

The Growth Prescription, a podcast for healthcare sales professionals
Episode 3: Customer-centric digital learning with Obi Ochu

Rick Cheatham: Hi, this is Rick Cheatham. I am taking time off of hosting "Fearless Thinkers" for a special series that we're calling "The Growth Prescription," a podcast for healthcare sales professionals. I'm leaving you in the very capable hands of Rene Groeneveld and Alan Gentry, two real experts in the world of cells and cells in healthcare.

René Groeneveld: Hello, everybody. This is Rene Groeneveld and I would like to welcome you to our next episode of the "Fearless Thinkers" podcast, "The Growth Prescription," our podcast for healthcare professionals. With me again is my wonderful co-host, Alan Gentry. Hi, Alan.

Alan Gentry: Hey, Rene. How are you doing today? I'm really excited to be here 'cause this is such a great topic to discuss when it comes to learning and digital and I'm so excited that we got Obi to join us today.

René: Fantastic, and I'm excited too, because we have Obi Ochu with us. He is our senior director of BTS Custom Digital Learning. Obi, warm welcome to our podcast here.

Obi Ochu: Rene, Alan. Thank you for having me on. I've been looking forward to this. Extremely timely, very excited, and looking forward to an informative, educational podcast.

René: Today's topic is how do you drive market share and revenue growth by empowering your client interactions and relationships, and a little bit more in particular, the business problem is about creating a sales force, a field force, that can quickly execute on the company's go-to market transformation. Alan, you're in charge of our healthcare vertical on a global level, what's your experience on this? Can you share a few thoughts?

Alan: My experience goes back to my days in the industry, but really when you look at this issue or this challenge, for years, pharma field forces have been

marketing driven with a number of different messages centered around a patient-centric approach.

Marketing and training departments create a number of great resources for the field to leverage while they're out in their calls or after their calls.

Often, these resources and tools are underutilized and not leveraged in the right way, but companies are starting to look for ways to really engage their field in real mindset shifts, but not only that, but to engage their teams in a way that really drives change. So, we've recently developed a solution that uses a platform anchored by gamified principles and an adaptive learning engine. Every learner gets to go on their own journey.

René:

Let me ask you, Obi, you also know the healthcare and the pharmaceutical world quite well – why is this topic hot, and why is digital learning hot in this environment?

Obi:

What we're beginning to see is digital learning continues to move at the speed of light, at the speed of now. **What's new today is old tomorrow.** You hear the features such as AI, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and machine learning continue to underpin most transformative journeys.

However, features aside, digital learning is still about getting people from learning to doing faster and more effectively. It's about maximizing ROI through greater engagement. Ultimately, engagement and gamification continue to be two sides of the same coin. So, what we're hearing from our clients is: we are looking for role competence, we're looking for role confidence, and we're looking for sustained performance. How can you help us deliver that as a true partner, do it in a more cost effective manner? And of course, engagement – attrition rates are at an all time high. So, they're looking at the power of digital to reduce attrition rates.

So, what does that mean? That means how can digital manipulate and reform a company's learning brand? How can we not only attract new talent, but how can we put our best foot forward when we are onboarding new talent? How can we create an experience that's memorable? How can we create an experience that ignites that mental shift within that new hire, that "I'm gonna view this as a career, not a job."

And it starts with the experience that you put them through in that onboarding process. And that's the true power of digital.

René:

How can our clients and how can BTS optimize such a digital blended learning strategy?

Obi:

A blended learning experience is the optimal learning experience. There's nothing that's ever going to replace that human touch. If you want to optimize training or learning – whether it's around leadership, whether it's around compliance, whether it's around sales, whether it's around how to clean your house – there has to be that human element. What digital does, it complements and supplements that human touch. Think of a learning experience: somebody is about to engage in an instructor-led session. How do you make sure that session is maximized? You have pre-work, and the best way to deliver that pre-work is through digital, because you can now assess where everybody's knowledge level is, you can assess what's a priority for each learner, you can assess what's important to them through a digital format, and you can communicate all that data to the instructor.

