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# Elevating Medical Affairs Insight Management

Transforming pharma through AI and cross-collaboration

Produced in conjunction with

**Within3** |



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Medical Affairs (MA) teams are increasingly seen as key players within pharma organizations. As the role of medical insights grows, these professionals face the complex task of efficiently managing diverse digital data streams to enhance strategic decision-making.

At the heart of MA's work is the challenge of overcoming resource shortages and gaps in expertise. Strategic adoption of innovative technologies and encouragement of teamwork across different functions present promising pathways to navigate these issues.

Moreover, it's essential for MA to proactively engage in the pharma industry's conversations, not only to meet expectations but also to contribute valuable perspectives. Building collaborative relationships with research and development (R&D) and commercial sectors is crucial for the continuous improvement of insight management and the fostering of innovation.

To gain a clearer understanding of these issues, Reuters Events conducted a 2024 survey with input from 195 MA professionals, enriched by in-depth interviews with sector leaders. The survey aimed to identify the main obstacles and opportunities they encounter in establishing a robust process for managing insights. The study brought to light several focal points:

## IMPLEMENTING AND KEEPING PACE WITH THE FUTURE:

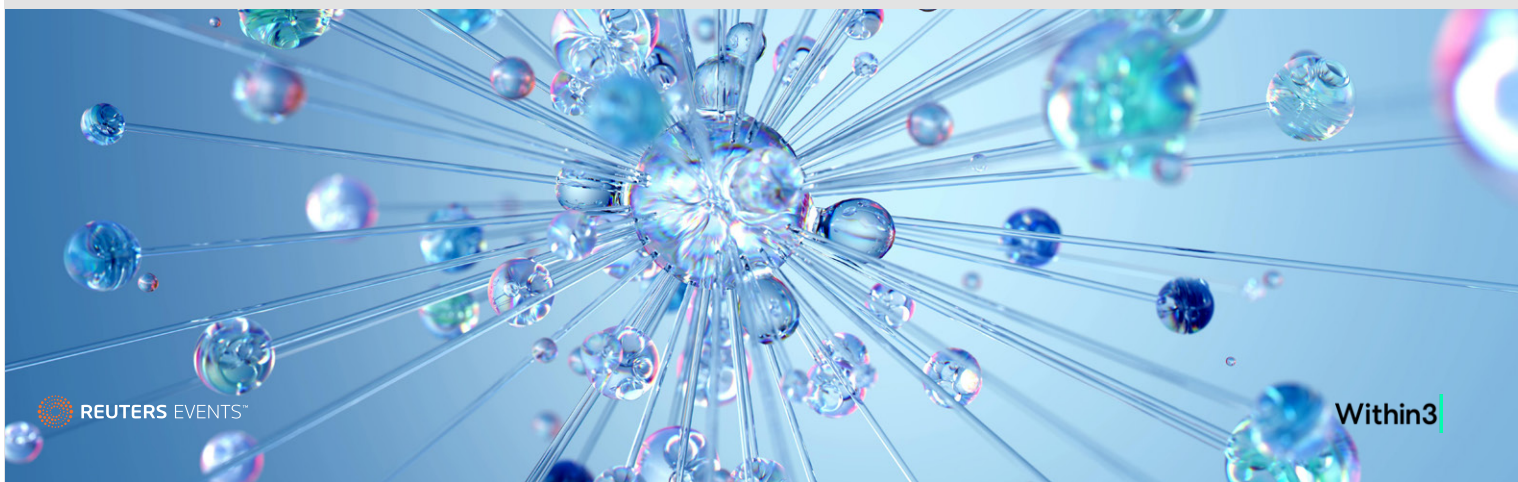
It's beneficial for MA to be well-informed about new technologies and shifts within the industry. Leveraging tools like artificial intelligence (AI) and social media analytics could greatly enhance their ability to generate and apply insights.

## ENHANCING BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

For MA professionals, it's crucial to develop a deep understanding of business principles and strategies to effectively provide actionable insights and drive informed decision-making. This involves not only understanding the data, but also being able to analyze and interpret it in a way that aligns with the wider goals of their organizations. This includes identifying market trends, customer needs, and industry best practices to help organizations achieve their objectives and stay ahead of the competition. Additionally, it's important for MA professionals to develop strong communication strategies to ensure that all stakeholders, including colleagues in R&D and commercial, understand their input for business strategies. This can involve using clear and concise language, visual aids, and storytelling techniques to effectively convey complex ideas and insights.

## VALUING COLLABORATIVE WORK:

The importance of collaboration is highlighted throughout the sector. MA professionals are encouraged to seek and maintain partnerships with other functions, such as R&D and commercial. Through such collaborative efforts, they can develop strategies and initiatives that are both effective and innovative.



# ABOUT THE SURVEY

195

Medical Affairs executives took part in the survey.

