



# Cloud Control

To unlock the vast business potential of the cloud, pharma must first overcome its inherent resistance to change and then commit to tearing down those silo walls. **James Chase reports**

If Henry Ford were alive today to ask pharmaceutical execs what they want, hopefully none of them would reply “faster reps.” Nevertheless, many companies continue to take a somewhat short-sighted approach to harnessing the true business potential of the latest cloud-based marketing and CRM solutions, and there’s a sense that pharma might be missing an opportunity by not fully embracing the technology.

## THE PROMISE

Cloud-based solutions can provide companies with a slew of valuable tools, including data on demand, support for real-time decisions, global scale, flexibility, personalized content, automated marketing, social-media monitoring and more. Used effectively, they have the potential to dramatically improve the customer experience—for example, by targeting only individual physicians with content that

interests them, in the manner and at the time they prefer to receive it.

“Nobody wants to be on the receiving end of a campaign,” says Craig Fiebig, VP of marketing for IMS Health Technology Solutions, which offers the Nexxus suite of cloud-based applications. “What you’re trying to do is deliver deeply personalized conversations, at global scale, to an audience of one. In some ways, it’s like a gigantic proactive spam filter on the part of the sender.”

Office visitors should benefit, too, because reps can access the healthcare professional’s recent brand interactions (downloads, seminars, meetings, etc.) and arrive with a better understanding of their informational needs. “The sales rep then becomes an adviser,” says Fiebig. “And the doctor now looks forward to their next meeting because the time wasn’t wasted. It allows you to be respectful as a rep.”

Such is the potential of cloud-based solutions that Cadient Group chief innovation officer Will Reese regards them as essential tools for managing launches in today’s integrated healthcare landscape. “I have a lot more customers to engage, I have to be smarter with content and I have to be smarter and more efficient with sales resources,” he explains. “A well-organized cloud system enables a very different commercial experience for a new product to market.”

Reese believes that while the industry has often dwelled on big data, the unique opportunity of the cloud lies in what can you do with that information. “What’s the implication on how you would change the business?” he asks.

## THE PUSH-BACK

If the arguments for adopting cloud-based solutions are so compelling, then, why are so many pharma companies failing to maximize their potential or avoiding them altogether?

One factor may be a reluctance to relinquish control of the data coupled with a perceived lack of trust in cloud security. “There’s always been that tendency within pharma to resist something like a cloud-based solution because [companies] have the desire to keep things in a centralized, controlled environment,” says Bill Drummy, founder and CEO, Heartbeat Ideas. “But it’s crazy. If banks can do it, why can’t the pharma industry?”

John Hosier, former executive director, commercial operations, Eisai, is equally perplexed. “It has been too easy for pharma to say ‘we’re different,’ ‘we need to own the data’ or ‘it’s too sensitive to let someone else manage it,’ ” he explains. “But IDNs and hospital systems certainly go to a deeper level in sensitive HIPAA-protected information and are largely in the cloud, so clearly there is a way to do it.”

Fiebig notes that security and compliance considerations are integral parts of the software design. But Drummy doesn’t need the reassurance, finding irony in the fact that an industry built on high-risk bets on molecules is otherwise so conservative.

“In the age of the Internet, not changing and not evolving are the biggest risks you can take,” he cautions. “So resistance is, I think, a little bit of a faux comfort blanket.”

But for those cloud-adopting companies unable to maximize the potential of their solutions, Fiebig has a far more robust (and empathetic) explanation: silos. “All companies, not just in pharma, are organized in a hierarchical fashion,” he says. “They think, act and behave to optimize within a silo.”

## SILOS IN THE SKY

Fiebig notes pharma companies have taken their individual silos of operation and sought to automate them. “It all sits under this rubric called multichannel marketing, and pharma thinks of that as a solu-

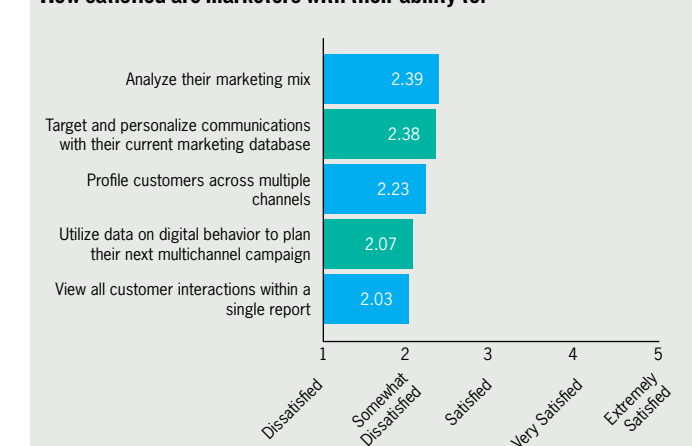
tion. But it’s not multichannel marketing. It’s ‘multisilo’ marketing.”

To demonstrate the difference, Fiebig poses the question: Do seminars matter? “For anyone in a multisilo approach, that’s a hard question to answer,” he says. “They’ll tell you, ‘Hey, last year we ran 125 seminars and we had an average of 75 people per seminar. This year we ran 175 seminars and attendance went up to 80.’ But those are just inputs, not outputs.”

Fiebig says the real question is: Seminars relative to what? “If I have a dollar, should I buy another sales rep, another seminar, another Twitter campaign or better content on my website? That’s virtually

## PHARMA DECISION MAKERS ON MULTICHANNEL PERFORMANCE SATISFACTION

How satisfied are marketers with their ability to:



Source: IMS Health, 2015 Multichannel Engagement Trends Report

impossible to answer in a multisilo approach. You can only do that if you’re knocking it out of the park on multichannel.”

Fiebig believes part of the onus for multisilo marketing resides on the shoulders of the software industry itself. “When you’re a start-up trying to raise money, the financial community will ask what the one thing is you’re going to focus on, so it almost compels you to come up with a business plan to tackle the problem in a silo.”

But Fiebig says cloud-based solutions can help reverse the trend and encourage the breakdown of silos. “We should be designing software—not just thinking about pharma but about the person it’s designed to reach,” he continues. “We have to think about the technology that’s being imposed and the impact it will have on culture. We have to break the chains of silos that bind us and let the information flow throughout the organization in a way that raises its game.”

Reese sees an emerging need for a marketing technology translator to bridge the divide between marketing and technology. “It’s a key piece to having a different type of conversation—to asking different questions,” he says. Questions like: How do we enable elegant customer service for physicians? How do we deliver a concierge-type experience for our rare-disease patient? “If you have that, and you can remove the legacy, progress can happen pretty quickly.”

Reese expects to see a handful of cloud players rise to the top in the next couple of years. “Those with deeper franchises and portfolios in particular areas will define a better experience and emerge from the pack with how they apply the technology.” ■