salesforce

Status Quo or Future Leader: The Opportunity for Life Sciences

How the choice between embracing innovation and clinging to legacy technology results in two distinct futures.

Introduction

Over the last 30 years, life sciences organizations have had to keep pace with seismic industry changes. Care is now provided across more settings than ever, from in-person to at-home to digital delivery. Treatments are more specialized. Doctors have knowledge, diagnostics, and tools at their fingertips to identify the best care plans. And patients are more empowered with health information.

But common business practices have remained largely unchanged, resulting in less effective (and even broken) sales, marketing, clinical, and medical processes:

- **Healthcare professionals (HCPs) are overwhelmed with information and face more complex clinical decisions than ever.**

- **Precision therapies and rare disease treatments demand more targeted, one-to-one engagement with HCPs who need support identifying eligible patients and navigating complex therapy initiation and delivery.**

- **Traditional rep-driven sales models have lost effectiveness, thanks to limited HCP access and fragmented touchpoints.**

- **External pressures like tightening regulatory demands and margin pressures from payers continue to bear down.**

It's time for a rethink of the traditional go-to-market strategy.

Success now hinges on smarter, tech-enabled strategies that deliver ROI at every engagement. Pair this with the power of agentic AI, connected data, and automation, and the opportunity for intelligent, highly productive engagement multiplies.

Unless life sciences organizations fail to transform.

In this report, we explore the shifts impacting pharmaceutical organizations and the two distinct futures they face:

1. One where following the status quo leads to burnout and being left behind by innovative competitors

2. One where embracing end-to-end, intelligent engagement with agentic AI makes you a leader in a changing industry

Content

01 # The Trends Impacting Life Sciences

What has led us to this industry-wide turning point? A number of factors, from shifts in customer preferences and the expansion of the workforce with digital labor – to drastic changes in policy, regulations, and the economy. These challenges are present in the top trends currently facing the life sciences industry:

1. **Everywhere, anywhere care.** The proliferation of digital tools has fueled the expansion of services beyond traditional settings. This means more direct-to-patient diagnostics, devices/wearables, and consumer/retail health.

2. **Precision intervention.** Treatments are now more personalized, driven by advances in AI, machine learning, 3D-printing, and gene therapy for targeted and effective therapy, improved prevention, and early detection.

3. **Empowered stakeholders.** Patients are increasingly demanding more transparency, convenience, and control over their healthcare decisions, as well as additional mechanisms for finding affordable care. Providers have greater technology and data access than ever, but are inundated with information and must navigate increasingly complex clinical decisions.

4. **Converging sectors.** Digital health has spawned increasing non-traditional partnerships between healthcare industry players and tech companies, converging to develop new products and services across the entire care pathway.

5. **Drug pricing models.** Pharmaceutical companies face increasing cost pressures due to legislative changes, tariffs, pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) reforms, the expansion of biosimilars, and patent cliffs.

In this era of unprecedented change, organizations have an opportunity to evolve their clinical, commercial, market access, and medical strategies with solutions that surface real-time data to make decisions as the market changes.

While legacy platforms[1] continue to deliver fixes to industry problems as they occur, Salesforce Life Sciences Cloud offers innovative, advanced capabilities for the pharmaceutical industry to accelerate drug and device development, personalize customer engagement, and streamline operations with automation and data-driven analytics.

Disjointed Data Disrupts Innovation

Life sciences organizations also face the same challenge companies across industries currently face: mountains of data. Often, different departments store data independently, making it difficult to form a complete view of operations. The siloed data then becomes outdated from lack of regular use and monitoring, leading to poor business decisions and missed opportunities. Accessing this data requires moving, copying, or reformatting it, leading to duplicate sources. All the while, organizations continue to expand, growing their data in traditional systems that struggle to keep up.

[1] Legacy systems are CRM systems built without AI at their core that offer limited functionality and have difficulty integrating with modern business systems.