The largest proportion had global responsibilities

32%

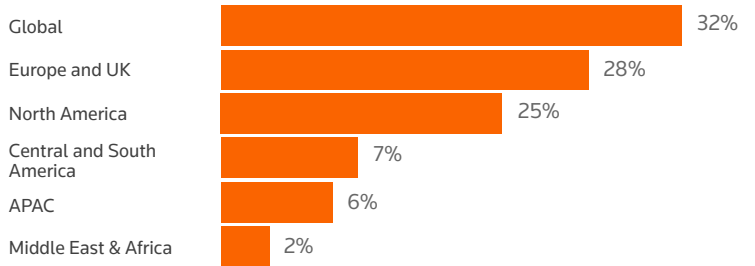
Most worked in pharma organizations

68%

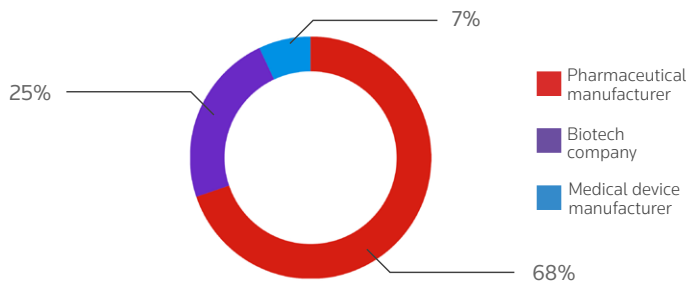
The majority were direct-level or above

71%

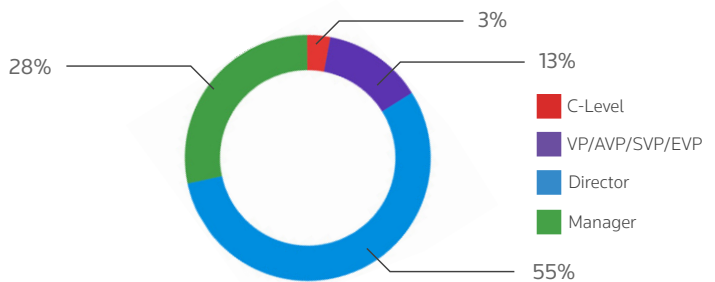
## Geographical Responsibility



## Type of organization



## Level of seniority



# INTRODUCTION

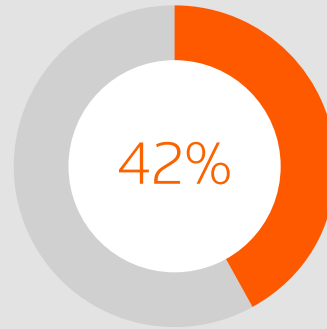
Medical Affairs are at the forefront of a paradigm shift, propelled by behavioral changes, an explosion of data, and rapid innovation amidst increasing industry pressures.

GlobalData identifies the primary challenges for the pharma industry in 2024 as persistent inflation, geopolitical tensions, and the relentless push to reduce drug prices.

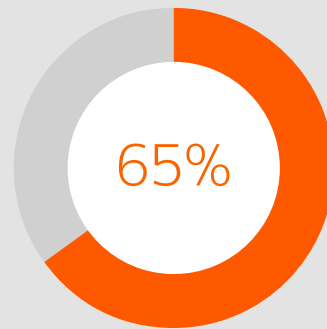
Adding to the complexity, McKinsey predicted that by 2023 “digital engagement will be the only scalable medical affairs solution to measurably reduce suboptimal care delivery across large patient populations”. The consultancy also predicts a broadening of stakeholder engagement by MA within the next five years, emphasizing the increasing influence and involvement of patients and advocacy groups in their healthcare decisions.

For MA to establish itself as a strategic partner, alongside R&D and commercial functions, it must improve its data and insight management capabilities. However, our survey indicates that many in the field are struggling with data management, with around two-thirds (65%) of respondents finding it challenging to organize and analyze data effectively, and 42% recognizing a need for improvement in their insight management techniques.

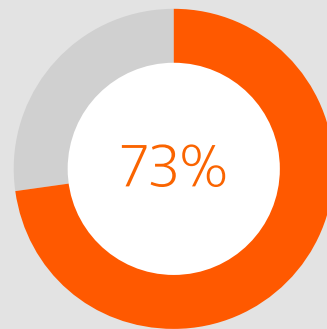
These challenges have serious implications, not only for patient care but also for the commercial viability of new products. A 73% of those surveyed cited “risk to



of respondents cite “there is room for improvement” in their process and methodologies for insight management.



of respondents say “we are struggling to organize, integrate, analyze and use data coherently”.



of respondents cited “risk to product launch” as the primary consequence of getting the necessary insights.

product launch” as a consequence of inadequate insight gathering, underscoring the commercial stakes involved.

The transformation of MA is critical for pharma companies as they navigate an industry marked by relentless change. Firms must adapt and innovate in their approach to MA or risk being outpaced by more agile competitors. To thrive, they must address these internal challenges and fully realize the strategic potential of MA and the role they play in insight management.

# INSIGHT MANAGEMENT ACCELERATES

The transformation of the function that acts as a bridge between industry and the wider medical community was already underway in 2019. Back then, [McKinsey](#) foresaw that MA would transition from its traditional support role to become a “third strategic pillar of the organization alongside R&D and commercial” by 2025.

However, in 2024 the [consultancy](#) said that the COVID-19 pandemic, the “meteoric” rise of mRNA vaccines, and “a complete upending of the pharma-physician engagement model”, brought MA’s importance into even “sharper focus”.

While there has been progress since McKinsey’s first report in 2019, arguably the transformation is not happening fast enough. Jan Malo, Country Medical Director at Roche Slovakia, explains: “Our journey towards a strategic role within the organization is on-going; it’s a process of aligning our teams operations and emphasizing our value beyond support.”

A key aspect of this transformation will be demonstrating the intrinsic value of insights provided by Medical Affairs. According to the [Medical Affairs Professional Society](#) (MAPS), this involved the capacity “to capture and respond to learnings based on data, facts, and observations from sources beyond the organization”.

While active evidence generation and insights management are key pillars of MA, there is,

Malo adds, “a notable gap, between the vision, execution and perception”.

As MA decides its next steps, the importance of data-driven decision-making cannot be understated. The sources of data are already vast and soaring. According to San Francisco-based trend spotter, [Exploding Topics](#), the latest estimates show that 328.77 million terabytes of data is created daily, 120 zettabytes will be generated in 2024 rising to 181 zettabytes by 2025.

It is therefore an imperative that organizations find ways to garner strategic, purposeful insights from their vast data stores. These insights emerge from numerous sources – everything from market research to patient journey flow analysis, first-hand field observations and advisory reports, as well as from global teams and affiliates.

But this remains a challenge. “Sometimes the abundance of information can overwhelm our resources, limiting the ability to analyze and gain valuable insights,” says Rosana Cabello Moruno, Therapeutic Area Leader, Medical Affairs, Roche Pharma.

As MA leaders look to the future, a dynamic and well-defined insights management strategy that promotes a cycle of continuous improvement is becoming business critical.

As [MAPS](#) states, insights “pinpoint areas of knowledge, opinion or behavior change that are necessary for the successful launch and use of an emerging drug, diagnostic or device”. They can also help to accelerate “the delivery of the right therapy to the right patient”.

Not only does this benefit MA teams, it can “inform the execution of strategies by other industry pillars” such as R&D and commercial.

However, for insights to drive strategic decision-making requires that teams identify pertinent questions, gather responses, analyze data, report findings, and continuously iterate.

Organizational growth and adaptability depends on it, which Malo, who likens insights to “the adjustments a skilled Formula One driver makes on a racetrack”. They help to find “the smartest path to adjust plans, stay on track and move forward efficiently,” he says.

