



# PHARMA'S NEW CONSUMER-GRADE IMPERATIVE.

**BLUF:** The next chapter of commercial leadership in pharma and life sciences will not be defined by science alone. It will be claimed by enterprises that deliver experiences worthy of their science, embedding excellence and an elevated consumer-grade standard into how value is designed, delivered, and lived across every interaction.

By Wayne Simmons



# Forward.

**Pharma and life sciences is an industry defined by really large numbers.** Large patient populations. Vast networks of healthcare professionals spanning countless specialties. Broad and increasingly complex portfolios of therapies. Global sales and medical organizations operating at extraordinary scale. Layered on top of this is an expanding mix of personal, digital, and non-personal channels, all governed by diverse regulatory regimes that shape not only what can be communicated, but how, when, and by whom engagement occurs.

When these forces are multiplied across a global ecosystem of pharma companies of every size and shape, what emerges is an interaction dense operating environment where every exchange carries significant weight, not only commercially but clinically and emotionally, because each interaction influences prescribing decisions and care delivery with real human consequences.

**It's also an industry of vast, untapped opportunity.** From inside large pharma commercial organizations, what becomes clear is that this interaction density represents complexity, but also an untapped opportunity. Every interaction is a chance to support patients in need. A chance to reduce friction and excess effort in the daily lives of time-constrained healthcare professionals and their teams. A chance to bring clarity to increasingly complex decisions, and demonstrate empathy in a global healthcare system under growing strain and scrutiny.

**A moth to the flame?** It was this scale and complexity that drew me into pharma from the outside. Across my professional network in consumer industries such as retail, financial services, and hospitality, I kept hearing the same phrase: *"pharma was the last frontier of customer experience."* This was not because the industry lacked intent or ability, but because *experience* as a discipline did not fit neatly within pharma's uniquely demanding regulatory, clinical, and operational realities, or its complex customer ecosystem, in the way it had in other industries.

After five years in the commercial trenches of this truly global industry, that view has only sharpened. It became clear that approaches borrowed from other sectors could not effectively be imported wholesale into pharma. What is needed was a fresh approach that integrated organically into commercial models and enterprise success formulas, designed specifically for the industry's regulatory, clinical, cultural, and operational realities.

As the launch platform for my next career chapter, this playbook is written from that perspective. It reflects an outsider's view, tempered by insider experience, and grounded in work alongside commercial, medical, and business leaders navigating real world constraints. It is offered with humility and a healthy respect for where the pharma commercial model has been. Most importantly, it is offered with the conviction that the future of pharma will be defined not only by the science it creates, but increasingly by whether the experiences it delivers are worthy of it.



Wayne Simmons | Your Customer Excellence Partner.