And beyond that, what happens after the classroom? You want reinforcement. You wanna make sure all those skills and competencies are peak levels beyond that learning event. You wanna make sure the competencies are there 30, 60, 90 days after training. That's where digital comes in.

But Rene, what happens after reinforcement? When it's the moment of truth, we've all been there, you're now in the field, you're now facing that customer. Well, digital can play a role there by providing a performance support, a buddy, call it a sales enablement tool, that sits in your hip pocket and you're able to access that and understand what you need to know in order to create that differentiation when you're communicating with your client.

So beyond pre-work, beyond transfer of knowledge, beyond reinforcement, beyond performance support, digital can plug those holes needed to elevate that in-person training session. That's so critical in what we do as an organization.

Alan:

Yeah, so what are some keys to a great digital learning platform?

Obi:

Let's understand what your **definition of success** is as an organization. The definition of success for each organization are like fingerprints on your hand. They are so different. It doesn't matter if you're in the same industry. There are so many variables, internal and external, to your ecosystem. It's our job to understand those variables and chart a plan, a path that's clear, a path that's underpinned by recommendations, timelines, milestones, and cost.

Once we've achieved that, some of the things you wanna focus on are **scalability**. We're starting with 1,000 people. What if we need to grow that to 10,000 people, 20,000 people, 100,000 people. Can that happen in a way that's thoughtful, effective, and in a way that considers all the cultural and geographical differences of a global organization? That answer needs to be yes.

Another key is it needs to **inspire** engagement **versus legislate** engagement. We've all been there before, where training is a checkbox activity. Like, if you're not told to do it, you don't engage with that training. So what we try to do [is]: we try to make the training engaging so it inspires you to engage with the training, interact with the training, and view it as a companion that helps you perform at a higher level. And this sounds pretty simplistic, but Alan, it has to be fun. I know we're all parts of serious organizations but training needs to be fun. It needs to be something you want to do on a daily basis. And this is probably one of the most important ones, individuality. The key is for everybody to reach mastery at the same time.

And that was a big, big aspect of what our clients were asking for: Can you provide adaptive learning? Can you provide a learning experience that attacks the individual gaps of each learner? Training has to be continuous, whether it's an instructor-led session, whether it's reinforcement, whether it's performance support, the thinking always has to be, "What comes after that?" Things evolve rapidly. Things change very quickly, whether it's legislation, whether it's innovation. So the training we provide has to evolve with the trajectory of the industry as well. And then, of course, data and metrics. You need those analytics

to understand the effectiveness of the training, where to go next. You need the analytics to understand where you need to invest your money in order to elevate your organization to the next level.

René: Correct me if I'm wrong, but I understood: scalability; it has to be inspiring; it has to be fun and engaging. It needs to be individual, not just a one-time thing, but continuous; and data and metrics, and in the end, result-driven. Right?

Obi: Captured it.

René: If this is true for a great digital learning platform, can you both share a little bit how we created this approach with a multinational pharmaceutical customer? So Alan, what are the outcomes the customer was looking for?

Alan: Like a lot of companies, what they really came to us, they were trying to engage their customers differently. They needed to engage them around this customer-centric approach, but also, the customer now is being defined as the patient. How can we get our patients on medications faster? In order to do this, this customer was looking for an omnichannel approach – how you change those stellar behaviors was one of the things that I came to Obi [with] and presented him the challenge to overcome. And so, we then presented a new platform to this customer. But I'm gonna really let Obi dive in and talk a little bit more about the platform.

Obi: One of the key challenges, as Alan just articulated, was the sales organization's inability to deliver an omnichannel approach. In addition, current training up, down, and across the entire organization was stale, dated, and failed to engage on an emotional level.

So, they were looking for a partner to provide a global learning platform that made learning more engaging, that made learning fun, that made learning resonate with their employees across the entire organization. And what we were able to provide was a platform that accomplished these key things. They wanted a platform that was able to transfer core knowledge in multiple ways. They wanted a platform

that was able to reinforce that core knowledge. So in 30, 60, 90 days, learners were able to recall that knowledge. They wanted a platform also that was able to provide performance support in the moment of need. But more importantly, they wanted a multi-modal platform.