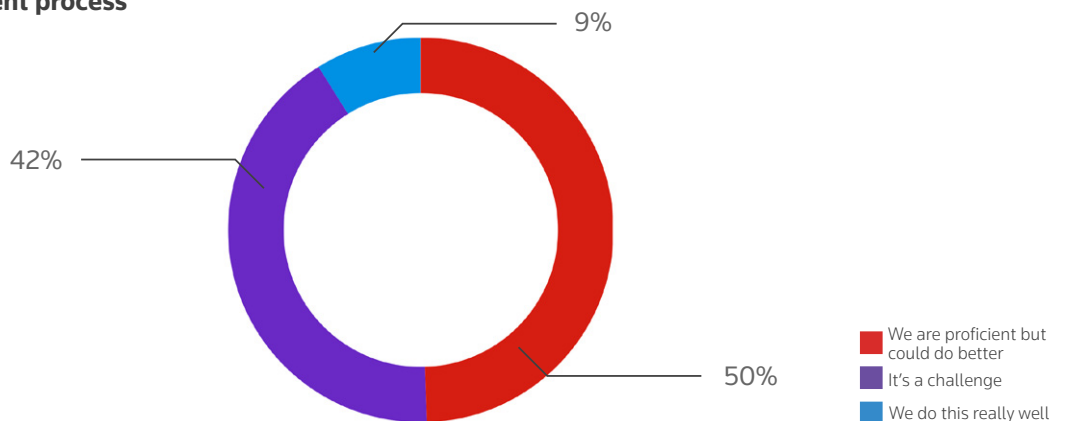
**“SOMETIMES THE ABUNDANCE OF INFORMATION CAN OVERWHELM OUR RESOURCES, LIMITING THE ABILITY TO ANALYZE AND GAIN VALUABLE INSIGHTS”**

**Rosana Cabello Moruno,**  
Therapeutic Area Leader, Medical Affairs, Roche

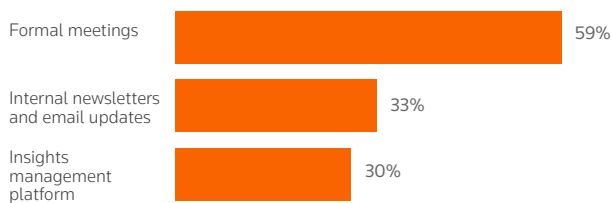
# INSIGHT MANAGEMENT REPORTING

Insight management in medical affairs often lacks standardization, integration between data sources, and relies heavily on manual processes. These limitations hinder efficiency, accuracy, and timely dissemination of insights, highlighting the need for improvement in reporting practices.

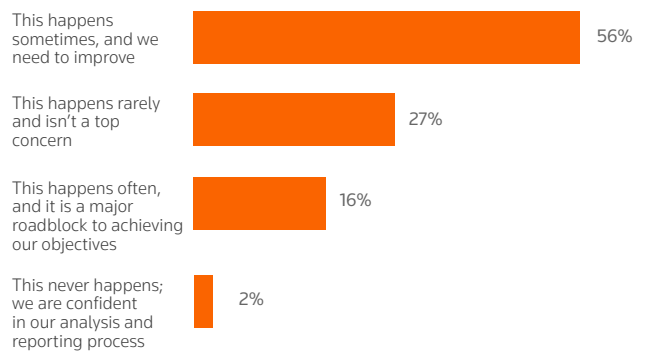
## Do you currently use social listening tools in your insight management process



## Top 3 channels to share insights



## After you generate insights, is it too late to make decisions?



## ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

What is clear is that organizations continue to grapple with resource limitations, fragmented processes, and a dearth of standardized practices for deriving the valuable insights.

According to the survey only 9% of organizations “do this really well”, while 50% “could do better” and 42% find it a challenge.

Making timely use of these insights is another factor. In fact 56% of respondents to the survey say that after insights are generated sometimes it’s too late to make decisions, and for 16% this is a major roadblock. A tiny 2% say this never happens.

MAPS points to establishing key insight topics (KITs) with input from cross-functional teams as a good starting point, and then defining key insight questions (KIQs). It would also like to see standardized ‘apples-to-apples’ comparisons within the data.

Mark Rees-Saunders, Sr Director Global FME, at Japanese multinational Astellas, believes

advanced technologies are paving the way for more efficient and effective approaches. “Advanced technologies will help accelerate medical affairs, being a genuine strategic partner, and driving so much more on an equal footing,” he says.

Indeed, with more streamlined data collection, analysis, and reporting processes, the possibility to master insights that drive strategic decision-making is within reach.

But to succeed, says Katy Curran, Director Medical Affairs, Medical Excellence & Impact, Immunology, UCB, the Belgian biopharma multinational, will require “substantial cultural change”.

**“ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES  
WILL HELP ACCELERATE  
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**Mark Rees-Saunders**  
Sr Director Global FME, Astellas





# HARNESSING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY & AI

From automation to natural language processing (NLP) and generative AI (GenAI), advanced technologies hold immense promise for mastering MA insights. They can help to tag and categorize data, generate and summarize content, and ultimately free humans to focus on more complex tasks.

However, as McKinsey noted in a [2022 report](#), “pharmaceutical companies have only scratched the surface”. Legacy systems, manual processes and data silos remain a reality for many. Beyond Excel and other spreadsheet software, business intelligence (BI) tools, such as Tableau or PowerBI, offer more efficient ways to visualize data but some manual input and interpretation is still required.

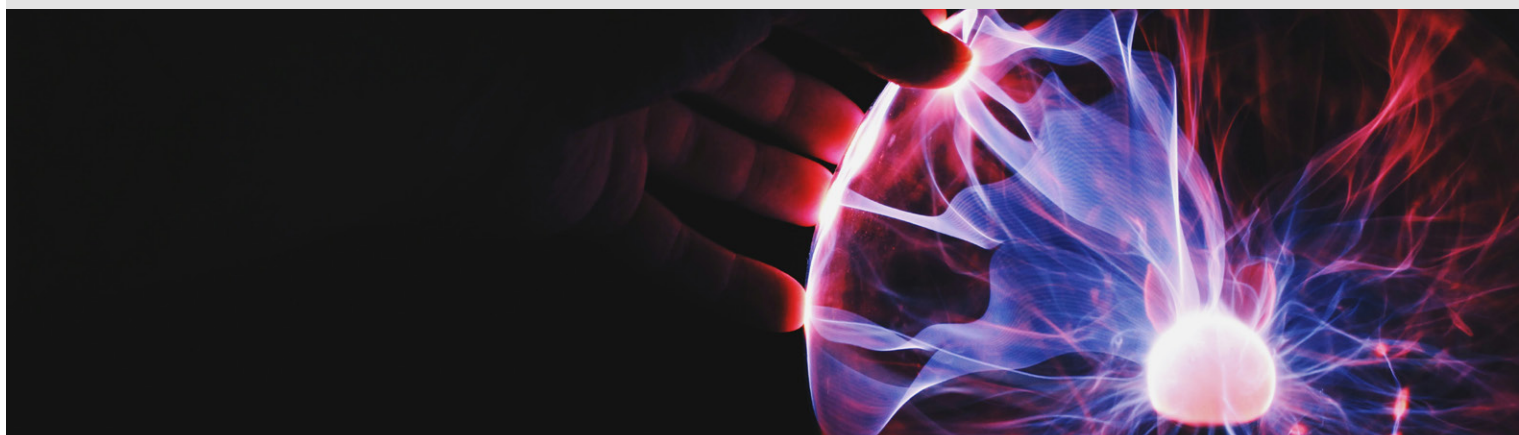
The transition from manual to AI-powered methods in managing insights has been gradual, yet the landscape is shifting. As new data sources emerge, forward-thinking organizations are testing new approaches and technologies to enhance insight management.