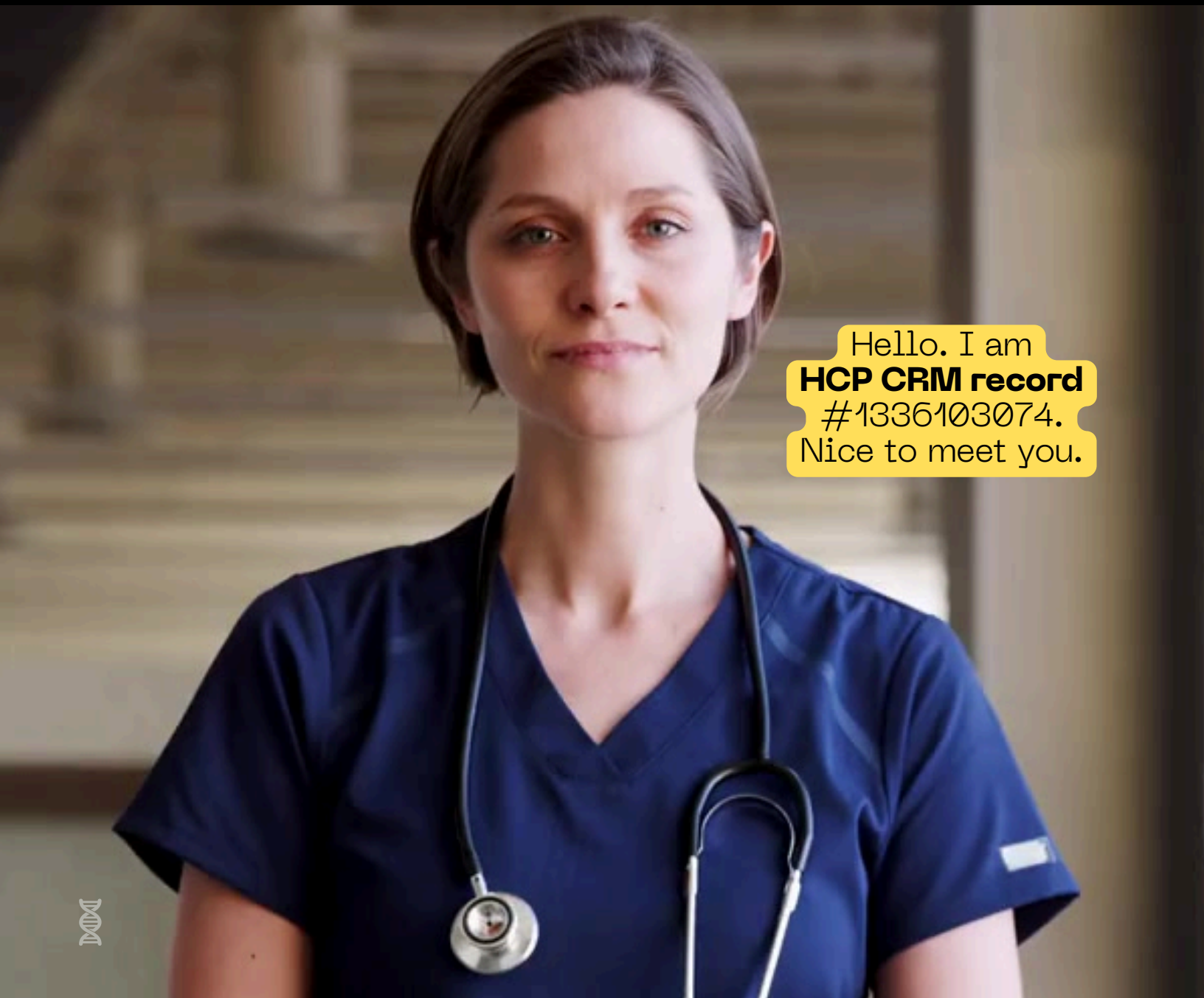


# Dear Pharma,

So, you think you know me?

Yes, I'm a proud healthcare professional...but I am also a consumer in my "Other Life." I no longer separate my professional expectations from my personal ones. The experiences I have with Amazon, Emirates, The Ritz-Carlton, and others has set the bar for what "good" feels like *everywhere* for me. I don't simply *like* these experiences. I trust them. I depend on them.

My message to you is simple: *I bring those same expectations and that same standard into every interaction I have with you. No more free passes.*



Hello. I am  
**HCP CRM record**  
#1336103074.  
Nice to meet you.



