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FOR LIFE SCIENCES AND MEDICAL DEVICE FIELD TEAMS

Challenges of selling in life sciences and medical device

Reps get less time with fewer HCPs, and every minute is regulated. This guide breaks down the four challenges field teams face today, what each one means for sales, marketing and leadership, and what the teams that handle them well do differently.

45%

of US HCPs were accessible to biopharma reps in 2024, down from 60% in 2023[1]

~80%

of pharma-approved content is never shared by reps[3]

74%

of pharma and med device professionals say some of their field force uses unapproved content[4]

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WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The pressures are familiar. The pace is new.

Meetings are short, competitors sit in the same waiting room, and every claim has to match the label. What has changed is how fast each pressure has grown.

Fewer HCPs see reps at all, and the ones who do see fewer companies. Buyers arrive with answers from search and AI tools, and want a rep to confirm what they found.[6] Marketing produces more approved content than ever, and most of it never reaches a customer.[3]

These challenges reach marketing, which builds the content, and leadership, which decides where to invest. The sooner all three work from the same content and the same data, the sooner reps are set up to succeed.

> "Sales enablement is a strategic, ongoing process that equips all client-facing employees with the ability to consistently and systematically have a valuable conversation with the right set of customer stakeholders."
>
> Forrester definition of sales enablement

THE FOUR CHALLENGES

1

Less access, less time

Fewer HCPs see reps, and meetings are shorter. Every second spent searching is lost.

2

Competing for attention

HCPs see a handful of companies, and arrive informed by AI. The rep has to earn the next meeting.

3

Compliance in the field

Claims change and approvals expire. Copies in inboxes don't.

4

Too many tools

Separate apps to present, train and fill in forms push reps back to the old PDF.

How to use this guide

Pages 3 and 4 cover each challenge and what it means for sales, marketing and leadership. Page 5 is a checklist: tick what is true for your team today to see which challenge is costing you most. The online version at vablet.com scores it for you.

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1 Less access, less time

Access to HCPs keeps shrinking. Veeva Pulse data shows US HCP access fell from 60% to 45% between 2023 and 2024.[1] For biopharmas with access, in-person meetings per HCP fell 7% in a year.[2]

Medical device reps support cases in ORs, cath labs and hospital corridors, where the procedure sets the schedule and the signal is often weak or missing. A rep who spends the meeting searching a shared folder or waiting for a download has lost it.

60→45%

US HCP access, 2023 to 2024[1]

SALES

Find the right asset in seconds and present it with or without a connection.

MARKETING

Build content for short meetings, and know which pieces reps actually show.

LEADERSHIP

See how field time is spent, so coverage decisions rest on data.

> **What good looks like:** the full approved library is on the rep's device before the meeting, organized by situation, and it opens with zero Wi-Fi.

2 Competing for attention

Half of accessible HCPs limit their engagement to three or fewer companies.[1] Being one of them is the competition. Buyers also arrive informed: 45% used generative AI during a recent purchase, and 69% prefer to validate what AI told them with a sales rep.[6]

Approved content helps reps win that moment. Field teams that used marketing content saw 2.5 times more new patient starts, and reps who shared content were 20% more likely to get a follow-up meeting. Yet marketing content appeared in only 48% of meetings.[3] Short videos, animations and interactive tools let a rep show a mechanism instead of describing it.

2.5x

more new patient starts when reps used marketing content in visits[3]

SALES

Stand apart from the last rep, and explain the product clearly in a short window.

MARKETING

Create content that stands out, deliver it where rich media plays, and get real field feedback.

LEADERSHIP

Define which presentation metrics matter, and decide with evidence, not anecdotes.

> **What good looks like:** reps carry rich media that plays offline on any device, and marketing sees which pieces earn follow-up meetings.

3 Compliance follows content into the field

Claims change, approvals expire and safety information gets updated. The copy in a rep's inbox or download folder doesn't update itself. In a survey of 192 biopharma and medical device professionals, 74% believed some of their field force uses unapproved content. Of those who had seen it, 93% reported a direct negative impact.[4]

Reps can't control whether a file is still approved on the day of a meeting. They can control whether they present accurately, and they need content that leaves little room for error. Compliance can't cost engagement either: plain, standardized content may avoid a warning letter, but it won't help a rep stand out.

93%

saw a direct negative impact when reps used unapproved content[4]

SALES

Present products accurately, and use each asset the way it was approved.

MARKETING

Balance branding and compliance, update or withdraw content fast, remove gray areas.

LEADERSHIP

See what is presented, and by whom, before an issue becomes a finding.

What good looks like: marketing schedules release and expiry dates once, expired assets leave every device automatically, even offline, and every view is logged.

4 Too many tools

Reps open one app to present, another to complete training and a third to fill in forms. Each extra login is another reason to fall back on the old PDF in their inbox.

Gartner found that 50% of B2B sellers feel overwhelmed by the amount of technology their job requires, and that overwhelmed sellers are 45% less likely to attain quota.[5]

45%

less likely to attain quota when sellers feel overwhelmed[5]

SALES

Fewer apps to learn and fewer places to look before a meeting.

MARKETING

One channel to publish content, training and forms, with one set of usage data.

LEADERSHIP

One view of field activity instead of three partial ones.

What good looks like: one app for presenting, training and forms.