02 # Two Different Futures

Upgrading from legacy CRM is a big decision. The choices being made today will affect the life sciences industry for the next two decades. One pathway relies on traditional features and functionality, while the other emphasizes data-first interactions tailored to each customer or engagement. What would a future built on an AI-led, innovative engagement platform look like?

Use Case	Legacy Systems	Life Sciences Cloud*
HCP Engagement	Legacy players provide a traditional platform for HCP engagement, but with less emphasis on addressing complex care journeys and technical innovation. Recording interactions still takes many clicks, and AI capabilities feel more like afterthoughts or bolted-on features than essential technology.	Sales reps gain insights right in the flow of work thanks to a comprehensive and innovative platform for HCP engagement. As-delivered AI that's tailor-made for the life sciences industry pairs with grounded data to create highly personalized and efficient interactions, creating improved customer journeys for HCPs and patients.
Patient Engagement	Legacy teams have access to powerful contact center tools, but largely focus on case management process optimization instead of innovation in patient engagement. Common workflows still rely on many manual, time-consuming tasks reaching across multiple platforms and external partners.	Patient engagement tools are integrated and innovative, supporting direct-to-patient initiatives at scale. Patient support programs offer advanced features like AI for benefits verification. This allows for more personalized care to more people without compromising experiences or outcomes.
Clinical Trials	Legacy players provide specialized tools for managing clinical trials but are more aligned with traditional practices. They must still contend with siloed data, disconnected systems, and antiquated processes.	Study teams, patients, and clinical sites can connect on a single digital platform for AI-powered patient recruitment, site selection, and study management, leading to reduced costs and faster, more effective clinical trials.

Use Case	Legacy Systems	Life Sciences Cloud* 🧬
Medical	Current CRM tools used by medical science liaisons (MSLs) offer dependable functionality for capturing field insights, tracking stakeholder interactions, and ensuring compliance with industry regulations. However, these systems may lack the flexibility and real-time analytics needed to fully support evolving scientific engagement strategies.	MSLs benefit from advanced CRM platforms that streamline data management, automate medical inquiry handling with built-in audit trails, and support compliance with regulatory standards. These capabilities enhance operational efficiency and enable faster, more accurate responses, ultimately improving satisfaction among HCPs/KOLs.
Field Reimbursement Engagement	Case management escalations are reactive and transactional, solving individual cases. Engagement is rarely proactive, and larger, pervasive issues are not addressed holistically. Field reimbursement managers aren't always strategically assigned to the most impactful tasks in a timely manner.	Reimbursement teams have insights to identify and prioritize the most impactful engagements with access to the right materials to support HCP offices while coordinating efforts with case managers, key account managers, and field sales teams to accelerate patient time to therapy.
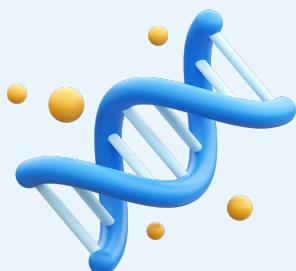
03   Smarter. Faster. Future-Forward.

Migration is inevitable. Making the right choice for your organization lies in looking beyond the present to a future full of innovation, scale, and clarity and aligning your technology and platform strategy to ensure success. You may have lingering questions and hesitancies, but the proof is in the possibilities for the future.

"This is the way it's always been done."

While a legacy CRM may suit your needs today, industry changes like expanding digital tools, HCP inaccessibility, patient empowerment, and increasing drug regulations are already shifting the landscape in a way that requires AI and real-time insights to help your sales team demonstrate value even faster.

If your organization has traditionally used CRM for only its most basic capabilities, you may be missing crucial insights that will lead your teams into the future. And when competition is fierce, the status quo simply won't cut it.

"I'm hesitant to switch to something new."

Transitioning your CRM will take time, money, and effort, regardless of the future you choose. A "lift and shift" mentality requires the same effort as moving to an end-to-end solution like Salesforce – without the reward of a future-forward platform. What works now does not always scale for the future, whereas an end-to-end system is inherently unified from the start.

