



Accelerate Launch Readiness

How to Right-size Omnichannel Capabilities
for Pharma Innovators

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Omnichannel Capabilities Are Essential for Launch Excellence



Drug launches can be a career rite of passage for many pharma marketers, complete with high stress, many unknowns, and the risks inherent in bringing a new product or indication to patients who need it. As a launch leader, many things are out of your control. However, by focusing on what you can control you mitigate the risks and uncertainties that are simply part of the process.

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Omnichannel marketing capabilities directed at HCPs and patients are one domain within a marketer's control, and can contribute significantly to launch success. With the right partner and a lean approach, you can gain effectiveness and efficiency by using existing, proven platforms while selectively customizing for your brand's unique needs. We call this our **'Build to Fit—Build to Scale—Build to Operate'** model managed by omnichannel experts and enabled by a dedicated **MarTech & Operations Hub** designed and built to ensure flawless, trackable, and accountable marketing operations.

Our experienced team can help you prioritize and integrate the right channels for your audiences; improve coordination between Marketing and Sales; onboard the appropriate technologies at the right time; right-size the level of investment to your brand objectives; and run and optimize your omnichannel campaigns targeting patients and providers. These planned, phased investments create a more agile and flexible approach to your omnichannel strategy. Asentech supports your company or brand team to systematically build omnichannel capabilities using its proven, modular, secure, and compliant methodology.

Five Key Principles to Overcome Launch Challenges...



In the world of pharma marketing, product launch is not a single point in time. It's an ongoing process that is unique to each company, and often varies for different products in the same company. Yet there are some common principles for launch planning that can help guide the process, even if this is your first launch.

1. Launch type matters.

First, it's important to be clear about the type of launch you are embarking upon. For example, scenarios may include launching your product:

- As a first-in-class treatment that may require you to deliver basic HCP and patient education about the condition, requiring more lead time and the development of disease education content
- Into a specialty in which your company has no other products, requiring your team to lay the marketing and sales foundation in a therapy area years ahead of product approval
- With a new indication or formulation, requiring precise education and promotion to change existing prescribing habits, or
- Into a new geography, perhaps months or years after the U.S. launch, and having the opportunity to tap into an existing marketing infrastructure and repurpose other markets' promotional materials.

2. Everyone has a first time.

Next, understand that all launch scenarios are complex and challenging, and that's why many pharma marketers specifically seek out launch experience to grow new skills and hone their performance under pressure. This can be particularly true for first-time launches in which a company can't look at its history to guide the launch team's actions.

In order to speed their way to **'launch competence,'** pharma and biotech companies that lack deep launch experience can leverage experienced partners like Asentech that can offer guidance and expertise based on supporting dozens of launches across a range of therapeutic categories.

3. History is not always a guide.

Third, even if your company has planned and executed previous launches, that's no guarantee that the next launch will be flawless. That's because the environment is fluid, with evolving competition, customers, medical practice, regulatory focus, and societal issues like drug pricing and affordability.

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4. Marketers cannot control everything.

Of course, pharma marketers would like to have as much control as possible over the environment into which they are launching their product, but sooner or later they come face to face with a competitor revealing positive Phase 3 data at a major medical congress, new class labeling that impacts their product's forecast, or a KOL making negative comments on social media about their clinical data. Figure 1 details some other key environmental factors that drive additional complexity and are outside the control of brand leaders.



HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Brand forecasts and other factors create management and Wall Street expectations for early sales volume and speed of market adoption, resulting in significant pressure on commercial launch teams.



RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

Depending on a brand's priority in a company's portfolio, there may be limited budget and low internal resources for launch—including Field Sales—or delays in resource availability.



REGULATORY UNCERTAINTY

Even when the PDUFA date for a product is known, FDA approval timing is not guaranteed. Additionally, product promotion must wait until the final label is received that specifies approved indications, appropriate patient types, and other information that may affect product communications to HCPs and patients.

Figure 1: Environmental factors that contribute to pharmaceutical launch complexity.

Five Key Principles to Overcome Launch Challenges...



5. Focus on the 'controllables.'

Some of the biggest levers marketers can adjust are the **operational levers** within their company's control. These factors can help reduce the risks to the overall launch plan. Examples of this are various internal omnichannel capabilities that require different lead times and investment levels to ensure launch readiness.