# Introduction.

## Redefining Scientific Value Through Her Consumer Lens.

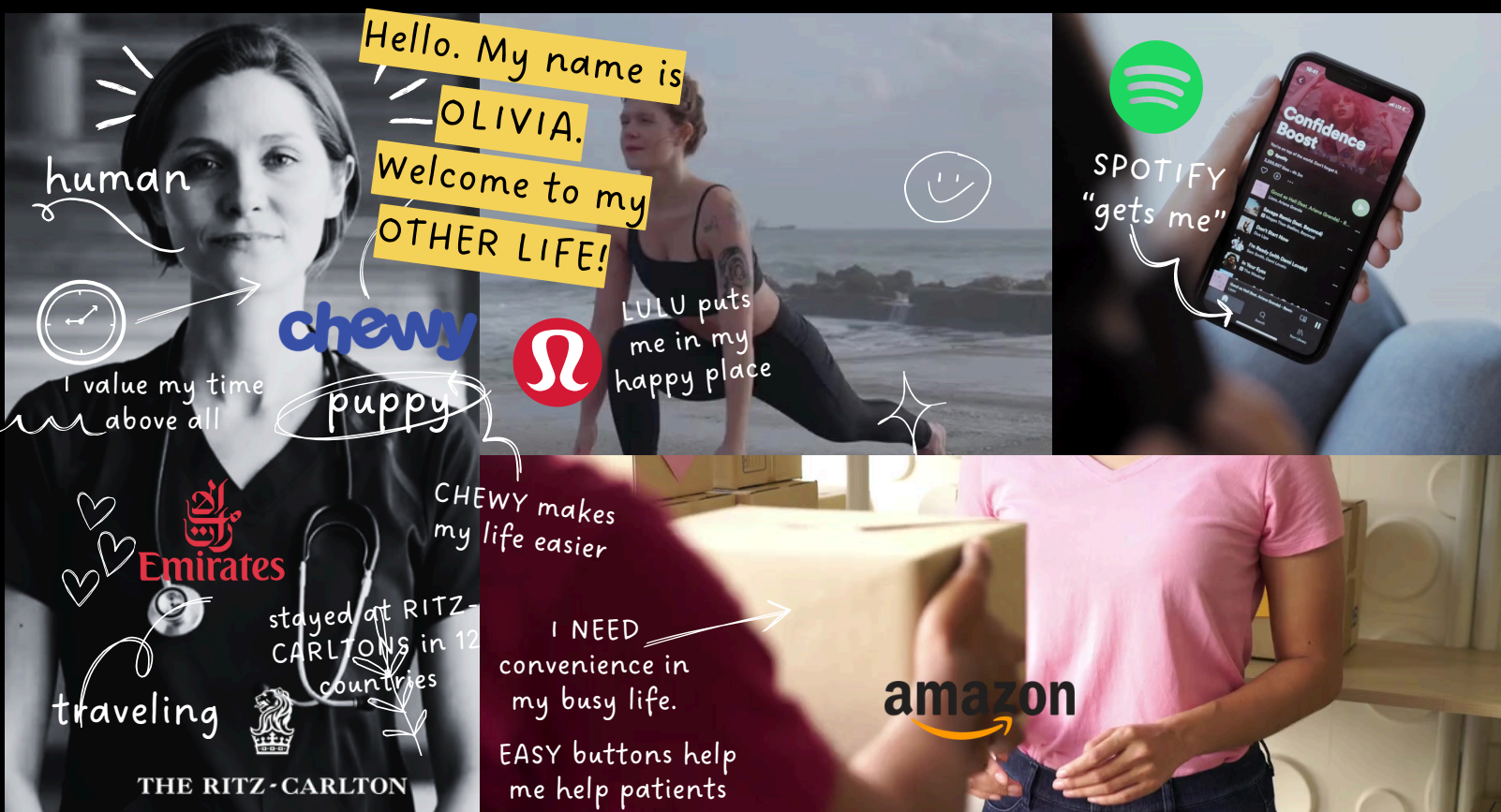
The standard of interaction and engagement for our healthcare professional is no longer set by traditional pharma players or even by other healthcare organizations. It is set by the world she lives in. A world that knows her. Every experience she encounters in this “Other Life” reinforces what good feels like. Ease. Anticipation. Coherence. These are no longer exceptions. They are expectations. When pharma interactions fall short, they feel increasingly out of step with the rest of her life.

This should not surprise pharma and life sciences leaders. The industry already operates under some of the most demanding standards in the global economy. Across its sectors and sub sectors, pharma has institutionalized three defining disciplines. The **evidentiary standard** that governs scientific rigor. The **precision standard** that governs manufacturing excellence. The **trust standard** that governs corporate and brand reputation. These standards are non negotiable. They are deeply embedded into how decisions are made, how risk is managed, and how value is protected.

Crucially, a **fourth standard** has now emerged. The **experiential standard** that governs how pharma companies, brands, and science show up in the real world.

What has changed is not the healthcare professional, but her point of comparison. Her expectations now travel seamlessly across personal and professional contexts. The consumer experiences that shape daily life now shape how scientific value is interpreted, how access is navigated, and how care is ultimately lived.