Organizations that have adopted these strategies are witnessing significant advantages. According to [McKinsey](#), pharma companies that have scaled their digital and analytics pilots into large-scale delivery and transformation projects are seeing “substantial bottom-line impacts”.

Companies are exploring and experimenting with various AI-based solutions, and small-scale pilots are also underway to assess their feasibility and effectiveness. Some are using their own AI capabilities for CRM data interrogation, insights curation and sentiment analysis.

Astellas, for example, is reconfiguring its CRM system and enhancing its UX interface. In doing so, it aims to empower field medical personnel to capture insights and establish a streamlined process, locally and regionally. “A true end-to-end insights process and functionality would help to streamline workflows,” Rees-Saunders says.

Meanwhile, UCB and Spark Therapeutics, the gene therapy arm of Roche, are testing AI-enabled tools that use natural language processing (NLP) to accelerate data analysis and improve strategy implementation.



## AI: THE RISKS AND REWARDS

AI, and in particular GenAI, shows great potential. Pharma companies are already experimenting with GenAI for real-time insight collection and synthesis, automation of medical writing, and production of images, animations, and videos, which is “disrupting the standard creative-agency model”, according to [McKinsey](#).

Michael Kahn, Senior Director, Medical Affairs, Spark Therapeutics, believes GenAI holds huge potential for reviewing scientific literature and making it more accessible. Tools currently being tested that parse scientific literature and provide automatic summaries would, he says, “be an excellent application of artificial intelligence.”

Beyond synthesizing information, GenAI can also optimize the delivery of insights, enabling more informed decision-making. However, UCB’s Curran would like to see further automation “into a format that’s more digestible for the analyst”.

All that said, understanding the risks and benefits, how to integrate it effectively into workflows, while retaining patient trust remains a work in progress. Though Kahn sees potential, he says AI is currently unreliable, often requires manual verification due to substantial error rates, and can take as much time as traditional processes.

A [report from Astellas](#) on the role of AI in healthcare makes the point clearly: “The biggest risk with AI is

the false expectation of perfection. We must manage patient trust by openly discussing the benefits.”

UCB’s Curran argues that often “people think AI is simply about throwing everything in and getting valuable output”. Instead, it demands a rigorous approach, programming and strategic planning to get meaningful results. “Without clarity on what you’re seeking, you risk analysing irrelevant information and losing time,” she adds.

By defining precise use cases and objectives, however, organizations can mitigate the risk of misalignment between AI capabilities and business needs. In doing so, they can lay the foundation for successful implementations and impactful outcomes.

Applied to the right use-cases, Lance Hill, CEO, Within3, says, “AI can help humans focus on more valuable, rewarding tasks... rather than just looking at dashboards and spreadsheets.” This also impacts patient outcomes because professionals engaged in more meaningful work advances medical research.

Despite AI’s phenomenal potential, human expertise and insight remains indispensable. It should not be a case of either-or, but a more complimentary both-and as relationships evolve. Continued refinement and validation of AI algorithms to enhance their accuracy and trustworthiness must therefore be a top priority.

## FIVE TIPS FOR AI IMPLEMENTATIONS

1.

**Define** use cases with clear objectives and desired outcomes especially in the pre-implementation stage. Effective AI usage demands careful programming aligned with specific goals.

2.

**Understand** strategic priorities and operational challenges.

3.

**Tailor** AI initiatives to address relevant pain points and show tangible value.

4.

**Discuss** in detail potential AI applications across various facets of MA, such as data analysis, insights generation, and strategic decision-making.

5.

**Collaborate** with purpose and continuously refine and improve.

**“WITHOUT CLARITY ON WHAT YOU’RE SEEKING [FROM AI], YOU RISK ANALYSING IRRELEVANT INFORMATION AND LOSING TIME”**

**Katy Curran**, Director Medical Affairs, Medical Excellence & Impact, Immunology, UCB

**AI - supported Insight Management**

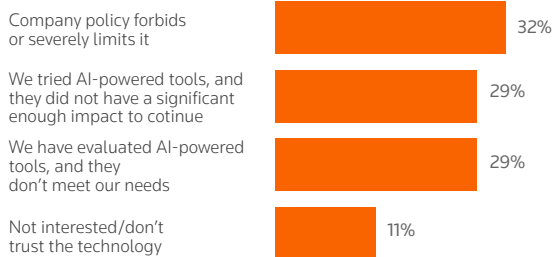
Use Analysis in 2024

**Do you currently use tools that feature/incorporate artificial intelligence as part of your insight gathering, generation, or reporting processes?**

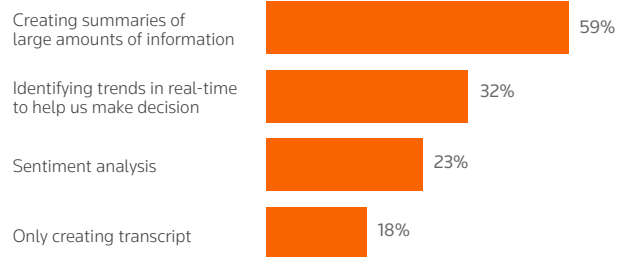


of participants said they currently incorporate artificial intelligence as part of your insight gathering, generation, or reporting processes.

