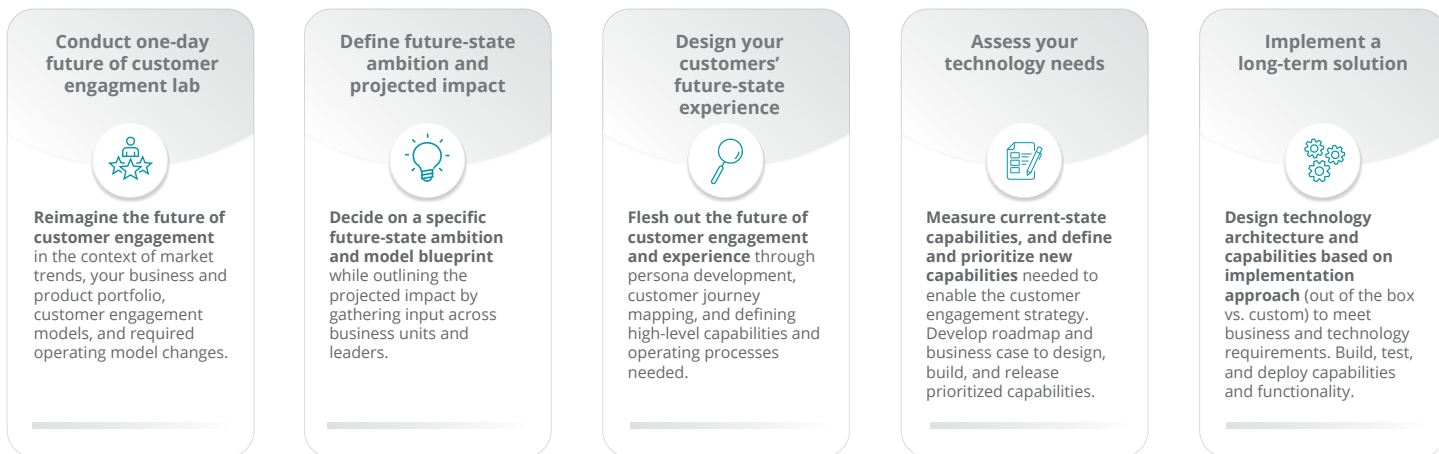
These models illustrate a range of possibilities for the future of customer engagement and can provide clarity around technology decision-making and customer-facing initiatives. By better understanding what the company hopes to achieve, leaders can ask more detailed, relevant questions of technology providers to determine which platform offers the most appropriate capabilities to meet ongoing needs and objectives.

Leveraging proven expertise to jump-start a new era of customer engagement

It may be challenging for pharma companies to seize this opportunity to revamp customer engagement, especially as the market continues to evolve at a breakneck pace and technology keeps growing more complex.

Working with an experienced partner, such as Deloitte, can bring in a valuable fresh perspective and a rigorous process for internal evaluation and goal setting that is essential to successfully chart a viable new direction.

Deloitte's model for reimagining customer engagement includes an iterative approach to assessing and enhancing the organization's business objectives, technology infrastructure, and governance principles based on specific future-state ambitions and projected impacts.



Deloitte's CRM Transformation Toolkit has been specifically designed to address this moment in time for the life sciences industry and has been deeply informed by work with commercial and technology teams from across the biopharma industry, as well as in-depth qualitative and quantitative research.

It will be essential for pharma companies to harness all available resources to achieve a successful CRM transformation, especially in light of the ever-increasing complexity of engaging customers in the life sciences environment.

With a collaborative and structured plan to establish goals, secure buy-in, and identify necessary resources, Deloitte can actively assist life sciences organizations with designing and implementing an end-to-end future-state experience that is tailored to the company's individual market, customers, and operating model goals.

Start the conversation

Deloitte has assets, accelerators, and teams of experts to accelerate your CRM transformation. Reach out to us to learn more and start building your customer engagement of the future.

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Endnotes

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3. Salesforce, "[IQVIA and Salesforce expand global partnership to accelerate the development of Life Sciences Cloud](#)," press release, April 8, 2024.
4. Salesforce, "[Salesforce announces Life Sciences Cloud, bringing the world's #1 AI CRM to pharma and medtech organizations](#)," press release, October 23, 2023.

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