

# **DON'T GET LEFT BEHIND**

**FOUR ESSENTIAL THINGS PHARMA MANAGERS  
MUST MASTER BEFORE YEAR-END**



**JUNE 10, 2026 | 11 AM ET**

This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of registrants to the 2026 Spring Webinar, and provides an overview of the Webinar

Patient expectations have changed, market needs have shifted, and even bigger changes are coming as AI stands to transform healthcare on a scale unlike anything seen before. It's no surprise, then, that many in the pharma industry are concerned about falling behind.

Which markets shifts can no longer be ignored? Are current strategies becoming outdated? What matters most right now?

In this White Paper, the National Pharmaceutical Congress (NPC) spoke with industry experts about responding to these real-time changes. This topic will be further explored at the NPC Spring Webinar 2026, which takes place on Wednesday, June 10 at 11 a.m. ET.



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## Building change-ready teams

According to Deloitte's [2026 Global Human Capital Trends survey](#), "Seven in 10 business leaders say their primary competitive strategy over the next three years is to be fast and nimble—to quickly adapt to and capitalize on changing business, customer or market needs."

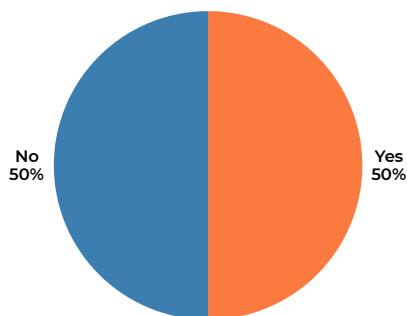
But what does that look like in practice?

For Benoit Lemelin, Global People Business Partner, Speciality Care, Sanofi, it means building organizational agility as a core muscle—beginning with leaders who embrace adaptability, learn fast, and lead through change.

"The key is to be more intentional and creative in how you build that muscle," he said. "Keep it simple and talk about it. Engage, listen, and act. Stop saying things like 'change is the new constant.' We know that—it's time to meet people where they are and bring them along. And if a few can't come along because the gap in their skillset is too wide, leaders need to be prepared to move them where better suited or let them go."

Sandra Heller, General Manager at Astellas Pharma Canada, echoed the need for agility. "In Canada, we're navigating an increasingly complex landscape with different provincial systems, evolving reimbursement expectations and ongoing pressure to improve timely, equitable access," she said. "The pace of change is simply too fast for rigid approaches."

In an unstable international market where shipping and raw material costs are only rising, has your organization identified backup supply chains?



The majority (75%) of participants also believed the increase in patients turning to AI for health answers **has sharpened their organization's focus on patient-directed communication.**

The NPC Institute surveyed Canadian pharmaceutical and healthcare executives to gather their thoughts regarding attitudes of pharma industry personnel toward emerging trends in the life sciences.

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## The rise of hybrid talent

“This is one of the most important workforce trends in pharma,” said Rodrigo Reis, General Manager, UBC Canada Inc. “The traditional model of experts working in separate silos—science, regulatory, commercial, and other functions—is outdated. Today’s environment is too complex, and decisions are too interconnected.”

The solution, he explained, is people who can move between disciplines without needing translators. “Scientific teams need to understand access implications, commercial teams need to understand regulatory requirements, and medical teams need to understand real-world evidence and digital engagement.”

A similar principle applies to leadership. “The best leaders in the next phase will be “hybrid leaders”—not only technically cross-functional, but culturally adaptive. They will know to lead in person and virtually, while creating cohesion across distributed teams,” Reis said.

## Ready or not, here it comes

AI is poised to revolutionize healthcare, with a recent [review](#) in the *Advanced Pharmaceutical Bulletin* suggesting it could accelerate drug discovery, improve manufacturing, streamline quality processes, and reshape areas ranging from formulation development to post-marketing surveillance.

Yet misconceptions abound about what AI can—and can’t—do.

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**RODRIGO REIS**  
GENERAL MANAGER  
UCB CANADA INC.