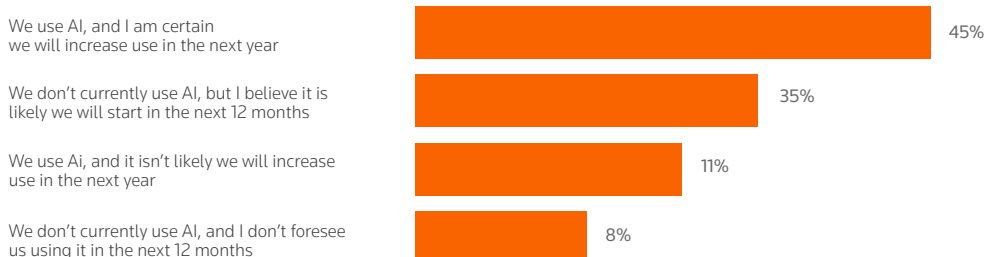
**If not, why**



**If yes, how do you use it?**



**Do you think your company's use of AI will increase in the next 12 months?**



# MINI CASE STUDIES: **WHAT IS BIG PHARMA DOING TO IMPLEMENT AI?**



## UCB: CONTEXT, COMPETITION AND THE HUMAN TOUCH

UCB turned to AI to mine field insights to better understand HCP's needs within a therapeutic area. At first, a strong message came from the analysis, pointing to an area of interest that could have influenced a subtle strategic shift. However, the AI model could only analyze the free text insights captured - it isn't able to apply the context of the competitive landscape, and the main 'insight' derived was, in fact, a competitor's strategic message.

While AI could mine the text to pinpoint a clear common insight from those recorded in the CRM by MSL teams across the Region, Curran says: "It required humans, skilled in our strategy and knowledgeable of that of others, to determine a true insight signal of unmet need and differentiate that from competitor noise." Curran believes it is only through the combination of AI and human skills that MA can harness the technology to amplify their value in the organization.

## HOW UCB AMPLIFIED ENGAGEMENT

UCB harnessed AI algorithms to understand stakeholder needs at an annual international medical education event. Leveraging AI, insights were gathered from past and potential attendees to discern preferences. Through analysis of this data, a tailored agenda was crafted that addressed stakeholder priorities. By doing so UCB was able to identify content gaps and prioritize topics, resulting in increased traction and positive feedback. In addition, AI-driven insight gathering enhanced stakeholder engagement and event planning processes.

## HOW SPARK GOT BELOW THE SURFACE WITH NLP

Spark Therapeutics used natural language processing (NLP) to enhance insight analysis. Spark's Kahn explains that the system was designed to suggest tags and identify themes in the data and make sense of recurring terms and topics. However, after the initial implementation some fine-tuning was necessary. For instance, the system flagged "gene therapy" prominently, as that is Spark's area of expertise. However, this surface-level insight proved unhelpful, and required manual intervention to discern meaningful insights. Another organizational challenge was that across teams, variations in terminology could lead to discrepancies in data interpretation, highlighting the need for continuous refinement and collaboration.

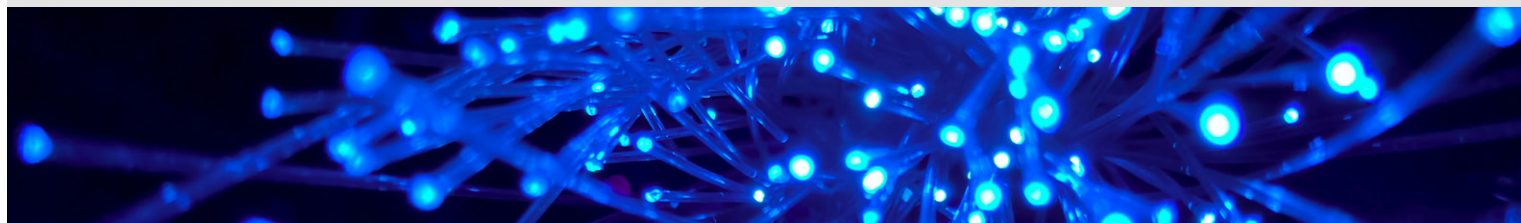
# FIVE STEPS TO REFINING INSIGHT MANAGEMENT

## 1. SPOT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DATA & INSIGHT

Within3's Hill stresses that MA teams "really need to understand the difference between data or an observation and a genuine insight". He sees many companies "using those terms interchangeably, and it's really not the same thing". An example of data is that 50% of patients aren't using a recommended therapy. An observation is a medical science liaison (MSL) meets with a physician who says they said only prescribe this therapy under very limited circumstances.

Insights require a deeper level of analysis, and Hill's observation is that the companies less effective at organizing data tend to be either drowning in detail or drawing conclusions based on just a few data points. "The result is a low quality insight that doesn't reflect the reality of the marketplace," he says.

In the field, people should be gathering both data and observations but with the right infrastructure and AI-driven tools it's now possible to fuse data with qualitative behavioural information gathered in the field. With access to broader datasets, insight analysis can now happen at a much higher level, Hill explains.



## 2. THINK QUALITY OVER QUANTITY AND CONTEXT

Spark's Kahn cautions against prioritizing quantity over quality as it can diminish the value of the data. On the other, too much emphasis on quality, says UCB's Curran, could shift focus away from strategic planning, potentially making insights irrelevant.

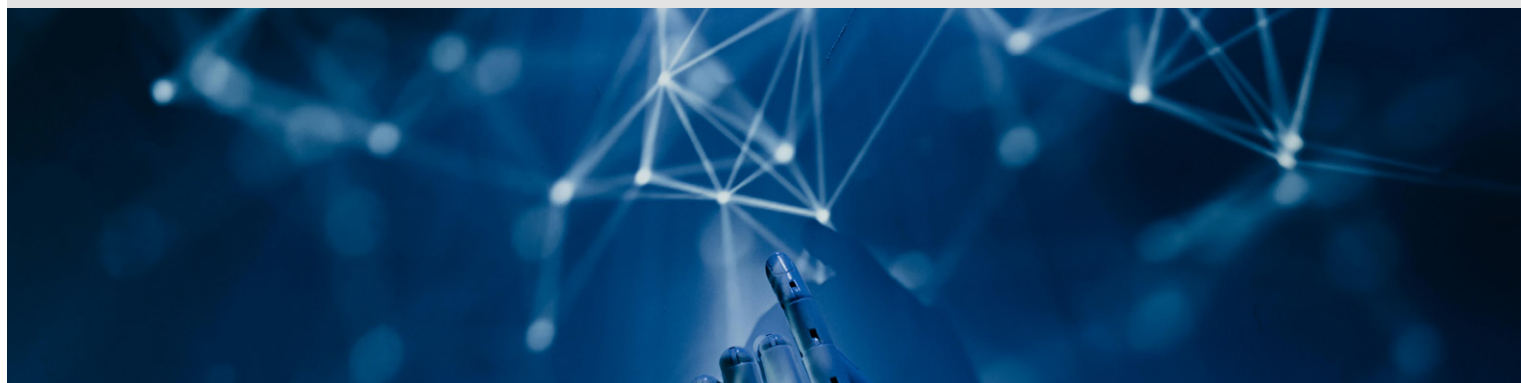
The most important thing, she says, is to recognize that "data alone isn't valuable unless it's contextualized".

