

Pre-launch checklist: what to look for in a commercialization partner

Nine questions to ask yourself and your commercialization partner about your pre-launch needs

The pre-launch phase of the drug commercialization journey is a mission-critical time that weighs heavily on product and patient outcomes. Manufacturers invest in and align on the building blocks of a successful therapeutic debut during this pre-market period – developing the unique value proposition, defining distribution channel strategy, and designing patient support services.

Finding the right integrated commercialization solutions partner can help position your product for success. The right partner will help you simplify the extremely complex pre-launch process. That partner will help you answer the tough questions as you navigate market access, distribution decisions, and patient services. Simply put, they'll check all the right boxes.

Position yourself for optimal market access – and start your search for a commercialization partner – by asking these questions.

01 What can I do to address evidence gaps?

Even after preclinical and clinical phases, knowledge gaps can persist – particularly within specialty medication trials. Look for partners who recommend practical solutions, such as real-world evidence studies, to fill in what's missing.

02 How can I apply HEOR to deliver a compelling value story?

Health economic outcomes research (HEOR) studies can help showcase a drug's full economic value and convince payers of its potential impact. If a partner doesn't apply HEOR insights to demonstrate a therapy's worth, it might be time to find someone who does.

03 How can I gain internal consensus on my product's value message?

As teams become more remote, it can be challenging to get pre-market feedback from internal stakeholders. The right partner will help take on that burden. In particular, look for someone with technology that solicits and streamlines internal feedback.

04 What are my business process and order infrastructure needs?

Not all manufacturers can or want to build out their own business processes and logistics infrastructure. Knowing this, effective commercialization partners provide outsourced solutions in storage, staffing, customer service, payment processing, and more so that logistics becomes a scalable and predictable expense.

05 Can I get more visibility into the ordering process?

Just because manufacturers don't handle orders directly doesn't mean they shouldn't have insight into them. Look for a partner who offers web-enabled reporting tools that make orders viewable in real-time to stay informed on changes in inventory, distribution, and finances.

06 How can I give payers information where and when they need it?

Getting payers on board with formulary considerations takes a nuanced approach, and hard-copy dossiers just don't cut it anymore. An effective partner's web-based platforms encourage collaborative exchange between manufacturers and payers.

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07 How can I help provider offices overcome reimbursement and access hurdles?

Even with a strong value proposition and formulary placement, drugs can't succeed if doctors don't know how to prescribe them or how they'll get reimbursed. Commercialization partners who offer field reimbursement and access services can fill those education gaps with reimbursement, prior authorizations, and claims support.

08 What can I do to break down access, adherence, and affordability barriers better than anyone else?

Ensuring that patients get and stay on therapy with as few obstacles as possible requires a human touch, along with technology. The right partner balances both for the sake of medication adherence – from staffing up with social workers and nurses to investing in machine learning tools that verify benefits and predict adherence risk in time to intervene.

09 How can I make sure my product is available wherever patients present for care?

Manufacturers benefit from a partner with a distribution network and provider reach that ensures product is available wherever patients choose to receive care – whether that's a health system, community practice, specialty or retail pharmacy. Consider the size and range of the partner's distribution network, and ask about their alignment with major GPOs.

Even more to look for

More overarching factors matter, too, even beyond the pre-launch phase. Look for a few "big picture" characteristics in a commercialization partner too:

- **They put patients first, always.** This is table stakes. But just saying the words doesn't mean it's true. Look for tangible actions the partner makes, like investing in personnel and technology that meaningfully improve the patient experience.
- **They're more than an aggregator of disparate services.** Look for a partner with a truly integrated suite of commercialization solutions, instead of just someone who cobbles together disparate offerings.
- **They're constantly seeking solutions for today's healthcare challenges.** Healthcare today is fraught with complexity, so find someone who can prove that they're always on the hunt for solutions that work in real life. Asking how they've managed previous challenges can help tease out their appetite for troubleshooting.
- **They make actionable investments.** Look for a partner willing to invest where gaps exist, from healthcare policy to technology.
- **They combine global reach with local know-how.** The best partners demonstrate international reach along with local expertise. Large brands with localized field teams bring that balance to life.

We know it's not as simple as it looks. Connect with us today to learn more about how AmerisourceBergen's product life cycle solutions are designed to deliver success.

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