

# ‘Lost in Translation’: Bridging the Gap Between Marketing and Sales

APLD Creates Common Language to Strengthen Alignment, Enhance Brand Performance

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According to the 2000 U.S. Census, a grand total of 329 languages are spoken in the United States. That’s not including the two distinct languages of “Marketing” and “Sales.” In the pharmaceutical industry in particular, when these critical commercial functions are not speaking the same language, the disconnects can be costly. Anonymized patient-level data (APLD) is altering the landscape by helping companies seamlessly translate marketing strategies into sales tactics through a common understanding of complex market dynamics.

There was a time when selling pharmaceutical products was relatively straightforward. Physicians were the key “clients,” and pharmaceutical companies didn’t worry about coordinating strategies and tactics across multiple stakeholder groups. But today’s landscape has become

vastly more complex: physicians are under more pressure than ever and have far less time to interact with pharmaceutical representatives. Patients, educated by direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising, are emboldened to participate in the therapy decision. And payors influence the vast majority of prescription decisions.

Making a sale today involves understanding and addressing the simultaneous interests of patients, payors and prescribers. Such a complex environment requires that companies access and understand a variety of information about their key stakeholders — and use it to form one cohesive approach to the market.



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The watchword in this brave new world is “optimization.” To optimize their resources, companies not only need a more in-depth understanding of the complex and dynamic interplay among their key constituents, but they also need a common “language” to translate these market dynamics into a set of marketing strategies that flow seamlessly into sales strategies and tactics, and provide a meaningful feedback loop between the two functions to measure success.

Anonymized patient-level data (APLD) provides a complete, evidence-based view of patient, provider and payor dynamics. Although APDL can be, and has been, used in a number of ways, its true value lies in its ability to seamlessly connect the full range of commercialization activities relating to patients, physicians and payors. It is a “language” that both marketing and sales can speak fluently, and ultimately ensures that physicians understand which medicines will benefit their patients most. In order

to fully realize these benefits, it is a strategic imperative for companies to use APDL-driven insights to inform the full scope of their commercial activities.

### THE ROSETTA STONE

APDL includes details on the diagnosis, testing, medical treatment and pharmaceutical therapy for millions of de-identified patients. From a marketing standpoint, it allows brand teams to achieve marketing excellence by providing a more accurate assessment of patient, physician and payor dynamics. This assessment can be used to inform the full spectrum of marketing activities that brand teams engage in on a day-to-day basis, including assessment of market size and performance, patient and physician segmentation, pricing and market access decisions, and message development and delivery.

Similarly, from a sales standpoint, APDL allows sales teams to optimize their effectiveness by providing insight into

**FIG. 1:**  
**APDL CONNECTS COMMERCIALIZATION ACTIVITIES ACROSS CORE MARKETING AND SALES PROCESSES**

MARKETING AND SALES EACH HAVE A NEED TO ASSESS MARKET OPPORTUNITIES, PLAN AND IMPLEMENT ACCORDINGLY, AND THEN MEASURE RESULTS AGAINST STATED OBJECTIVES. HAVING A COMMON MEANS OF SETTING STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES THAT IS DIRECTLY LINKED TO FIELD FORCE EXECUTION WILL HAVE A DRAMATIC IMPACT ON BRAND GROWTH AND COMMERCIAL SUCCESS.



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ongoing and evolving treatment decisions to provide a deeper understanding of physician prescribing behavior. This allows companies to more accurately segment and reach physicians, better monitor product performance, and more effectively align sales compensation metrics in accordance with brand objectives.

It is a language that both functional areas can use to not only improve their own activities, but also to communicate with each other.

In this way, APLD serves as a common language that spans the continuum: from assessment to planning to implementation to performance measurement, within and across functional areas. It allows marketing to develop strategies and tactics based on a more robust understanding of their market that can be translated into actionable sales strategies and tactics and then evaluated on an ongoing basis. Ultimately, it helps ensure that the right message is reaching the right audience at the right time as efficiently as possible — the goal of optimal resource allocation.

The following hypothetical examples illustrate how APLD can help companies better understand multiple stakeholder groups and develop a coordinated set of marketing and sales strategies and tactics to optimize brand performance.

#### THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

A brand team is preparing to launch “Sampla,” which in clinical trials has demonstrated superior efficacy when used as a first-line therapy to treat a particular disease. In addition to providing a better treatment outcome for the patient when used first-line, a market analysis shows

that there are more patients on first-line therapy than subsequent lines, indicating that the market opportunity decreases with each subsequent line of therapy. The brand team is therefore hoping to get physicians to adopt Sampla as a first-line therapy.

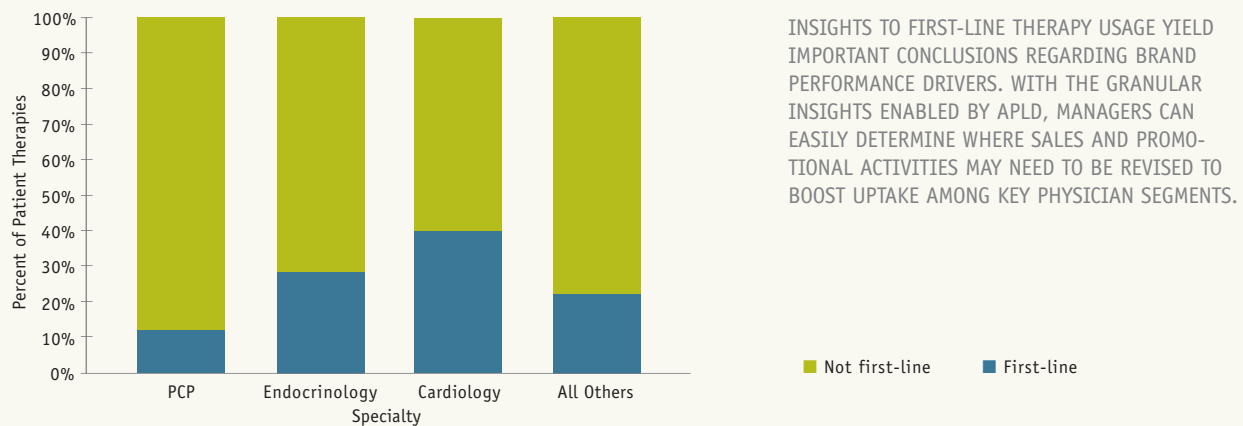
Sampla’s marketing team commissioned a number of primary market research studies to size the market and understand patient and physician behaviors, attitudes and perceptions. Physicians indicated in the studies that they were impressed by Sampla’s efficacy profile and were eager to use it as a first line of therapy. Therefore, the brand team developed messaging that stressed Sampla’s efficacy as a first-line treatment.

Upon Sampla’s launch, the field force relied on deciling based on total prescription (TRx) and new prescription (NRx) metrics to identify the types of physicians who would be likely prescribers for Sampla. Using these aggregated, top-line metrics alone, Sampla’s sales force was not able to identify or direct their efforts toward the physicians who see the greatest number of patients just beginning therapy (also known as naïve or new therapy patients) — the ideal candidates for Sampla. So, the marketing strategy began to unravel the minute it was handed over to sales.

In the early days post-launch, the brand team was eager to know:

- What line of therapy is Sampla being used as? Are physicians adopting the product for new patients only or are they also switching patients to the brand?
- Are certain specialties more likely to prescribe Sampla as first-line therapy than others?

**FIG. 2:**  
**APLD SHEDS LIGHT ON PHYSICIAN SEGMENTS THAT INFLUENCE BRAND PERFORMANCE**  
 SAMPLA'S PERCENT OF PATIENT THERAPIES BY SPECIALTY AND LINE OF THERAPY



- How effective is our messaging? Are physicians responding in the way we had hoped?
- Are reps reaching the physicians who have the most opportunity to prescribe Sampla for new patients?

Since the company was relying solely on standard prescription metrics to evaluate its sales performance, it was not able to answer these questions. While dispensed prescriptions are, and will, remain the gold standard for measuring performance, they are not as granular as the inputs that went into the marketing strategies to begin with. They cannot reveal details about specific physician prescribing behaviors (i.e., are physicians switching patients to the brand, or prescribing for patients new to therapy) or about the progression of treatment for various patient segments (i.e., are patients taking Sampla as first-line therapy? Or did they start on something else first?). Thus, they cannot address questions about line-of-therapy utilization.

Similarly, while primary market research could have been used to address some of these questions, the results are difficult to track on a frequent, ongoing basis. In addition, the results of primary market research are based on physicians' recollections of what they did, as opposed to what they actually did, which can lead to potential accuracy issues.