However, the good news is that common complaints such as confirmation bias, timeliness and accuracy, which can affect the quality of the data, can be minimized with right technology investments.

### 3. CONNECT THE DOTS BETWEEN INSIGHTS AND BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

Developing metrics and methodologies to quantify the impact of MA insights on business outcomes would help to convince management and solidify its position as a strategic partner.

AI solutions offer potential avenues for more sophisticated insight analysis and impact measurement. But establishing metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) will be crucial to identifying the next best action, asserts Katy Curran, Medical Impact Lead Europe, UCB. The development of [Field Medical Impact Indicators \(FMII\)](#) and companion “diagnostic metrics”, is one example, and is designed to deliver more meaningful patient-centric behaviours and tangible outcomes. Other metrics to assess impact could include the likelihood of changing clinical practice following educational events.



### 4. TRAIN, SUSTAIN AND COLLABORATE

As McKinsey notes, in 2024 HCPs “are becoming younger and more diverse” and they have “become more comfortable with technology than their predecessors”.

To attract the right talent, companies must adopt ‘modern learning journeys’ - that combine technology with interactive, collaborative approaches and diverse content. Investment in analytics expertise is also necessary, to attract data scientists, data engineers and translators who can apply advanced analytics to address business challenges.

Roche’s Malo stresses the importance of training not only Medical Science Liaisons (MSLs) but all customer facing roles. The ability to ask the right questions and actively guide conversations is essential to uncovering robust, relevant insights, he says.

### 5. PRESENTATION, PERSUASION AND PARTNERSHIP

For MA, not only is medical expertise important, so is the art of presentation, “a piece that is often overlooked,” says Hill. To become a true strategic partner as pharma navigates product launches and pursues optimization, MA’s ability to convey insights with precision and persuasion emerges as pivota

Increased collaboration with R&D, and other parts of the business, further stresses the need for presentation skills. In fact, Hill asserts that medical input in protocol design can directly impact enrolment targets and logistical considerations. “Effective presentation ensures insights translate into actionable intelligence, fostering alignment and collaboration across departments,” he says.

# SOCIAL MEDIA LISTENING: BEYOND THE CONS

Patients are taking charge of their health and social media platforms, which are effectively publishers, have democratized access to information. The downside of this is the spread of disinformation.

The benefits for pharma companies is that social media can offer valuable glimpses into public opinions about a therapy area or a specific product. On the other hand, there are limitations in conveying nuanced information about clinical trials or trial design, for example.

The pros and cons, and the potential risks might explain why over half of respondents to the survey are not using social media tools.

This is unsurprising. Healthcare regulations demand a meticulous approach to data privacy, security and ethical considerations.

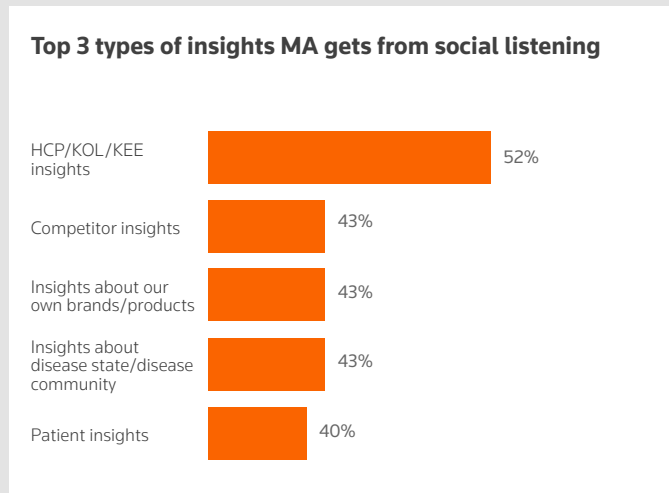
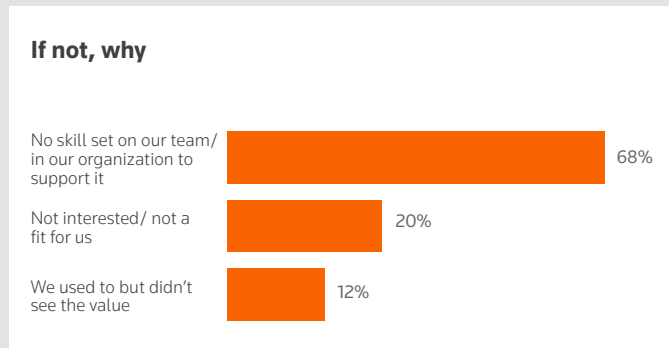
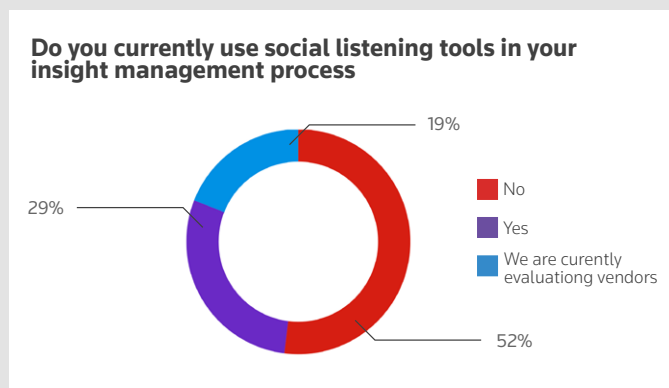
From an industry perspective, Spark’s Kahn recommends caution. Social media data, he says, “lacks complexity...is incomplete for getting the big picture... and may not provide a comprehensive understanding of stakeholder opinions and needs”.