Some of these operational levers include:

- **Flexible Timing**

Building the foundation for a successful launch should begin earlier than many people think. Many first-time launches suffer from waiting too long to start planning due to uncertainty around the timing of FDA approvals.

These delays eat into the valuable time needed to acquire or build omnichannel capabilities, including hiring and training the internal resources and engaging the external partners required for a successful launch.

- **Phased Budget**

It is financially prudent to gate investments based on achieving milestones like reporting positive data from a pivotal clinical study or responding to competitive activities. A few years out from launch, the picture may appear blurry and spending levels can reflect this uncertainty. However, as clinical data reads out and other launch elements move into place, investment usually increases as the picture (and forecast) gets clearer.

The trick is to balance the risks and opportunities based on reliable market intelligence, but this is not easy. And sometimes the reality in pharma is that brand teams can either be caught unprepared for launch due to an accelerated FDA approval, or grossly overspent on a product that is delayed— or worse—ultimately fails to gain approval and generate revenue.

Five Key Principles to Overcome Launch Challenges



■ Right-sized Operating Model

Standing up an omnichannel marketing infrastructure for a single brand launch can be expensive, however amortizing the costs of the capability across a portfolio of brands or an entire company can drive efficiencies.

Centralizing capabilities under a MarTech & Operations Hub can also be a smart way to share learnings across brand and Sales teams so launches improve and become more efficient over time. Sharing the costs of the omnichannel infrastructure, integration of systems, specialized data and data management, development of standard operating procedures (SOPs), setting up governance structures, etc., also helps annual planning and budgeting across the company.

Channel and audience integration within a complex, omnichannel marketing capability also can benefit from a system that serves more than one product (Figure 2).

Figure 2: An company's omnichannel marketing system can efficiently support many brands and target audiences.



Key Roles Enabling Omnichannel Capabilities

All market entry initiatives rely on a combination of highly skilled internal and external resources to get the job done, from early market research to forecasting to strategic planning to testing omnichannel operations as launch approaches. A key consideration is onboarding the right talent and skills—at the right levels—at the proper time to meet launch milestones.

A good rule-of-thumb is to start designing and developing your launch infrastructure roughly 24 months before the expected FDA approval, depending on your brand's individual circumstances. Of course, hiring experienced external partners can often accelerate capability-building and provide hard-to-find skills required to enable today's complex omnichannel marketing systems and campaigns.

Let's take a look at some of the key players on the team, and their primary roles and responsibilities:

Pharma Brand Team, Functional Area Support & Launch Leadership	Agencies of Record (Creative & Paid Media AORs)	MarTech & Operations Partner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brand vision, strategy, messaging, and communications planning ▪ Marketing and Sales integration to drive the commercial engine ▪ Functional area expertise to consult with brand team about finance, market access, marketing operations, corporate communications and brand PR, and others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HCP and patient insights and positioning ▪ Brand identity ▪ Message development and testing ▪ Creative asset development and testing ▪ Channel planning, media buying, and optimization ▪ Marketing performance reporting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design technology architecture to support brand goals ▪ Align technology stack and data platforms to marketing capabilities plan ▪ Develop custom capabilities ▪ Execute tactical plans, e.g., campaign design and execution, business rules, SOPs, reporting and optimization ▪ Channel-specific expertise across the Sales and Marketing mix (Figure 3).