If, in the Sampla case, the company had had the benefit of APLD's insights into physician treatment dynamics, the brand team would have been able to quickly determine

whether physicians were using Sampla as first-line therapy or not and refine their strategies and tactics as necessary to drive this behavior.

For example, the team would have seen that even though earlier analyses had revealed that their overall usage of Sampla was higher, primary care physicians (PCPs) were using Sampla less often as a first-line therapy than were specialists. (Fig. 2)

Knowing this, the brand team could have developed specific messages for PCPs that spoke to the benefits of starting patients new to therapy on Sampla. In turn, the sales team could have conveyed these messages to the physicians treating those patients who would benefit most from this particular therapy. The effectiveness of the strategy as executed would have become clear in the new therapy start rates among PCPs. And the progression from assessment to planning to implementation and measurement would have operated as a closed circuit.

### A MORE ACCURATE DIAGNOSTIC OF PRODUCT PERFORMANCE

In addition to providing insights into physician treatment dynamics, APLD also provides insights into the patient dynamics (e.g., patient characteristic and utilization profiles, compliance and persistence behaviors) associated with a particular market. In another hypothetical example for a product called "Illustran" in the hypertension

market, the company takes advantage of APLD’s insights into patient dynamics to assess the overall effectiveness of its strategies and tactics, and to inform refinements that will serve to optimize the product’s performance.

Given the crowded therapy area, the Illustran brand team had positioned the product as being particularly efficacious in the segment of patients with hypertension and comorbid diabetes, based on the results of a clinical study that had produced results to this effect. The team wanted to understand whether or not their strategy was working. Without the benefit of APLD, they may have relied only on top-line prescription metrics, but these metrics don’t provide any insight into the types of patients that are using a particular brand.

They may also have relied on primary market research, but this can be subject to physician recall, which is not as accurate, and the results do not lend themselves to being tracked on an ongoing basis. Using APLD, however, the team was able to segment the market based on patient characteristics and treatment utilization rates to accurately assess their penetration within this particular patient segment. The team found that penetration of this segment was not what they had hoped for. (Fig. 3)

The team needed to conduct additional research to assess the cause of their lackluster performance. Key questions included:

- Is this trend true for all physicians? If yes, then perhaps the product messaging was not resonating with the target audience.

- Are the reps not reaching the right target audience?
- Is there variability in performance from rep to rep, potentially indicating a need for more training or better support materials?

Using APLD, the team was able to answer these questions quickly and accurately, and avoid a primary market research fire drill to answer some of these questions. Based on analysis utilizing APLD, the team determined that the reps were not reaching the right physicians, and, again using APLD, was able to identify those physicians who tended to see a high number of patients on both anti-hypertensive and anti-diabetic therapies so that the sales force could redirect their efforts. Both marketing and sales monitored the progress of the campaign by measuring changes in prescribing rates for patients with both conditions.

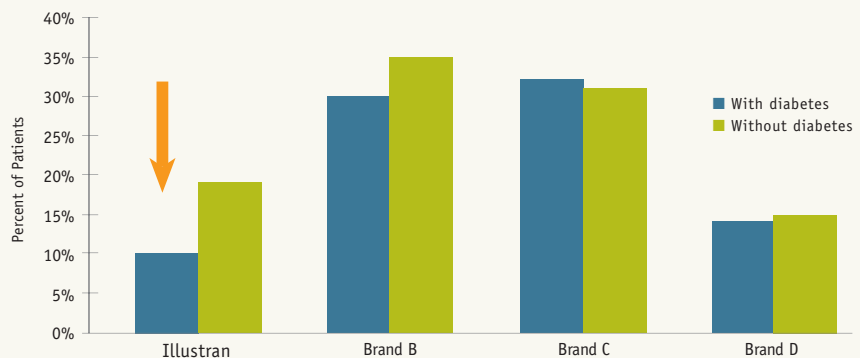
APLD’s insights into patient dynamics allowed the team to quickly and accurately identify and diagnose the issue, and develop a targeted action plan to address the situation to get the brand’s performance back on track.

### AN EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK LOOP IN ACTION

In another hypothetical case, APLD is used to better understand the payor dynamics affecting “Pretendex,” a newly approved antidepressant with fewer side effects than other therapies on the market, such that the brand team was able to refine their strategies and tactics to drive optimal performance.

