A PRACTICE MANAGER'S GUIDE

5 secrets to make industry reps and resources work harder for your practice

Introduction

As with all technology, healthcare technology is advancing at a blistering pace. This pace of change can make it difficult for physicians to stay abreast of the latest treatment options and standards of care. Life sciences companies strive to help physicians, nurses, and other clinical staff stay ahead of the curve by making highly-trained company representatives available to them in their practices. Many of these company representatives are physicians and nurses who are able to engage in peer-to-peer conversations with clinical staff. Even reps without advanced clinical degrees are extremely intelligent and well-versed in various disease states and therapies, as well as all of the value-add programs that their companies provide for clinicians and patients.

Did you know?

Physicians who restrict access to life science reps may be slower to adopt first-in-class new drugs that improve patient outcomes, according to a 2012 study published in the *Journal of Clinical Hypertension*.

Unfortunately, many physicians overlook life sciences representatives despite their ability to convey a significant amount of information via quick and concise discussions.

Why? Not all reps are created equal, and it takes a significant amount of work to filter out reps who don't provide value while making time for those who do—meaning those who provide new and relevant information. This problem is compounded by the fact that what's considered 'new' and 'relevant' is constantly changing commensurate with new technologies. Physicians may not want to devote the time and resources necessary to oversee the effort that often requires 20+ hours of their staff time monthly. Finally, some life sciences companies put more resources into education, while others emphasize sales and marketing. Physicians have no way of knowing which will be the case prior to engaging in a conversation with a given company's rep. This means they won't know whether an interaction with the rep will be fruitful or a waste of time until that interaction has concluded. Even the best reps need to have the right timing and the right information to be valuable.

Why life science reps + technology = Value

To extract the most value, practices must take proactive steps to tell life science reps exactly what information they need, when they need it, and how they want to receive it.

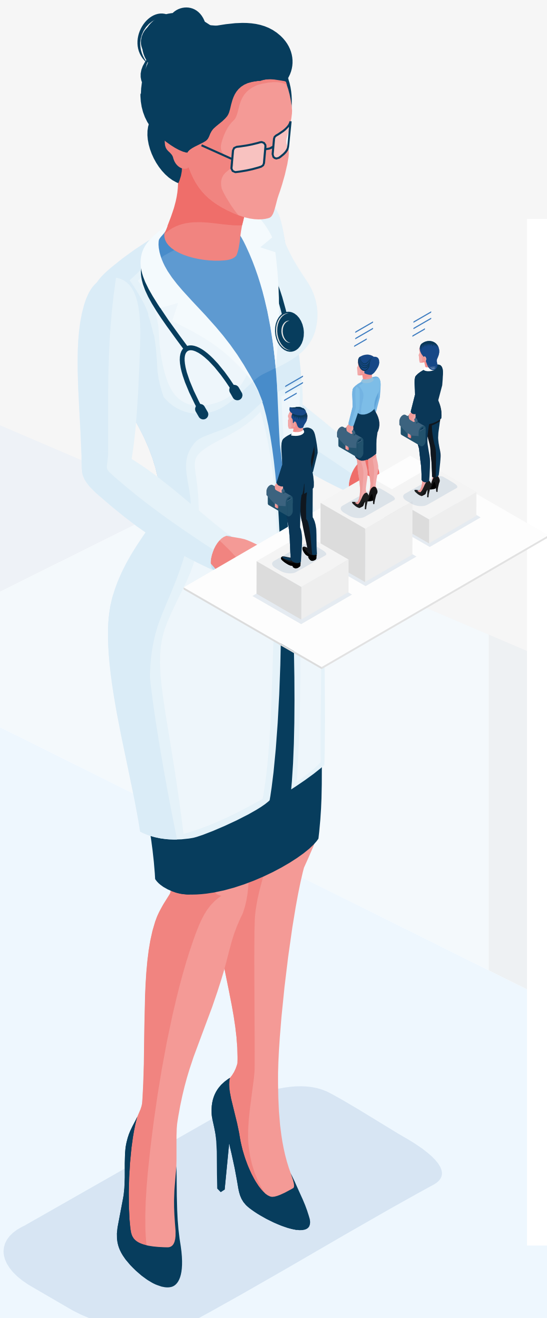
Practices already use technology to automate rep scheduling and message reps directly. Eventually, technology will suggest rep visits as new and relevant drugs and medical technologies become available. It will recommend reps based on the most common diagnoses a physician treats. Doing so streamlines communication, cuts out the noise, and provides physicians with a more personalized experience that also saves time. It is a win-win for everyone. Physicians get the information they need, reps gain easier access, and patients benefit from the latest breakthroughs in medical technology.

Did you know?

Life science sales reps are the primary source of product information for nearly half of all U.S. physicians, according to the ePharma Physician® 2017 study by DRG Digital's Manhattan Research.