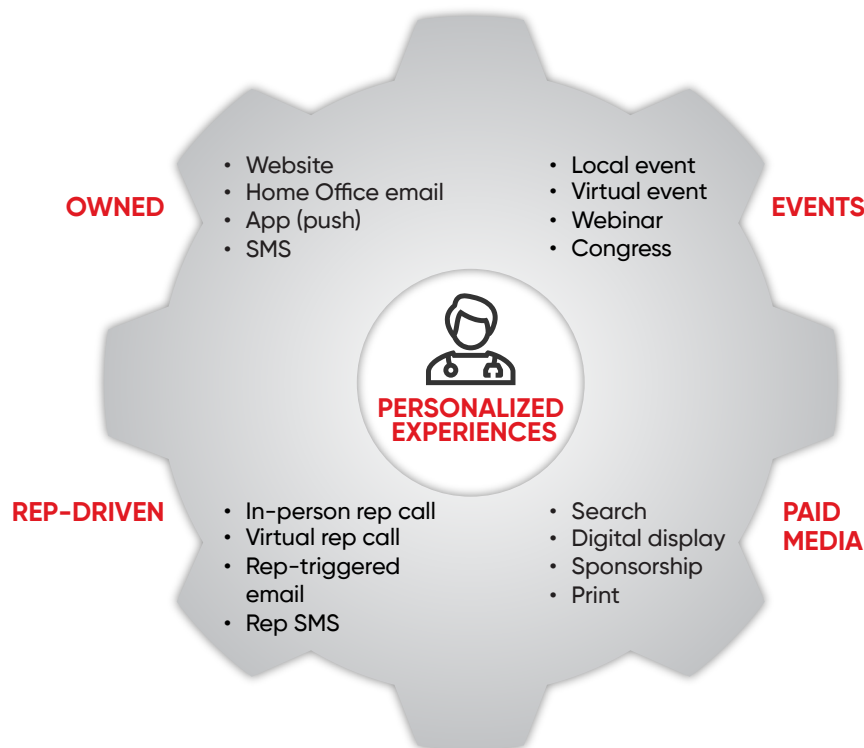


Figure 3: An experienced martech and operations partner has deep expertise in each owned channel, as well as the experts and technology to integrate them into an effective omnichannel marketing system with other channels.

An Experienced MarTech & Operations Partner Reduces Risk & Increases Speed

Managing investments in omnichannel capabilities by hiring a specialized external partner like Asentech lowers costs and risks for pharma launch leaders while accelerating their **'speed to capability.'** An experienced marketing technology and operations partner understands the sequence in which technology and platforms can and should be designed, set up, tested, and deployed.

Our experts know that lead times vary by channel to move from initial commitment to full-scale operation. Similarly, skills and levels of talent are matched to the timing to optimize spending levels based on our extensive launch experience. Overall, this approach will 'right-size' and 'right-time' investments to yield a high-performing system of omnichannel marketing capabilities.



Here are the essential components to start up, run, and scale omnichannel communications to your high-value HCP and patient audiences (Figure 4):

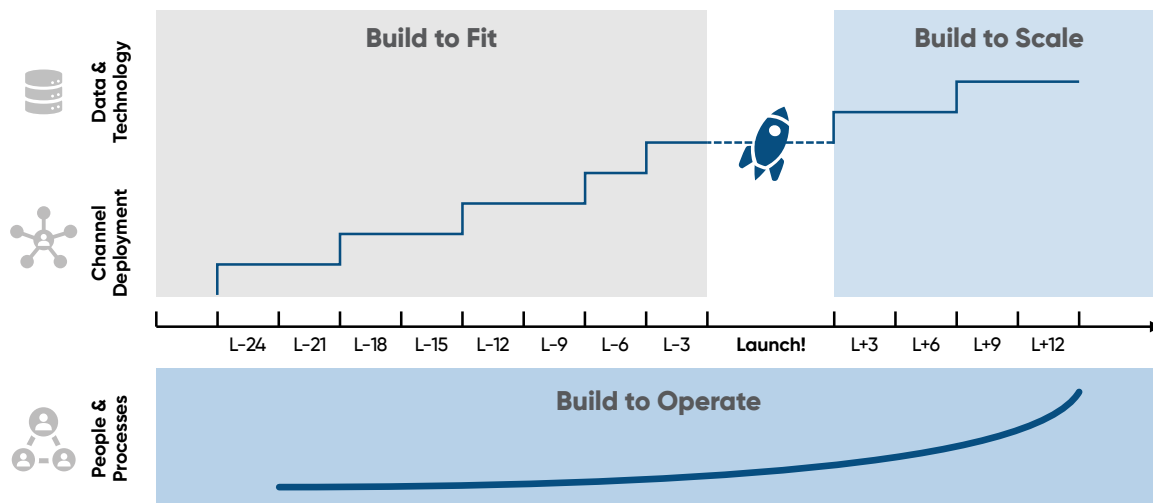


Figure 4: Asentech's proven 'Build to Fit—Build to Scale—Build to Operate' model enables a brand or company's omnichannel marketing capability to ramp up investment and channel sophistication and integration as needed over time.