So what that meant, they wanted a platform that learners could access on their desktop, laptop, but more importantly, they wanted a solution where learners could access on their mobile device, so specifically a native app, so they could interact with the platform regardless of the availability of wifi or internet connectivity.

Now, within the platform itself, we customized a dual experience. They wanted a prescriptive portal, so prescriptive in the sense where learning managers could prescribe a learning journey for each learner that they had to go through. And that learning journey could consist of a number of things: watching a video; going through a scenario; revising white papers; reading particular pieces of literature; or listening to a podcast.

And then there were very customized inter activities that followed way beyond simple multiple choice questions. We utilized interactivity such as drag and drop, click and reveal, sliders, and things of that nature to make it engaging.

And then we have what we call a self-directed portal. A portal you the learner could go, we called it Disneyland, where the learner could kind of go and practice competencies that they were struggling with where they could engage in one-on-one coaching, they could engage in surveys, they could engage in games, and enjoy features like leaderboard, team leaderboards, individual leaderboards, and things of that nature to ensure that learning was sustained.

These were some of the key features that the organization was looking for, but more importantly, analytics, analytics, analytics, data. They wanted to measure over 52 data points. And those data points range from anywhere to just the simple details of the program. How many people were involved, what were the skills we were trying to maximize, the things such as what resources are people touching, what levels of mastery are they reaching? How long is it taking a learner from the day they log into the platform to when they complete it, how long is it taking to master a particular competency? So basically, they had over 52 metric points.

We built the dashboards, we were able to connect those dashboards with our CRM system, which was critical, because it's important to tie retention and it's important to tie the platform, the analytics produced by the platform, to performance. And we were able to see an increased rate in retention and we're able to correlate that to performance.

René:

Now those are awesome, great outcomes: being more data driven, as far as the analytics piece. Increasing employee engagement, critical in today's world. Integrating learning and work, so that we're not disrupting the workflow on a day-to-day basis. And then, I think, the most important one that we've seen is really that improving the time to competency. In some cases, we've seen it go from 13 months to seven months.

Anything else come to mind, Obi, as far as other metrics that companies might be able to see by using an approach like this?

Absolutely, and I can use this particular organization as an example. In addition, obviously, increased levels of learning engagement. During our discovery phase, we were able to capture levels of engagement. That number more than doubled post implementation of this platform on a consistent level. The one that really surprised us was engagement outside office hours. We're seeing lower rates of attrition with some other clients, because again, we were able to reform the learning brand. We were able to communicate to new hires. "Wow, this is a company I wanna be with." And, of course, we're able to see an increased ability to communicate differentiation at each point of client contact. Healthcare professionals are being bombarded with everybody under the sun in terms of why they should go with my company, or this company, or that company. And we quickly realized, HCPs are viewing companies in the life science industry as a commodity because they're all coming with the same message. There's no differentiation.

So, what we were trying to do was create a situation where the learners could communicate value through scenarios, through understanding what's important to the HCPs, through role playing, through real time support, and the platform was able to deliver that in spades.

René:

Well, thank you so much, Obi. There was so much in this and it's all about value, it's about making value personal. Our listeners might have additional questions, of course. So if you want to follow up, feel free to reach out to Obi, Alan, or me. Contact us on LinkedIn, contact any of our BTS offices.

But Obi, I don't wanna leave our listeners without the three golden tips at the end. So what are the three things, in a nutshell, you want everyone in this podcast to walk away with?

Obi:

Critically important not to just go with what's hot. It's important to first distill and filter what your definition of success is as an organization. Make a move because you've clearly articulated what your definition of success is. And then, the third thing is the importance of design. It's taking number one and two and creating a design document. That design document will articulate what your solution would look like from end to end, and that's what you can socialize internally and gain alignment. And that aligns expectation with effort and minimizes mistakes and makes sure your budget aligns with what you're going to expect at the end of the engagement.

René:

Alan, Obi, it was an honor. Thank you so much for taking the time today. And dear listeners, that's the end of our podcast today, but stay tuned.

Obi:

Thank you.

Masami:

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