## This is the new HCP Customer Context.



# The New HCP Customer Context is central to the dynamics of pharma and life sciences.

The new customer context is the lens through which clinical intent becomes human impact and commercial realization. Specifically, experience increasingly shapes how HCPs make sense of scientific value, how confident they feel acting on it, and whether prescribing intent ultimately translates into real-world care.

**Experience has become the throughline between intent, impact, and realization because it is the lived expression of that context.** Organizations that lead will treat experience as one of the three foundational elements of the enterprise value proposition, alongside product and brand, while recognizing it as the mechanism for care delivery and how their value is actually realized. Not as an initiative, but as infrastructure. Not as an add-on, but as a governing belief.

This is not a trend or a passing phase. The age of *Experiential Commerce* has arrived, and pharma and healthcare more broadly are no longer insulated from it. Economic value is shifting away from an exclusive reliance on tangible propositions toward intangible factors, where experiential forces such as effort reduction, orchestration, and continuity show up. These forces increasingly influence how HCPs evaluate options, rationalize trade-offs, and decide which therapies feel most credible, workable, and worthy of action in real-world practice.

Like any consumer, HCPs have already recalibrated their expectations. The experiences that shape their daily lives now serve as reference points in professional interactions. Speed and convenience signal respect for time. Attention to detail reflects seriousness of intent. Relevance translates into institutionalized empathy that builds trust. These are no longer aspirational benchmarks. They are the standards against which every pharma interaction is judged, and against which prescribing confidence and preference are increasingly formed.

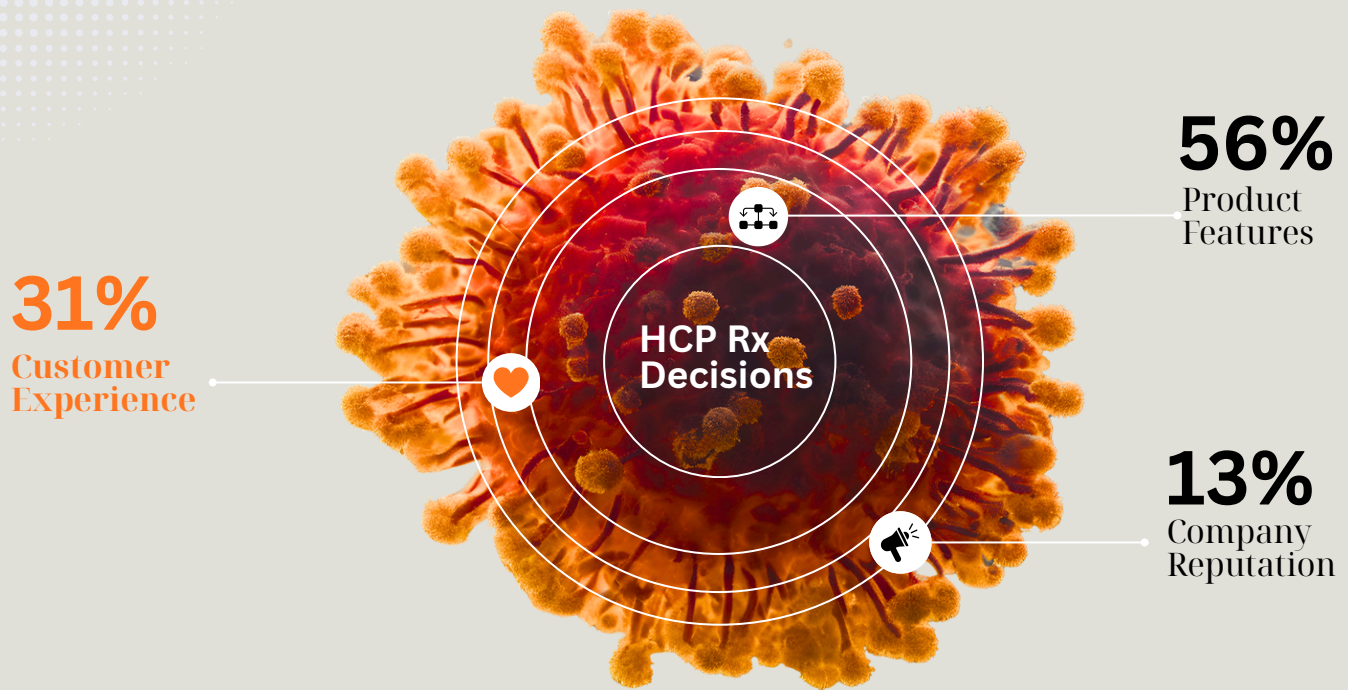
The next era of commercial leadership in pharma and life sciences, therefore, will be defined by how seriously this context is taken and how deeply it is embedded into enterprise operational and commercial models. The question facing leaders is no longer whether this shift is real, but whether their organizations are prepared to meet this elevated experiential standard with the same rigor applied to science, manufacturing, and corporate reputations.