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According to Tom Slowe, CEO of Breadcrumbs Analytics in Buffalo, N.Y., it should be viewed as a tool to supplement—not replace—human expertise.

“I think AI’s biggest impact over the next several years will be less about replacing researchers and more about reducing fragmentation across healthcare and pharmaceutical workflows,” he said. “Healthcare data is incredibly siloed across EMRs, speciality pharmacies, payer systems, clinical trial systems, patient support programs and operational teams. Many of the inefficiencies in pharma today stem not from a lack of intelligence, but from a lack of continuity, context, and coordination across systems and organizations.”

Ethical considerations, Slowe added, will remain a major concern in data collection and analysis. “AI systems are trained on historical healthcare data, and that data invariably reflects longstanding inequities within the system. As a result, AI can unintentionally reinforce or amplify biases, particularly when socioeconomic disparities or historical underrepresentation are embedded in the data.”

Reis agreed that companies will need stronger data foundations. “The winners will not be the companies that simply use AI, but rather companies that redesign their operating models around high-quality data, scientific rigor, responsible automation, and faster evidence generation.”

**“I think AI’s biggest impact over the next several years will be less about replacing researchers and more about reducing fragmentation across healthcare and pharmaceutical workflows.”**



**TOM SLOWE**  
CEO  
BREADCRUMB ANALYTICS

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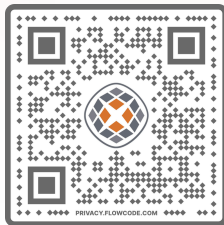
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## Four practical strategies to keep up

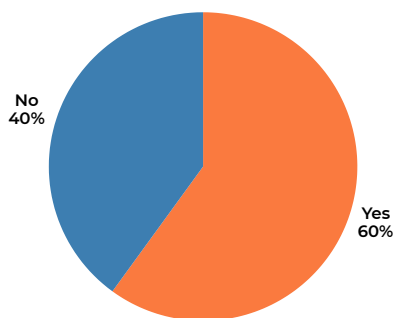
According to Heller, leaders can help their teams navigate change by focusing on four key strategies:

1. **Clarity on priorities:** Ensuring people understand where to focus, what success looks like, and how their work contributes to business and patient outcomes.
2. **Connection to purpose and the external environment:** Keeping patients at the centre while staying attuned to the realities of the Canadian healthcare system.
3. **Transparent communication:** Being honest with teams about challenges
4. **Alignment around a shared strategy:** Collaborating across functions while staying focused on common goals.

### Bottom line?

“Stay the course,” Lemelin advised. “Whether we are in a period of change or not, we all know what makes a great leader. That has not changed,” he said. “Know what you bring to the table as a leader—and what you need to dial up or dial down.”

The number of Canadians without a primary care doctor is growing, leaving them without a personal health advocate. Do you feel pharma has a duty to support the public in navigating the health system?



According to a respondent pharma can support patients by: ***“Ensuring we allow for patients to access services irrespective of whom they see for their care”***

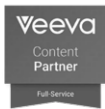
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# 2026 SPRING WEBINAR FACULTY



**SANDRA HELLER**  
GENERAL MANAGER  
ASTELLAS CANADA

For more than 25 years, Sandra Heller has had the privilege of working toward improving the lives of Canadians. As the new General Manager of Astellas Canada, she leads a dedicated team focused on improving the health of people through the provision of innovative pharmaceutical products.

Prior to Astellas Canada, Sandra was the General Manager of Seagen Canada where she witnessed the company's incredible transformation from a one-product company to having multiple products commercialized, further delivering on their mission to help improve the lives of people with cancer through targeted therapies.

Before joining Seagen, Sandra also worked for Gilead, Roche, and EMD Serono in various sales and marketing roles in therapeutic areas such as breast cancer, lung cancer, melanoma, bladder cancer, lymphomas, and multiple sclerosis. She also has extensive experience in patient support programs where she started her career.

