

# Three questions that should anchor your brand strategy



IN ASSOCIATION WITH Novasecta



By Ed Corbett

**'Strategy' is a word that is often overused and can mean different things to different people.** At its most basic, it is about making informed choices to achieve an agreed ambition, enabling resources to be deployed towards areas of greatest opportunity. The absence of a sound strategy typically leads to chaos and poor performance.

Most pharmaceutical companies have a process that cascades the corporate strategy through the organisation and enables the creation of tailored strategies in R&D, commercial and manufacturing. This ensures alignment across the organisation with the overall strategic direction and goals. Such a process often leverages templates to capture relevant insights to enable decision-making. However, templates are often used too rigidly, which risks limiting thinking and

creating a box-ticking mentality. Many a team has filled them in 'just to secure next year's budget'.

The rigid use of templates in brand strategy creation means organisations miss a huge opportunity. A great brand planning process should be embraced as a time to pause and really think about a product's future, make informed decisions that will benefit patients and deliver revenue for the company. Templates are simply tools to enable the right conversations and ensure key decisions are taken.

Commercial leaders have a critical role to play in the strategic planning process. They should provide guidance on how to get the most from any tools or templates, and focus teams on the things that really matter, such as gaining customer insight, competitive planning and making the most of new indications.

Setting strategy can seem daunting, complex and confusing. There is so much to consider and so many potential opportunities to pursue. As the fog of confusion clears and choices are made, commercial leaders and their teams should be anchored to three questions:

- 1) Who are our target customers (patients, physicians, payers) and why?
- 2) What do we want them to do differently and why?
- 3) How are we going to make this happen?

Although simple, they are powerful checks that ensure the organisation is focused on pursuing the most attractive commercial opportunities.

---

**Ed Corbett** is a Partner at Novasecta, Europe's leading pharmaceutical strategy consultancy