5 steps to improve the quality of rep education

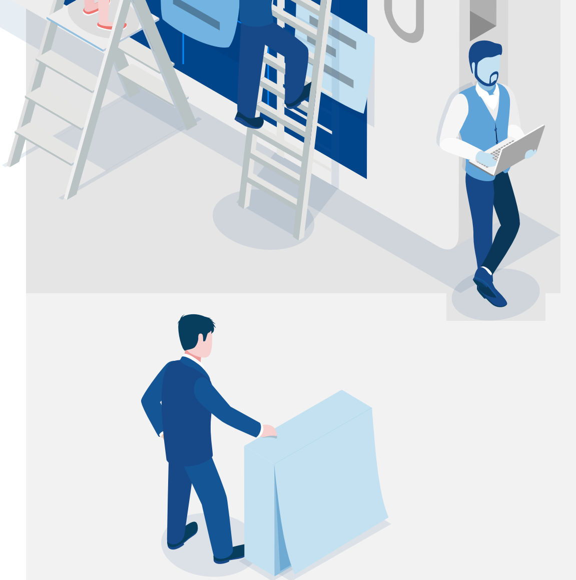
Saving time is essential. But it is also about making the most of the time practices already spend meeting with reps. Consider these five steps to tap into the value that reps provide.



STEP 1

Know your life science reps

Most pharmaceutical and medical device companies have a large portfolio, and practices need to know what rep to contact for each product or service. They also need to understand that multiple reps (e.g., medical science liaisons, clinical health educators, and sales reps) may cover the same drug or medical technology but possess different expertise. This is important because it ensures that practices know what they are getting when they invite a rep onsite for an educational session. Knowing each rep also requires knowing what resources they provide beyond face-to-face or virtual education (e.g., medication samples, vouchers, or copay cards). By maintaining an updated database of contact information for each rep, practices have easier access when needs arise. Be sure to track each rep's full name, title, company, products, phone number, and email address.



STEP 2

Be mindful of scheduling

Designate specific time slots for when reps are able to schedule meetings. To avoid redundancy, track how often each rep visits. Some practices may decide they only want to see a rep once a month, once every few months, or even once a year. This prevents a handful of reps from taking all available slots, and it opens the practice up to other reps who can also add value. Consider creating separate calendars for physicians, nurses, billers, and administrative staff so reps provide role-based education with minimal disruption to patient care.

5 types of reps and how they add unique value

Depending on their specific role, life science reps add value to physician practices because they:

1

Medical Science Liaison

MSL's, often M.D.'s themselves, can have in-depth discussions as a peer.

2

Nurse Educators

Like MSL's, NE's often have an advanced degree and depth of knowledge that allow for valuable peer-to-peer interactions.

3

Account Executives

Extensive and continuous training makes them a valuable source of info, and they can coordinate other company resources you may need.

4

Reimbursement Specialists

These reps can help you with all things related to billing and reimbursement.

5

Clinical Trial Coordinators

Help you discover clinical trials and enroll patients who might benefit from them.

STEP 3

Ask life science reps to submit topics in advance

This helps staff members brainstorm questions or ask for specific clinical data prior to the meeting. Ninety-one percent of physicians want industry reps to provide more discussions about clinical studies and evidence-based medicine, according to a recent survey conducted by Publicis Touchpoint Solutions, Inc. There is no reason why reps cannot provide this information when it is FDA-approved.

Life science industry education self-assessment

Not sure whether your practice is getting what it needs from life science reps? Consider these questions to determine whether your life science industry education could use a tune-up:

- ✓ Do physicians frequently state that they do not have the time to meet with reps, or they do not see the value?
- ✓ Do reps often show up announced, disrupting patient flow?
- ✓ Do drug or medical technology related questions go unanswered because reps do not possess the right expertise?
- ✓ Do staff members complain that time with reps is not well spent?
- ✓ Do rep presentations seem redundant or irrelevant to your practice or specialty?

If you answered 'yes' to one or more of these questions, you may want to consider re-evaluating your relationship with life science reps. It is time to impose some structure, set some boundaries, and let reps know what you need.