Plus, you already know Salesforce; you just may not realize it. The tech you use today is built on our platform, meaning Salesforce is the foundation for how you already work. Now? It's better than ever with Life Sciences Cloud's purpose-built solution. It's even more data-first and agent-first to help you move in the direction the industry is headed.

"My legacy platform is considered the industry leader."

Industry leadership does not happen overnight. While many legacy platforms have decades of experience in the life sciences space, they lack the CRM expertise necessary for the next era of innovation.

Salesforce is the world's #1 CRM. With roots firmly planted in CRM, Salesforce is consistently named a leader by Gartner and IDC. Our work with 96% of the top 50 global pharmaceutical and medtech companies speaks to our deep industry knowledge. We understand the challenges, needs, and goals of the industry, which is why we've built a tailor-made solution in Life Sciences Cloud. We also support a wide range of industries outside of life sciences, meaning you benefit from innovation across sectors.

"Any AI functionality is good enough."

Going forward, only companies that drive meaningful AI adoption and strategies will win. This is because challenges like data growth, personalization at scale, and operational inefficiency will continue to grow. Organizations that use AI to their advantage in intentional, planful ways will outpace the competition, as AI is meant to be part of a larger core strategy, not an add-on.

For over a decade, Salesforce has invested in understanding, building, and harnessing AI for the future of work. We have non-P&L research teams study AI well before emerging technology becomes mainstream. We continually author papers on the importance and advancements in AI. And we regularly promote thought leadership on AI topics.

"I have all the migration support I need."

Can you move your entire marketplace through professional services alone? Don't put all your eggs in one basket and risk a burdensome migration. Salesforce's rich partnerships with global systems integrators, content partners, data vendors, mid-market, and commercial partners ensure you'll never be alone in your migration journey. We've even developed a Migration Alliances coalition of top partners to help life sciences organizations migrate as seamlessly as possible.

Open Ecosystem & Effortless Transitions

With the majority of life sciences companies currently on Salesforce-based CRM, migrating to a different, unproven platform is risky. Upgrading to our future-proof Life Sciences Cloud, you can rest assured that you won't lose your existing integrations, workflows and customizations. Our robust network of Trailblazers, SIs, ISVs, and strategic industry partners extends the power of our Platform.

Learn More

04 The End-to-End Difference

More than any other advantage, the power of Life Sciences Cloud lies in its end-to-end connectivity across your entire value chain. Instead of loading your tech stack with individual point solutions and data silos, all of your life sciences channels and touchpoints dwell in a single platform, giving you a chance at true interoperability.

An intelligent engagement platform also provides a true 360-degree view of HCP customers in a way that legacy CRM can't. Whereas traditional systems can create a fractured patient experience (e.g. using one system to enroll patients in a clinical trial and another to provide patient services), Life Sciences Cloud allows you to track the entire patient or customer journey, no matter the interaction.