THE CHALLENGES BY ROLE

CHALLENGE	SALES	MARKETING	LEADERSHIP
1 Access	Getting to content fast; presenting with no signal	Building for short meetings; knowing what gets shown	Seeing how field time is spent
2 Attention	Standing out; explaining clearly	Content that stands out; field feedback	Defining presentation metrics
3 Compliance	Presenting accurately; using content as intended	Updating and withdrawing content fast	Monitoring what is presented
4 Tools	One place to look	One channel to publish	One view of field activity

SELF-CHECK

Where does your team feel it most?

Tick each statement that is true for your team today. Then count the ticks for each challenge.

SALES	
☐ Reps lose meeting time looking for the right file.	1 ACCESS
☐ Reps can't present when there is no Wi-Fi or cell signal.	1 ACCESS
☐ Reps show the same flat deck as every competitor.	2 ATTENTION
☐ Reps can't play video or interactive content on their device.	2 ATTENTION
☐ Reps sometimes use slides they built or saved themselves.	3 COMPLIANCE
☐ Reps aren't sure the file they have is the current approved version.	3 COMPLIANCE
☐ Reps use separate apps to present, train and complete forms.	4 TOOLS

MARKETING	
☐ We don't know which assets reps open in meetings.	1 ACCESS
☐ Most content we produce is never shown to a customer.	2 ATTENTION
☐ Field feedback on content is anecdotal.	2 ATTENTION
☐ Pulling an expired asset means emailing reps and hoping they delete it.	3 COMPLIANCE
☐ Old versions still circulate in inboxes and download folders.	3 COMPLIANCE
☐ We publish content, training and forms through different systems.	4 TOOLS

LEADERSHIP	
☐ We can't see how reps spend their selling time.	1 ACCESS
☐ We can't tie content to follow-up meetings or results.	2 ATTENTION
☐ We have no audit trail of what reps present.	3 COMPLIANCE
☐ We pay for several field tools that overlap.	4 TOOLS

1 Access
Put the approved library on every device, ready offline.

_____

2 Attention
Add rich media and track which pieces earn follow-ups.

_____

3 Compliance
Use approval windows and automatic expiry.

_____

4 Tools
Consolidate presenting, training and forms.

_____

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CHALLENGE BREEDS OPPORTUNITY

What teams that handle this well do differently

1 **They put approved content on the device before the meeting**
Reps open the right asset in seconds, in a hospital basement or an OR corridor, with no connection.

2 **They set approval rules once and let expiry run automatically**
When an approval window closes, the asset leaves every device, including ones that are offline. Nobody chases reps to delete files.

3 **They measure what gets presented, not what gets downloaded**
Views, time on page and shares by rep and account show what works in front of HCPs.

4 **They feed field data back to marketing**
The next asset is built on what earned follow-up meetings, not on guesswork.

5 **They give reps one tool for presenting, training and forms**
Fewer logins, one place to look, and one set of data for leadership.

CREATE WITH AI, DELIVER ONLY WHAT'S APPROVED

STEP 1
Create
Marketing drafts decks, visual aids and training with any AI tool.

STEP 2
Review and approve
Content clears medical, legal and regulatory review.

STEP 3
Publish with rules
Approval window, audience and device rules are set once.

STEP 4
Present and measure
Reps present the approved version, online or offline. Every view is logged.

Nothing a rep presents should be generated on the fly. AI belongs in creation, before review, and the field gets only the approved version.

QUESTIONS TEAMS ASK

Why is HCP access to pharma reps declining?
HCPs are limiting how many companies they meet. Half of accessible HCPs engage with three or fewer companies, and in-person meetings per HCP fell 7% in a year for biopharmas with access.[1,2]

How do medical device reps present where there is no Wi-Fi?
The approved library has to be on the device before the meeting, with video and interactive content that plays offline and usage data that syncs when the device reconnects.

How do companies stop reps from using unapproved content?
By making the approved version the easiest one to use: one library, approval windows that expire content on every device, and an audit trail of every view.

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WHY VABLET

One app for presenting, training and forms

Reps already juggle too many tools. vablet gives them one, and gives marketing the controls a regulated team needs. Named a Hot Vendor in Sales Enablement by Aragon Research (2017).

- Approved content, training and tools in one secure library, controlled by marketing. Content is encrypted on the device.
- Release and expiry dates, audiences and device rules set once. Expired assets removed automatically, even offline.
- iPad, iPhone, Android, Windows and any web browser, with full offline access.
- Video, animation and HTML5 apps, plus video embedded inside PDFs with tap-to-play.
- Every view logged, with engagement tracked to the second. Usage syncs when the device reconnects.
- Push content with notifications. Revoke access, clear content remotely, limit emailing or opening in other apps.
- vablet Capture forms work offline. Training completed in vablet gives each rep the content that goes with it.
- Salesforce, SAP C4C, Power BI, Google Drive and single sign-on. Microsoft Entra groups decide who gets which content, synced through vabletSync.
- SOC 2 attested, ISO 27001 certified, GDPR and HIPAA compliant, with audit trails.
- AI never generates or changes approved content in vablet, so nothing a rep presents is created on the fly. The AI meeting assistant is optional, and your admin turns it on or off.
- Nothing for the HCP to install. Content and usage data exported on request, at no charge.

2010
vablet launched

60+
countries in use

50+
life sciences teams

0
Wi-Fi needed to present

See your approved library on every rep's device

Deployment can take as little as a day, with simple per-active-rep pricing.

Book a demo

Sources

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