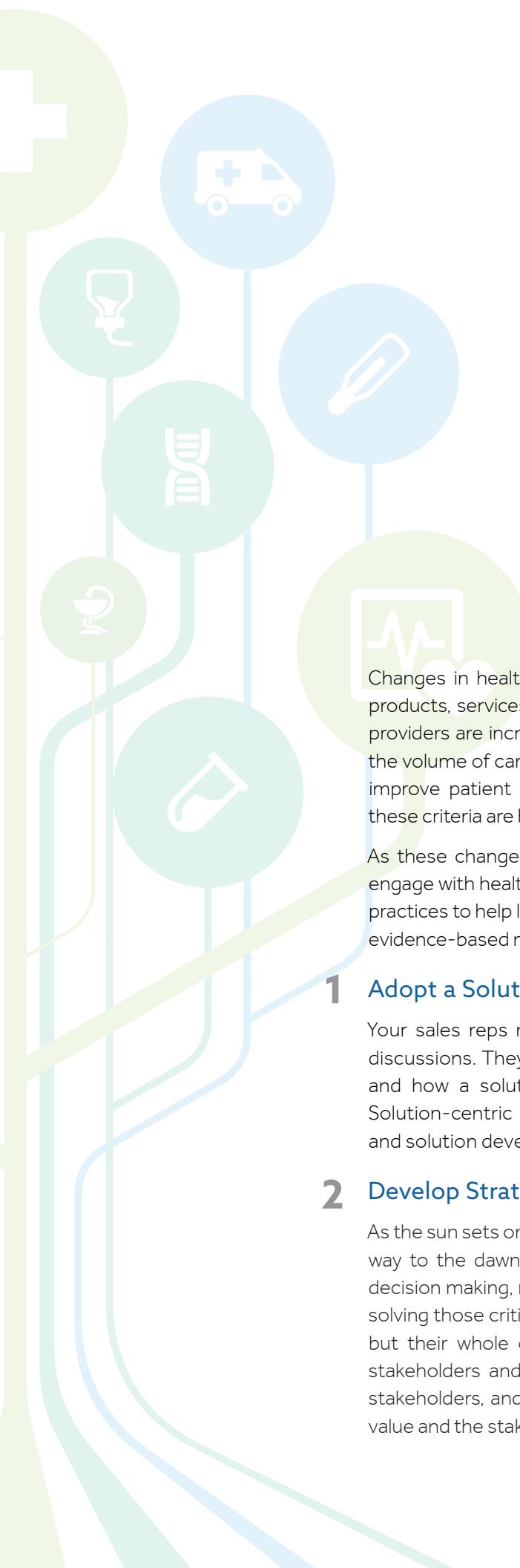


FIVE BEST PRACTICES

Sales Success in Today's Healthcare Market





Changes in healthcare policies are having a profound impact on how healthcare products, services, and solutions are being bought. Reimbursements to healthcare providers are increasingly based on the value or outcome of their care rather than the volume of care. This leads them to favor treatments that either decrease costs, improve patient outcomes, or both. Increasingly, therapeutic decisions to meet these criteria are based on evidence from well-designed and conducted research.

As these changes cascade, life sciences companies must also change how they engage with healthcare buyers in order to drive business results. Below are five best practices to help life sciences salespeople achieve greater success in this new era of evidence-based medicine.

1 Adopt a Solution-Centric Sales Approach

Your sales reps must learn to have solution-centric instead of product-centric discussions. They must understand the clinician's practice and patient population, and how a solution creates value by lowering costs or improving outcomes. Solution-centric discussions require new skills, such as discovery, collaboration, and solution development.

2 Develop Strategic Account Management Discipline

As the sun sets on the era of independent physicians with great autonomy, and gives way to the dawning of widespread physician employment and multi-stakeholder decision making, representatives must develop a new skill set. They must focus on solving those critical practice issues that may impact not just an individual physician but their whole organization. Selling strategically requires sales reps to identify stakeholders and their critical business/practice issues, gain access to the right stakeholders, and create a vision of a solution by establishing links between brand value and the stakeholders' critical business/practice issues.

3 Develop Your Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) Skills and Vocabulary

Understand and leverage the principles of evidence-based medicine and know how to speak the language. Many of today's regulatory changes are focused on the use of EBM to ensure that treatments are based on the best available evidence. Additionally, regulators now require medical schools to teach five levels of competency in EBM. This approach is influencing physicians' perception of your sales reps. Research shows that EBM holds the strongest customer buying influence, and over 90 percent of physicians want reps to make more use of clinical studies and EBM in their conversations. Thus, representatives must know how to critically appraise clinical data the way that physicians are taught to do and how to use that information to establish the validity, statistical significance, and clinical relevance of the data.

4 Speak Both Clinical and Business Language Fluently

Representatives must not only have the ability to speak the language of evidence-based medicine that physicians are expecting, but they must also have the skill to address the objectives and concerns of key stakeholders. In the morning, a rep might be speaking about clinical data with the physician representative on the Value Analysis committee of an accountable care organization (ACO). In the afternoon, he or she may be speaking with a finance executive who is interested in patient outcomes and the impact it will have on the bottom line.

5 Advocate For Your Customer

Your reps may not have all the answers that they need at their fingertips, and will need to access subject matter experts in your organization. They should think of themselves as the quarterback while looking for those solutions for the individual physician or healthcare organization. They must learn to pull from all resources in your company, and at times, across the industry. Healthcare organizations and individuals expect you to provide information that will help them solve critical issues or practice issues. Rally the right expertise and resources.

Conclusion

The one constant in life is change, and massive change is rocking the healthcare industry worldwide. Respond to change and you will reap the rewards. Ignore change, and you will certainly face some less than desirable consequences.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Brad Ansley Directs the Life Sciences division at SPI. His current responsibilities include the development and marketing of Evidence-Based Selling. Mr. Ansley's career spans over two decades in the Life Sciences industry as a microbiologist, pharmaceutical sales and marketing leader, sales training consultant, and international facilitator. Mr. Ansley frequently speaks at industry conferences and is also an international facilitator of sales training programs.

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SPI offers the industry's only comprehensive Sales Performance Optimization Platform, comprised of three integrated components; talent assessment and analytics, continual learning and development, and sales enablement technologies. Our extensive sales performance expertise, deep industry knowledge, and global resources, uniquely position SPI as the go-to firm for organizations that need to adapt and transform how they sell in a disruptive and increasingly competitive world. Founded in 1988, SPI has assisted more than 1,200,000 sales and management professionals, in more than 50 countries, and 14 languages, achieve higher levels of performance.



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