LEGACY CRM	INTELLIGENT END-TO-END ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM
Tacked-on AI	Built-in AI
Limited vision	Future-forward innovation
Incremental fixes	Transformative changes
Disconnected data	Unified data
Static, manual processes	Automated workflows
Lack of market adaptability	Competitive advantage
Missed opportunities	Goal realization
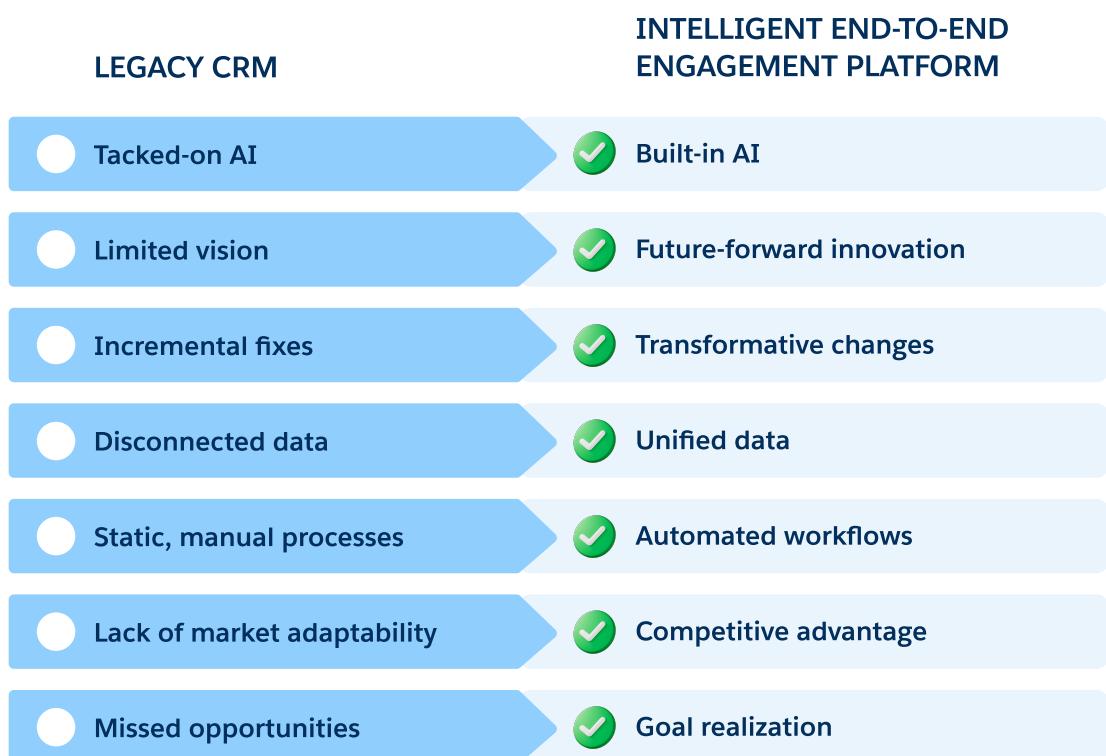
AI + Data Changes Everything

Thus far, AI in life sciences software has typically been a clickable, add-when-ready experience instead of being baked into the flow of work. With Life Sciences Cloud, AI has been weaved in the natural flow of business on every page and interface, every UI/UX design, and every process users interact with. That's because Salesforce has not only followed AI for the past decade – we've helped pioneer it.

With extensive investment in industry-specific automation, predictive intelligence and analytics, generative AI, and our own proprietary LLMs for genetic research and agentic AI, we continue to lead the way. That means life-sciences-specific AI is native to our platform and embedded across every workflow and business process, whether for verifying pharmacy benefits or simplifying pre-call planning.

But it's AI's connection to your data that's the true differentiator. Salesforce Data Cloud allows you to better manage, access, and derive insights from vast amounts of industry data, unifying it across different sources in real time without having to duplicate or swivel between systems. Pre-built connectors with MuleSoft and Data Cloud allow you to unify structured and unstructured data and metadata across EHRs, claims databases, and other external systems. This allows you to create dynamic, 360-degree profiles of your HCPs and patients in real time to activate intelligent recommendations and next best actions for engagement.

CONCLUSION

Invest in a Healthier Future with Life Sciences Cloud

Life sciences companies are at a crossroads. One path leads to constancy, incremental changes, and "business as usual." The other leads to transformation, long-term innovation, and competitive advantage.

Building on its deeply unified platform, Salesforce has continued to invest in pharma and medtech, industries primed for disruption, to deliver the next generation engagement platform that meets the needs of the industry today – and in the future. Life Sciences Cloud is poised to deliver unique, persona-based capabilities across commercial, clinical, and medical with embedded agentic AI capabilities that help accelerate time to value. Building on the innovation of teams across Salesforce, it will leap-frog innovation for the pharmaceutical industry.

And with it, you can finally provide the speed and engagement of life-enhancing therapies that HCPs and their patients have been looking for.

Learn More

*Any unreleased services or features referenced here are not currently available and may not be delivered on time or at all. Customers should make their purchase decisions based upon features that are currently available.

HCP Engagement and Medical capabilities will be GA with LSC4CE beginning in September 2025.