**When they are, the brilliance of their breakthrough science will finally be matched with the world-class experiences worthy of it.**

# Welcome to Pharma's New Consumer-Grade Imperative.



**Figure:** Customer experience influences one-third of HCP Rx decisions.



Adapted from Source: DT Consulting: The State Of Customer Experience In The Global Pharmaceutical Industry, 2025: HCP Interactions | 6,020 HCPs across 13 countries and eight HCP specialty areas.

**“Customers crave immersive and seamless end-to-end experiences integrated into lives and workflows as they strive to achieve their desired outcomes. With this realization, in a CXE the experience becomes the proposition, an essential element in the offering and value exchange with customers, and a primary variable in corporate growth engines and value creation formulas. Consistent with the core attribute of building and delivering ideal experiences, CXEs treat brand-aligned experiences as a core differentiator that shows up, alongside core product and brand propositions, as a decisive factor when customers are trying to make life cycle decisions.**

—The Customer Excellence Enterprise

# Practiced. Proven. Published. A solution for modern commercial leadership.

The point of view advanced in this paper is grounded in research and practical application. It has been progressively developed, tested, and deployed inside two of the most complex global pharma organizations, where commercial models must function within scientific, regulatory, access, and field realities. In these environments, conventional *Customer Experience* as an adjacent initiative evolved into *Customer Excellence* an embedded commercial solution.

This work is formally codified in ***The Customer Excellence Enterprise: A Playbook for Creating Customers for Life***, published by John Wiley & Sons. The perspectives in this paper extend that foundation, applying its core principles to the specific forces reshaping pharma and life sciences.

This solution is further grounded in leadership experience of the author within **consumer-intensive, service-led industries**, where experience quality directly drives competition, growth and brand performance, and reinforced by academic rigor developed through designing and teaching curriculum in the first graduate-level Master of Science program in Customer Experience Management at the Eli Broad College of Business, Michigan State University.

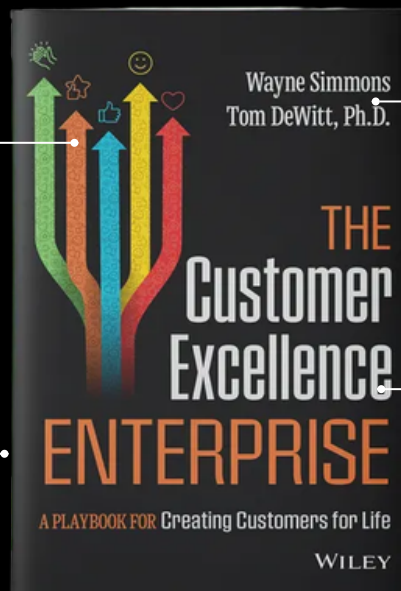
**Together, these dimensions establish a novel commercial solution for pharma and life sciences that is both technically sound and operationally proven.**

## Built for Post-Pandemic Commercial Reality.

Selected for publication to address why traditional CX models broke down and what replaces them.

## Written for Enterprise & Commercial Leaders.

Designed for CMOs and commercial leaders responsible for performance, not CX theater.



## Elevates Experience into a Commercial Asset.

Repositions experience as a repeatable driver of growth, not a program or measurement layer.