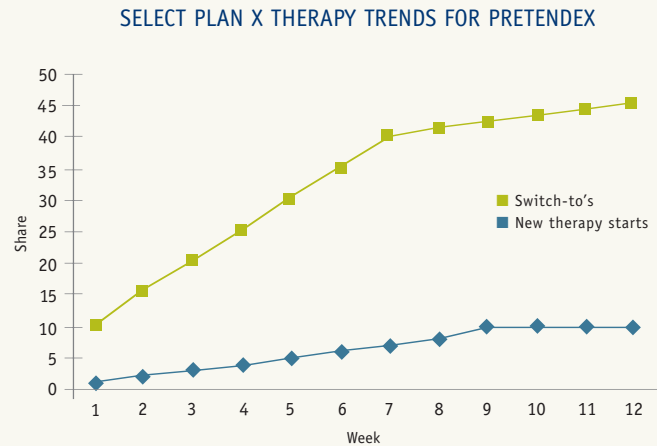
**FIG. 3:**  
**REAL-WORLD ASSESSMENT OF MARKET RESPONSE TO PRODUCT POSITIONING**  
**HYPERTENSION PATIENTS: PATIENT SHARE BY COMORBIDITY**

BY UNDERSTANDING TREATMENT PATTERNS AND MARKET SHARE AMONG THE COMORBID PATIENT POPULATION, MANAGERS CAN DETERMINE IF MESSAGING, PROMOTION, AND CALL PLANS REQUIRE REVISION — AND THEN IMPLEMENT THESE CHANGES AND DETERMINE THEIR IMPACT.



**FIG. 4:**  
**SOURCE OF BUSINESS TRENDS**  
**HIGHLIGHT NEED FOR TARGETED**  
**MANAGED MARKET STRATEGY**

GRANULAR INSIGHTS INTO PLAN THERAPY TRENDS PROVIDE A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR MORE INFORMED DECISION MAKING REGARDING CHANGES IN MANAGED CARE CONTRACTING AND PULL-THROUGH STRATEGIES.



Marketing knew from extensive testing that Pretendix would be a hands-down winner with patients because its low incidence of side effects offered a real lifestyle improvement. The brand team, therefore, decided to invest the bulk of its marketing spend in heavy professional and DTC promotion and to not contract aggressively with managed care organizations. All indications were that patient demand would override a higher co-pay set by managed care organizations, making it unnecessary for the company to aggressively contract with payors for automatic discounts in return for favorable formulary status.

In the first three months post-launch, the brand team was surprised to see that Pretendix's national sales were behind the forecast, although the issue was isolated in one region of the country. Based on results calculated at the health plan level, the company discovered that performance in the region was being dragged down by one dominant managed care organization (Plan X). The brand team turned to APLD to better understand the underlying drivers of Plan X's performance. Using APLD plan-level insights into Pretendix's share of patients new to therapy vs. those switching from another brand, the brand team learned that Pretendix was capturing most of its business from Plan X patients who were switching from other therapies, rather than from patients new to therapy. (Fig. 4)

Further analysis into patient treatment progressions revealed that physicians treating newly diagnosed patients in this plan were prescribing a generic medication first

and only switching patients to Pretendix if they failed first-line therapy. With this knowledge, the company's national account team intervened, immediately engaging the payor in contract discussions to highlight the product's overall value (outcome vs. cost) and was able to negotiate a more favorable formulary status. Simultaneously, the office-based sales force began communicating to physicians that the co-pay for Pretendix would be just slightly higher than that of the generic, but overall, provided patients with a much better value.

In this case, without the detail provided by APLD on payor influences, the company would have discovered that there was a problem, but would have been unable to dig deep enough to understand the exact cause. Analysis of APLD enabled marketing and sales to quickly revise and coordinate their strategies to keep brand performance on track.

**MARKETING AND SALES WITHOUT SUBTITLES**

At a time when "good" is not good enough and pharmaceutical companies must achieve excellence in every aspect of marketing and sales, they simply cannot afford to lose anything in translation.

APLD not only supports marketing and sales excellence by providing a richer, evidence-based view of complex market dynamics, but it also gives companies the means to seamlessly translate strategy into results-producing tactics. With continuity of thought and action, companies can ensure that their promotional resources are put to the best use — and that's a hit for all audiences. ●



## Getting Started with APLD

THE PROSPECT OF INTEGRATING APLD INTO YOUR ORGANIZATION'S COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES CAN SEEM DAUNTING...BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE.

