



How on-demand talent bolsters biotech business planning

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From reimbursement uncertainty to engaging with key stakeholders, biopharma faces challenges in the current commercial landscape and when planning for the future. These challenges, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic, affect both emerging biotechs and large corporations. SmartBrief

spoke recently with Laura Weinstein, president of B2P Consulting, about how companies can tap on-demand talent to meet these challenges and bolster their business strategies going forward.

What are some of the most urgent challenges in biopharma commercialization and planning?

There has always been uncertainty in drug development in terms of whether a therapy or diagnostic will eventually make it to market. Layered on top of that are multifaceted

commercial challenges, including effective stakeholder engagement and successful reimbursement. The COVID-19 pandemic has only added more uncertainties to this mix.

Meanwhile, companies that have already seen commercial success need to think about how some of their promotional efforts might shift or change in a post-COVID world. The reimbursement and patient landscapes are changing. Companies need to adapt their commercial strategies and deploy different approaches to meet the moment. Finally, all companies — both startups and established companies — should incorporate commercial thinking into earlier-stage planning.

These challenges can be hard to address amid the demand for life sciences talent and digital transformations seen in today's biotech industry.¹ As a result, more companies are turning to independent talent to augment their expertise and staff quickly and on an as-needed basis.

What do you see as the future of biopharma marketing and the evolution in commercialization?

Reaching and engaging stakeholders systematically and continuously as a two-way dialogue will continue to be a trend. We have already seen greater frequency of touch points and omnichannel communications, and these will increase in ever more sophisticated ways with the use of data analytics and specific targeting, allowing more personalized outreach.

My expertise is in precision medicine, oncology and rare diseases, and in those highly specialized areas I expect to see an even greater shift to omnichannel engagement and personalized stakeholder engagement. We will be able to provide more customized data and resources to stakeholders, so they are armed with actionable information to make important decisions.

One development that came out of the pandemic is the ability to adapt and shift promotional efforts quickly, and this will continue to serve biopharma commercialization and marketing well into the future. In addition, we will continue to see an evolution in the intersection of biopharma, policymakers and regulators. These have always been intertwined, particularly in precision oncology and rare diseases, and the current moment provides an opportunity for biopharma to take the lead in bringing these entities together through holistic commercialization planning.

The pandemic has also accelerated the shift toward on-demand talent, which can help firms increase flexibility and innovation, provide access to a wider skill set and reduce time to market.¹ In fact, 90% of corporate leaders surveyed by the Harvard Business Review and Boston Consulting Group believe independent talent will be core to their ability to compete in the future.¹

Why is flexibility in scaling and commercialization so important, and how can companies achieve it?

Given the uncertainty in drug development and the highly competitive landscape, companies often don't have the internal resources to hire teams so that they can scale quickly in the lead-up to product launches or pivot quickly as competitive landscapes change.

For biotech firms gearing up toward a product launch or growing post-launch, being able to augment their internal skills and competencies with someone who can quickly pick up the ball and run with it can make the difference for teams in achieving their objectives.

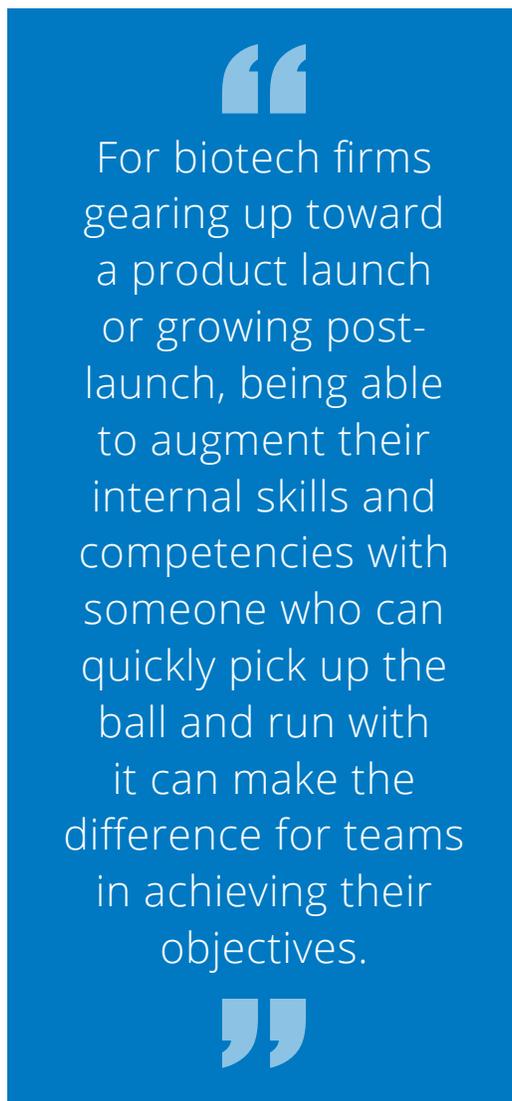
It's also never too early to think about commercialization, and companies can benefit from commercial perspectives in clinical trial design and other early stage decision-making. While it may be premature to hire full-time commercial teams for those skills, companies can still benefit if they draw from independent talent.