STEP 4

Disseminate, disseminate, disseminate

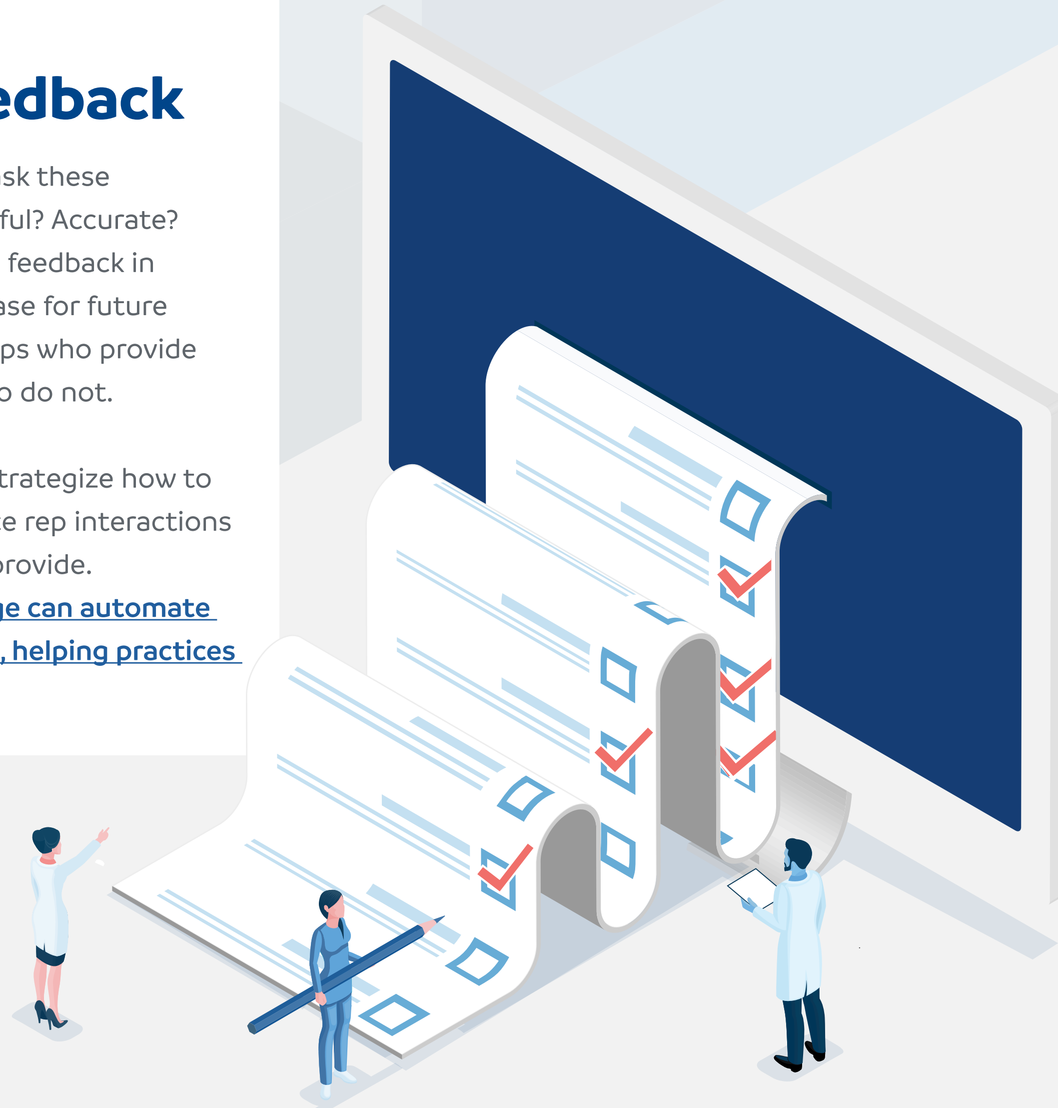
Keep everyone in the loop by circulating vital information. When reps provide new billing codes, for example, ensure that the practice notifies billers and updates the practice's internal billing policy. The same is true for new clinical protocols and regimens. Notify all clinical staff of new guidelines to ensure consistent care.

STEP 5

Solicit staff feedback

After each educational session, ask these questions: Was information helpful? Accurate? Easy to understand? Include this feedback in the practice's internal rep database for future reference. Make more time for reps who provide value and less time for those who do not.

Practices that take the time to strategize how to enhance the quality of life science rep interactions will benefit from the value they provide. Learn more about how RxVantage can automate several of the steps listed above, helping practices boost efficiency.



BY THE NUMBERS

What physicians want from life science reps

Physicians want to see life science reps. The question is, can practices make it happen with minimal effort and maximum return on investment? Yes … with the help of technology.

73%

of physicians want to see more clinical health educators who work with physicians and patients to improve health outcomes.

78%

of physicians want to see more medical science liaisons who work with healthcare providers involved in clinical trials.

74%

of physicians want to see more customer service representatives who provide patient literature, samples, and formulary information.

Source: What Physicians Want! A survey by Publicis Touchpoint Solutions and Sermo

Life science industry education in action

RXVANTAGE SUCCESS STORY #1:

At North Mississippi Health System, life science reps provide cutting-edge information about new drugs, allowing the clinic to build orders in their electronic health record so physicians can prescribe the drugs as quickly as possible. By using RxVantage to automate rep scheduling, the clinic also saves more than 900 hours annually.

> "Time is of the essence especially in the oncology world. People can progress without the right treatment. But it's hard for us to keep up new medications and indications. We need the reps to alert us."

Connie Renfroe
Clinical Practice Manager
Oncology clinic at North Mississippi Health System

RXVANTAGE SUCCESS STORY #2:

At Oncology Consultants, life science reps provide critical information about oncology treatments straight from the source without having to place the burden on administrative staff to obtain, filter, and disseminate details. By using RxVantage to automate rep scheduling, the clinic also saves more than 200 hours annually.

> "The regimens and protocols change so much. It's important to have that time with the life science reps. We're trying to cure cancer."

Niki Roosma
Executive Assistant
Oncology Consultants

To learn more about how RxVantage can help you save time and have meaningful educational interactions with life science reps, visit **RxVantage.com/tour** or call us at **(866) 464.2157**

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