## Unifies Brand, Product, and Experience.

Introduces a system-level model that closes the gap between promise and delivery.

**Figure. An Unapologetically Commercial Interpretation of Customer Experience.** reframes traditional customer experience into a commercial operating system, positioning experience as a driver of growth, differentiation, and enterprise value.



## The Fourth Pillar of Commercial Excellence.

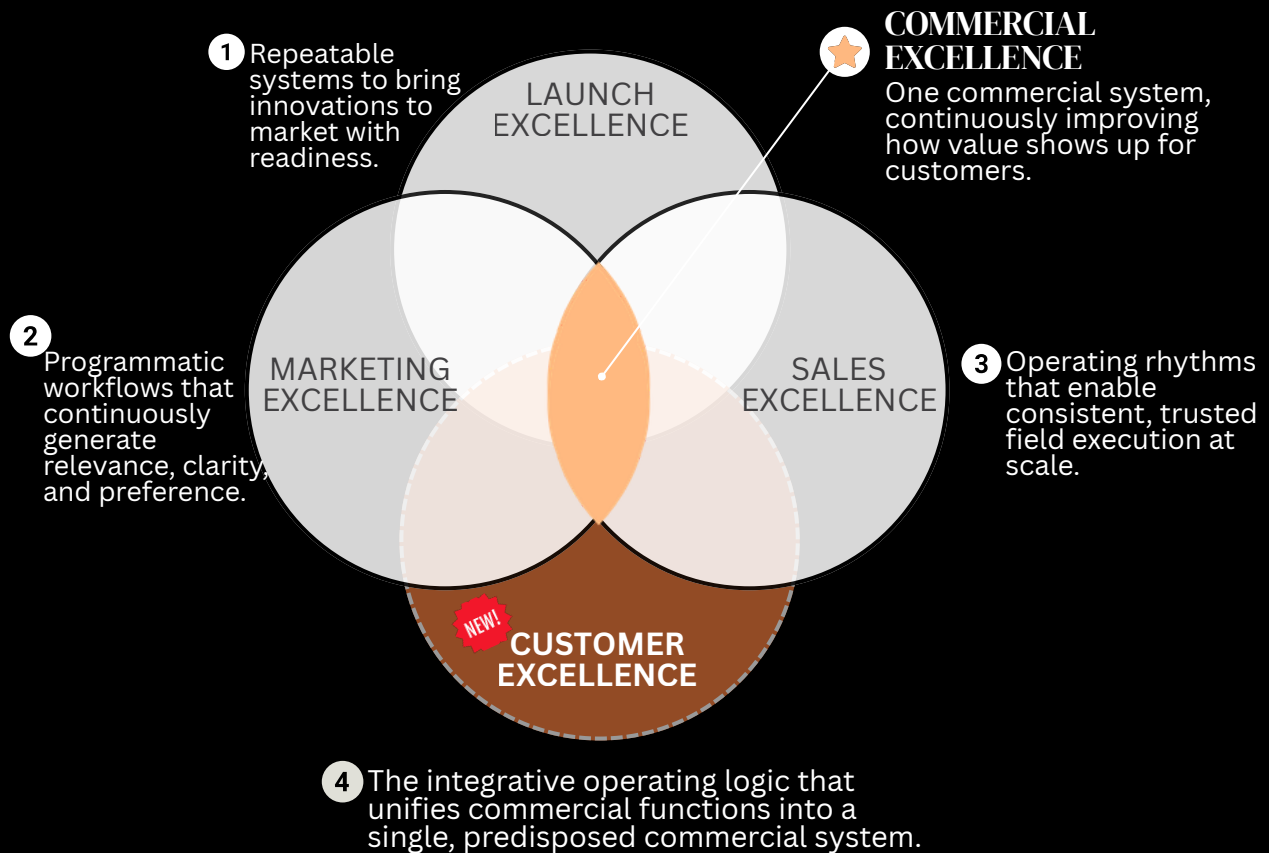
Customer Excellence does not belong at the margins of the commercial organization, where customer experience functions have traditionally resided in many pharma companies. It stands alongside **Launch Excellence, Marketing Excellence, and Sales Excellence** asserting equal value as the fourth foundational pillar of modern commercial performance. It does not replace these capabilities. It strengthens them. It completes them.