THE FOLLOWING QUICK-START GUIDE OUTLINES SEVERAL CRITICAL ANALYSES AND METRICS THAT MARKETING AND SALES CAN AND SHOULD START USING IMMEDIATELY TO ENHANCE THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF KEY MARKET DYNAMICS, IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THEIR OWN ACTIVITIES, AND IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO FUNCTIONS.

Key Analyses/Metrics for Marketing Utilizing APLD	Key Business Questions Addressed	Application(s)
Market Sizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How big is my market opportunity?</li> <li>What are the characteristics of my market (e.g., size and treatment rates by comorbidity, age)</li> <li>What is my real market potential?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Size and characterize available patient population with greater precision so that you can better inform forecasts and allocate resources</li> </ul>
Patient Segmentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What distinct patient segments exist based on clinical and demographic profiles?</li> <li>How do patient treatment needs vary by segment in my market?</li> <li>What potential unmet treatment needs exist?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and more clearly articulate the patient segments that will benefit the most from your product and use this to inform/refine product positioning and messaging that will drive marketing and sales strategies and tactics</li> </ul>
Patient-Flow Modeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do patients "flow" through the healthcare system?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g., How many patients visit the doctor, and when, what treatments do they receive and by which line of therapy, what are compliance/persistence rates?</li> </ul> </li> <li>How does my product "fit" into the broader context of care?</li> <li>How do physician prescribing patterns for my product stack up against the competition?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify opportunities to influence application of your brand in the most suitable manner, founded on an evidence-based understanding of physician and patient behaviors</li> <li>Inform/refine product positioning and messaging that will drive marketing and sales strategies and tactics</li> </ul>
Performance Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What proportion of the market is "in play" (i.e., new therapy or change of therapy decisions) versus static?</li> <li>What is my share of the "in play" market?</li> <li>What is the movement of patients between my brand and my competitors' brands (i.e., what is my share of new therapy starts, switch-to's, switch-from's, etc.)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quickly identify and diagnose potential issues and opportunities and redirect marketing and sales tactics as necessary throughout the year to keep performance on track</li> <li>Drill down into how physician prescribing behaviors affect your brand and develop more precise marketing and sales strategies and tactics to influence them</li> </ul>
Payor Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do payors influence treatment patterns and uptake for my brand?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess overall influence of payors on brand performance and revise strategies and tactics as necessary to drive optimal brand performance</li> </ul>

- Detailed, accurate understanding of:
  - The patient segments that will benefit most from your brand
  - The treatment behaviors of the physicians who are treating them
- Sales can use this information to:
  - Better reach the physicians who are treating the patient segments that will benefit most from their brand
  - Tailor their promotional messages to physicians to drive appropriate use of the product
  - Align sales compensation metrics in accordance with brand strategy



- Detailed, accurate understanding of:
  - Market response to product positioning, messaging, and various tactics
- Marketing can use this information to:
  - Refine positioning, messaging and tactics as necessary to optimize performance

Key Analyses/Metrics for Sales Utilizing APLD	Key Business Questions Addressed	Application(s)
Physician Segmentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What discrete physician segments exist? Are there segments that tend to have a high volume of new prescription starts and switches?</li> <li>What messages are they likely to respond to?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better align messaging and resources by target audience</li> </ul>
Resource Allocation and Call Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What level of effort should I put towards different groups of physicians?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine proper amount of resources necessary and optimize deployment based on volume of new patients and volume of active treatment decisions to ensure that the right physicians are receiving the right messages — and providing their patients with the right treatments</li> </ul>
Performance Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What proportion of the market is "in play" (i.e., new therapy or change of therapy decisions) versus static?</li> <li>What is my share of the "in play" market?</li> <li>What is the movement of patients between my brand and my competitors' brands (i.e., what is my share of new therapy starts, switch-to's, switch-from's, etc.)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More effectively align sales compensation metrics in accordance with brand strategy</li> <li>Enable quicker, more precise performance management through increased ability to tie activity to performance</li> <li>Drill down into how physician prescribing behaviors affect your brand so that you are better able to design, target, and assess the impact of sales promotions and programs</li> </ul>

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**ABOUT IMS HEALTH**

Operating in more than 100 countries, with \$1.8 billion in 2005 revenue, IMS provides clients with evidence-based, customized intelligence about the pharmaceutical and healthcare markets — delivering critical information, analytics and consulting that drive superior client business strategies, decisions and results.

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