Compliance issues and the dearth of specialized tools to filter and capture discussions, also pose a barrier to social listening effectiveness, according to Astellas’ Rees-Saunders.

However, there are many potential insights and benefits – from proactive crisis management to real-time patient-clinician feedback, product preferences and competitive set analysis.

What the industry would like to see is tools tailored to the unique requirements for MA but Within3’ Hill asserts that’s already happening.

## SOCIAL LISTENING FOR INSIGHT GENERATION





“The technology that can be applied to social listening is evolving very rapidly.” However, when many in the industry are using solutions from two to five years ago, or no solution at all, “they fail to see the value”. Indeed, they may be missing business critical insights.

This is becoming particular true as the line blurs between KOLs and DOLs, making it more difficult to identify influential voices within the digital landscape.

Traditionally, KOLs would be established senior leaders, published authors, investigators and recognized experts in their field. Digitally savvy, often self-appointed, and more informal.

But at UCB, Curran notes that in one therapeutic area they found a 30% overlap between DOLs and KOLs. In other words, traditional KOLs are also now active online which is an important consideration for MA when developing social listening strategies.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY INCLUDE:

- Diverse motivations can drive engagement and this varies widely between stakeholders. Healthcare practitioners use social media for a range of purposes from establishing expertise to simply connecting with fellow practitioners.
- It depends on the therapeutic area. In rare disease areas, social media may be more active due to the small size of the patient population and the need for connectivity may be greater. In more competitive therapeutic areas, such as hematology and rheumatology, traditional networks may be more established, reducing the need for social media.

By adopting an integrated and nuanced approach within a comprehensive insight management framework, MA can move beyond the risks and harness power of social media platforms to inform strategic decision-making and enhance customer engagement.



# DRIVING CHANGE THROUGH CROSS-COLLABORATION

Medical affairs needs to secure its place at the strategic table, ensuring its active involvement in shaping impactful business decisions alongside R&D and commercial stakeholders. However, achieving this goal requires a profound cultural shift within the organization.

Tasked with gathering expert insights through relationships with key opinion leaders (KOLs) and, increasingly, digital opinion leaders (DOLs), distributing educational content, publishing clinical trial data and more, their responsibilities are wide-ranging.

With so much on their plate, this can make it a struggle to find the time and focus needed for comprehensive strategic analysis and the interpretation of insights. Insight management and active evidence generation may be key pillars of MA but as Roche's Malo put it, "it's very complex topic that depends on many factors". It is also where he sees the biggest gap, especially in relation to the gap between the vision and execution.

What is clear is that there is a delicate balance between MA and commercial, research and patient interests. Roche Pharma' Cabello Moruno, explains: "At Roche we work with agnostic field positions. Sometimes, it could be complex to find an optimal balance between the achievement of short term commercial goals, and medical affairs long term vision.

The importance to reach those goals could make difficult to fully recognize the value of medical affairs," she says.

Astellas' Rees-Saunders is seeing growing demand for medical insights and analysis that support functions outside of MA, particularly commercial and R&D. But without dedicated resources, tools and capabilities tailored MA progress will be limited. He sees data curation tools of today as "suboptimal".

Meanwhile, there is a growing focus on patient-centricity and getting the right drug to the right partner much faster. At Roche there has been a move to flatten hierarchies. However, it is critical that all those working externally in the field - are able to capture insights effectively. Although today Roche is capturing valuable insights, such as preferences, from omnichannel information delivery, this is more commercially focused. "From a medical insights perspective, there's clear room for improvement," Malo says.

This underscores the critical need for senior leadership to allocate greater resources towards insight management within the MA. It needs a focus on innovating technology, optimizing workflows, and enhancing the skill sets of the MA workforce.

By equipping MA professionals with advanced analytical capabilities and strategic acumen, they can effectively interrogate data and translate findings into actionable strategies that drive organizational success.

**"THEY WILL HELP ACCELERATE MEDICAL AFFAIRS, BEING A GENUINE STRATEGIC PARTNER, AND DRIVING SO MUCH MORE ON AN EQUAL FOOTING."**

**Mark Rees-Saunders**

Sr Director Global FME, at Japanese multinational Astellas

### ENHANCE INSIGHT MANAGEMENT WITH RAILGUARDS

Traditional approaches are well-established in the sector, but there's a recognized problem with how different companies identify and agree on what counts as a valuable insight. To address this, there's a growing emphasis on creating detailed guidelines. The purpose of these guidelines is to create a unified understanding among team members about the nature of insights.

Railguards serve as the backbone for creating a cooperative and knowledge-sharing culture in MA. By setting clear standards and processes, team members can work towards shared goals, which promotes teamwork across different functions of the company. This unified effort makes it possible for teams to pool their collective knowledge and insights, which leads to more innovative and well-informed decisions throughout the organization.

### PRIORITIZE DEVELOPMENT OF METRICS AS INDICATORS OF IMPACT

In addition to establishing safeguards, it's crucial for MA to devise metrics that can accurately reflect their impact, whether in the short or long term. When projects involve collaboration with R&D and commercial teams, it's important to develop tailored metrics that showcase the value contributed by each function. Yet, as Cabello Moruno points out, it is still a challenge to

identify the right metrics that reflect the value of medical affairs activities. The difficulty lies in the fact that its impact depends more on qualitative than quantitative aspects. Identifying and implementing the right metrics will enable MA to demonstrate their effectiveness and continue to evolve as a vital component of the healthcare industry.

### JOIN THE THE STRATEGIC TABLE

A significant obstacle in MA is the lack of dialogue regarding insights at the executive level, which obscures the strategic value of MA. To overcome this, MA must make its voice heard in the strategic planning arena and articulate the business impact of its insights clearly.

Roche's Malo points out the discrepancy between the expected and actual level of MA's engagement in high-level strategic conversations. He reflects, "Are we living up to that expectation? Not quite yet. There's a journey ahead to elevate the team to the vision I have for them, in terms of both their operational approach and their perceived contribution to the organization." This underscores the need for MA to take an active role in strategy formulation and ensure their insights are weighed seriously by top management.

It's essential to understand that MA's ultimate aim, like other departments, goes beyond individual agendas and focuses on improving patient care. Therefore, it's crucial for all departments to work in harmony. Medical Affairs should not be considered in isolation, as the success in pharmaceuticals depends on how well all departments can integrate their efforts, collectively propelling the shared objectives forward.