What are some of the areas where biopharma firms benefit most from independent talent?

In early to midstage planning, small pre-revenue clinical-stage companies can draw on commercialization experience early in drug development. Independent, flexible talent can bring the necessary commercial experience and input without the resource

commitment of a full-time hire. This early input can include identifying clinical trial design implications, market access implications, and crafting brand strategy, such as shaping the voice of the brand early and identifying ways to engage with the relevant patient community.

Much of my consulting work is with small companies leading up to launches, often inaugural product launches. We can help craft commercialization road maps and help think through brand strategy, such as creating a strategic marketing plan with multifaceted, high-value engagement opportunities.



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And for a large global company looking to refresh, independent talent can provide an outside perspective to help review, revise and refresh strategic, operational or business plans to achieve brand goals.

We are seeing a growing shift toward freelance talent, and companies understand that this can help augment employees, prevent burnout and increase flexibility.²

REFERENCES

1. Fuller, J. et al. Rethinking the on-demand workforce. Harvard Business Review. November-December 2020.

Being able to draw from on-demand talent, pull in complementary competencies and augment existing team structures quickly helps companies reach their commercial goals and objectives more easily than with standard hiring costs and timelines. Ultimately, this will allow them to bring innovative treatments to market successfully, allowing patients to benefit from receiving these life-changing and life-saving medicines. ■

2. Gelles, D. How freelancing is changing work. The New York Times. Aug. 13, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/13/business/hayden-brown-upwork-corner-office.html>

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Laura Weinstein, President, B2P Consulting

Armed with an entrepreneurial spirit and a roll-up-her-sleeves approach to problem solving, Laura built her career across a breadth of roles and responsibilities, all of which required diligent strategic planning, deep understanding of the market landscape and key stakeholders, and cohesive collaboration for excellent execution. She brings deep experience working within complex matrix environments, building bridges among multiple disciplines and cultures, and establishing collaborations among diverse stakeholders to drive actionable consensus.

Laura worked as a management consultant to life sciences clients as well as to hospitals and healthcare systems, advising on a range of strategic, operational, and financial issues. She spent the majority of her career in a range of global marketing and market access roles of increasing responsibility for biotech and diagnostics companies, including Genzyme Corporation (now Sanofi Genzyme), Foundation Medicine, and bluebird bio. She began her career in public health consulting at John Snow, Inc. and as part of a public health research team at Boston Medical Center.

Laura also serves as a business coach to aspiring women entrepreneurs through the [Boston Women Innovating Now \(WIN\) Lab](#).

Laura has a BA cum laude from Tufts University and an MBA cum laude from Babson College Olin Graduate School of Business.

ABOUT B2P CONSULTING

B2P Consulting is a strategic management & marketing consultancy. With a patient-centered focus in rare diseases, oncology, precision medicine and areas with high unmet need, we work with companies spanning a variety of disease areas, therapeutics, diagnostics, and geographies. At B2P, we are passionate about helping organizations from emerging biotechs to large corporations craft sustainable commercialization strategies that bring innovations to the people who matter most—the patients who need them most.

At B2P, we employ a flexible approach that is customized to fit your needs. We offer consulting services and products across the development life cycle from commercial input into early-stage programs to pre-launch and launch planning to post-launch growth and expansion planning. We provide ongoing support for short-handed marketing teams, strategic alliance management and commercial due diligence efforts.

We are enthusiastic problem-solvers who deliver compassionate insight into target audiences through a deep and empathetic knowledge of key stakeholders, coupled with an inherent understanding of your organization and its products/services. We do this as part of your team, delivering with a sense of urgency, purpose and passion.

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