1. BUILD TO FIT

ACTION:

Design a right-sized, custom omnichannel strategy and roadmap; activate priority channels enabled by tech and operations infrastructure.

BENEFITS:

- Tightly matches business requirements with spending levels, particularly for new or first-time launches
- Phases foundational investments to achieve readiness for daily operations, minimizing under- and over-investment
- Enables easier and faster development of custom capabilities.

2. BUILD TO SCALE

ACTION:

Enable in-market brands to scale up with lower risks and costs; keep options open to efficiently add new omnichannel capabilities.

BENEFITS:

- Activates new channels and more frequent campaigns on-demand
- Conserves budget for later phases or subsequent launches
- Personalizes customer experiences to drive post-launch relevance, reach and engagement.

3. BUILD TO OPERATE

ACTION:

Stand up a flexible, cost-effective MarTech and Operations Hub; manage people and processes for campaigns, analytics, and channel performance optimization.

BENEFITS:

- Single-source coordination and accountability for outbound campaigns
- Central management of tech infrastructure including Customer Data Platform (CDP) acquisition, setup, and operations
- Oversees governance structures, SOPs, best practices, and ways of working.

Improving Performance of Pharma's Email & Website Channels



Our experience shows a remarkably high level of activity and investment around a pharma company's primary owned channels: outbound emails and the Product.com website. One reason the emails and website are the 'operational core' is because HCP reach and engagement can be orchestrated in a 'closed loop' using these channels in conjunction with the Sales team. Therefore, these tend to be the highest priority for brand leadership and Asentech's MarTech & Operations Hub.



Channel Lessons: Email to Reach & Engage

- Under-investment is common due to unanticipated costs; email often requires licensing and management of 3rd-party data (and other prerequisites)
- Email can be less interesting (and less profitable) to creative agencies because it can be viewed as too operational and/or outside of their core creative skillset
- Pharma companies often select closed, proprietary platforms without understanding the total costs, risks, and issues around data ownership and portability
- Teams are often surprised by email volume ramping up exponentially as creative wears out and audience segments expand. Since email can also communicate and amplify news, new use cases such as congresses and speaker programs are drivers of email frequency and volume.



Channel Lessons: Website to Engage & Track

- Primary point of fulfillment for calls-to-action (CTAs) found in email and paid media. As an owned channel, clickthrough engagement and responses are the most trackable and measurable
- Launch teams may not prioritize or support this important asset with the right people and skills, leading to issues with response tracking and timely and accurate reporting
- Content production, versioning, and approval are often areas where more resources are needed; content management systems can require specialized skills that change over time.

Takeaways

A pharmaceutical product launch is a high profile, high risk, and often high-cost affair. Yet many aspects of launch risk and complexity can be mitigated by adopting Asentech's proven **Build to Fit—Build to Scale—Build to Operate** approach (Figure 4).

This innovative yet practical approach prioritizes channels, enables sequencing of capabilities, and engages the right talent level and skillsets to make the most of available—and often phased—budgets. As an added benefit, options to scale up in the future are kept open for little to no cost impact, increasing a brand team's ability to adapt to the changing competitive landscape.

Selecting a leading **MarTech & Operations Partner** like Asentech enables pharma brand and commercial leadership to control a major element and leading indicator of successful launches: a proven omnichannel marketing capability. A strong operational capability mitigates risks, ensuring that compliant communications and campaigns go live at the right time, to the right audiences, through the right channels, with the right messages. Partnering with Asentech ensures that pharma brand leaders and their teams can focus on what they do best, and trust that their marketing operations function is rock solid and ready for launch.

About Asentech

Asentech is at the forefront of digital transformation, partnering with life sciences brand marketers to deliver optimal customer experiences through data-driven omnichannel marketing solutions. Our proven MarTech & Operations Hub equips marketing teams with scalable commercial capabilities to accelerate launches and achieve brand objectives.

We excel in crafting robust omnichannel strategies, brought to life with our experience and expertise in channel activation and integration, advanced customer data management, tailored identity/access solutions, secure and compliant custom applications, and technology hubs for targeted campaign orchestration and data analytics.

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