### WHY KOL PLAYBOOK IS A BRIGHT SPARK IDEA

Spark Therapeutics is developing a KOL engagement guidance manual to streamline data collection processes within Medical Affairs. By clearly defining insights, as well as guidelines for analysis teams' roles and responsibilities, Kahn expects the manual to improve consistency across the organization, minimize discrepancies and maximize shared understanding of key concepts.

#### Strategies a guidance manual could define include:

- Standardized methods for recording insights in technology systems
- Clear responsibilities for individual team members
- How insights are conceptualized and identified, and established criteria for distinguishing them from observations
- Solid objectives for team members to ensure clear communication and collaboration

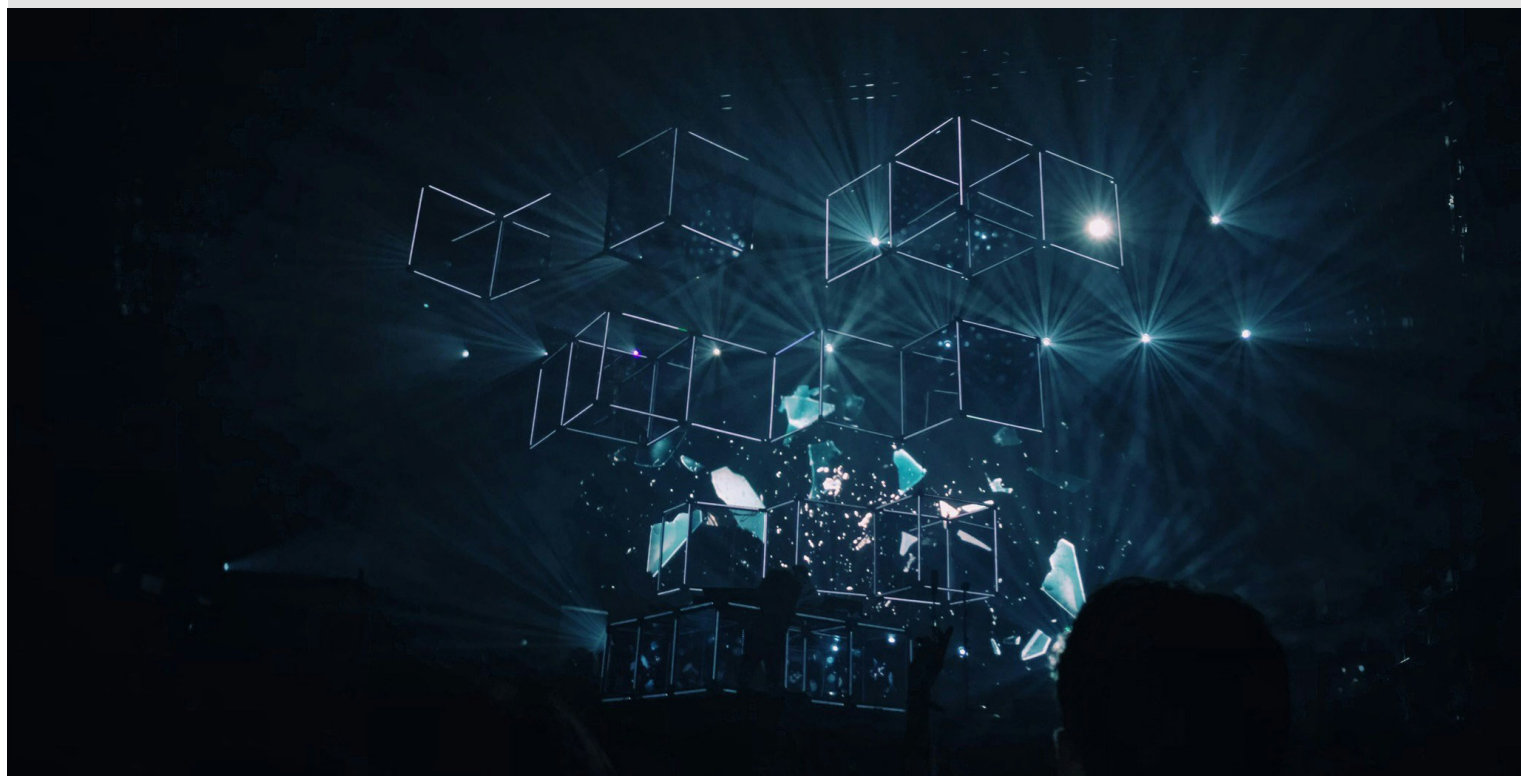
In essence, the KOL engagement guidance manual is the foundation for optimized insights. By providing clarity, structure, and guidance, it empowers teams to collect, record and use insights efficiently, ultimately enhancing the organization's ability to drive informed decision-making and strategic planning.

# CONCLUSION

To truly capitalize on the significant shifts in the pharma industry over the past several years, MA must focus on cultivating strategic influence and realizing its full potential. The key to success lies in a proactive embrace of cutting-edge technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), and an acute awareness of the changing currents within industry practices. The integration of AI into the fabric of MA operations can be transformative, offering a quantum leap in data analysis, enhancing decision-making, and optimizing the distribution of resources.

The value of a united front cannot be overstressed. As industry leaders have indicated, the power of collective effort paves the way for unprecedented growth and innovation. This calls for a dismantling of internal barriers and the promotion of synergy across MA, R&D, and commercial teams. By harmonizing diverse perspectives and drawing from a wellspring of shared knowledge, MA is poised to deliver significant contributions and adeptly maneuver through the intricacies of the healthcare sector. The adoption of AI-driven tools and collaborative platforms will only streamline this process, enabling a more dynamic exchange of ideas, insights, and evidence-based strategies.

In essence, by fostering an environment that encourages strategic foresight, technological adoption, and interdepartmental cooperation, MA is set to redefine its role as an instrumental ally in the pursuit of innovation, stakeholder satisfaction, and, most importantly, the advancement of patient care in a constantly evolving healthcare context. The journey ahead demands a holistic transformation that positions MA not just as a participant, but as a proactive architect of business strategy and a beacon of progress.





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Within3 is the world leader in life science insights management. The Within3 Insights Management Platform gathers, integrates, and analyzes insights better than any other platform on the market, reducing insight reporting from months to days and eliminating 90% of the workload. Companies use Within3 to drive strategy-impacting decisions up to 3x faster and ensure the customer's voice is heard across the enterprise. To learn more about the insights management platform or to request a demo, visit [within3.com](http://within3.com).

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