The existing pillars govern how innovation is launched, how value is articulated, and how engagement is activated. **What they do not govern is how that intent is experienced once it leaves the organization.**

They do not control how promises are lived across access, onboarding, and support, nor how handoffs between functions and channels feel over time. As a result, organizations often perform well within each internal functional domain while customers experience fragmentation externally.

**The new Customer Excellence operating logic exists to close that gap.**

**Figure:** As the fourth pillar, Customer Excellence provides the customer-centric operating logic that aligns functional excellence into a structurally unified Commercial Excellence system.



**Reference:** “Encompassing the essential interdependent dimensions of corporate mission, culture, brand, and strategy, the CXE model is specifically tuned to experiential commerce...”

—*The Customer Excellence Enterprise, Chapter 6.*



# The commercial rules are being reset.

Driven by a fundamentally changed HCP customer context and a corresponding shift in how prescribing decisions are made, the commercial rules of pharma and life sciences are being reset. Like any true tipping point, this moment will become either a source of escalating risk or a catalyst for enduring advantage. That outcome will not be determined by market forces alone. It will be determined by the choices leaders make, or fail to make, right now.

Many organizations will choose to continue delivering scientific innovation through ways of working and operating systems increasingly misaligned with the modern customer. In doing so, they will widen the gap between clinical intent and lived experience, mistaking familiarity for safety and the status quo for progress. The industry's reliance on tech-led transformation playbooks will only compound the problem, leaving digital stacks, omnichannel strategies, and even generative and agentic AI initiatives alone insufficient to close the gap.

**This is why pharma now stands at a commercial inflection point.** Most commercial systems were built for a different customer context and definition of success. They were designed to optimize promotional output and channel choice, not experience delivery. While effective at message distribution, they often fail to support HCPs and patients through the complexity that follows. The result is persistent fragmentation, friction, and fatigue, with scientific excellence constrained not by evidence or efficacy, but by the experience surrounding it.

**A different future is now possible.** The discipline of Customer Excellence provides the belief system, operating infrastructure, and capabilities required to deliver experiences worthy of breakthrough science. As the *fourth pillar of a modern commercial model*, alongside *Launch Excellence*, *Marketing Excellence*, and *Sales or Field Excellence*, Customer Excellence establishes a structural and systemic path to connect brand promises with the enterprise's ability to consistently deliver on those promises in the real world.

When brand, product, and experience are intentionally aligned by design, differentiation is no longer asserted through persuasion alone. It is demonstrated through unique, company-selected experiential attributes that customers recognize and reward as sources of distinctive value. In a crowded and noisy global market, this alignment earns the **Preference Payoff—preferred positions in the hearts, minds, and daily realities of customers, and the sustained commercial advantage and outsized financial performance that follow.**

**The new customer context is a statement of fact.** Pharma's Consumer-Grade future is no longer theoretical. It is present, accelerating, and unforgiving of half-measures. Whether leaders and their organizations respond with the status quo, incremental improvement, or a fundamental rethinking of how value is delivered will determine who pulls ahead—and who is left behind.

**This starts when leaders confront an important question:**

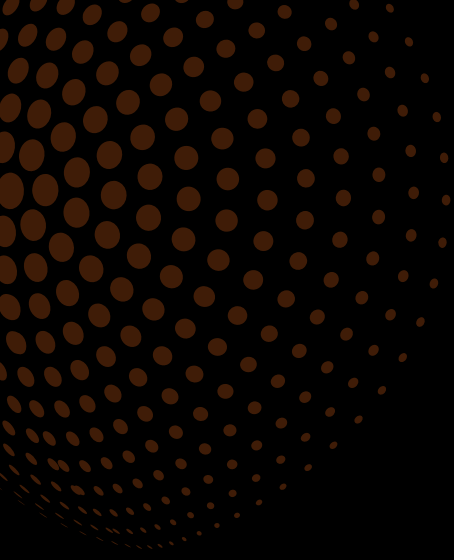


How's your science really showing up in the world?

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