As a leader, she's passionate about transformation, learning, collaboration, and the inspiring potential of science and innovation to make a meaningful difference in the lives of Canadians touched by cancer.



## **BEN LEMELIN**

GLOBAL PEOPLE BUSINESS PARTNER, SPECIALTY CARE  
SANOFI

Ben Lemelin is a seasoned People & Culture leader and executive coach currently serving as Global People Business Partner at Sanofi, where he supports several key Specialty Care business/functions, including Integrated Launch Capabilities, Global Oncology, Corporate Affairs, and Global Market Access.

With an extensive international track record spanning the pharmaceutical, professional services, private equity, and artificial intelligence sectors, Ben has led HR and talent strategies across up to 32 countries in Europe and the Americas. He brings deep expertise in executive coaching, culture transformation, organizational growth, M&A, leadership development, and succession planning.

Ben holds a Master of Business Administration focused on innovation from École des sciences de la gestion in Montreal and completed his undergraduate studies at McGill University. He has also completed the AI Executive Program at HEC Paris and is fluent in English, French, Spanish, and Italian.



## **RODRIGO REIS**

GENERAL MANAGER  
UCB CANADA INC.

Rodrigo Reis is a seasoned business professional with over 25 years of diverse experience in the pharmaceutical industry, currently leading UCB Canada Inc. operations as General Manager. Over the past two decades, Rodrigo has honed his skills in medical, marketing, and sales roles, gaining expertise in small molecules, biologics/vaccines, and rare diseases. His passion for improving patient lives is the driving force behind his remarkable journey.

Throughout his career, Rodrigo has worked in local, regional, and global roles, gaining significant experience in markets such as Brazil, Argentina, the United States, and now Canada, in leadership positions encompassing marketing, medical, and sales, and has also worked with policy and government affairs teams to advance policy in healthcare. This international exposure and diverse experience have enriched his understanding of diverse markets and business cultures.

Rodrigo joined UCB in Brazil in 2020, as Head of the Immunology business. After almost three years of a successful transformation, delivering double digit growth for three years in a row, Rodrigo was appointed as General Manager for Canada and relocated to the Greater Toronto Area with his family. Rodrigo holds a PharmD degree from the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, and an MBA from the Pontific Catholic University of Sao Paulo. This solid foundation has been instrumental in his professional journey.

Recently, Rodrigo has also been serving on the Board of Directors of two organizations: the pharma trade association Innovative Medicines Canada (IMC), where he chairs the Human Resources Committee, and the Belgium-Canadian Business Chamber (BCBC).

Beyond his professional interests, Rodrigo is a man of many passions. Music resonates deeply with him, and he spends his free time playing instruments. He also cherishes the company of his family, made up of his wife and two children. Rodrigo's background as a healthcare professional and his passion for positively impacting patient lives aligns perfectly with UCB's values.



**THOMAS E. SLOWE**  
CEO  
BREADCRUMB ANALYTICS

Thomas E. Slowe is CEO of Breadcrumb Analytics, a data and artificial intelligence company focused on making complex healthcare and research data verifiable, reproducible, and actionable. With more than 20 years of experience at the intersection of technology and business, he has led teams advancing the practical use of AI and data engineering in healthcare, media, advertising, and the public sector.

Tom's current work focuses on building AI and data pipelines that support label expansion, enhance transparency, reduce bias, simplify regulatory compliance, support SDOH, and anchor real-world evidence generation in the life sciences. He holds a Master's degree from the MIT Media Lab and a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from Rutgers University.



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For more information on the NPC Institute, please get in touch with us at [health@chronicle.org](mailto:health@chronicle.org) or visit [pharmacongress.info](http://pharmacongress.info).



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Reporter: Diane Bracuk

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FOUR ESSENTIAL THINGS PHARMA MANAGERS MUST MASTER BEFORE YEAR-END



11:00 AM	WELCOME	BEN PARRY & MITCH SHANNON
11:10 AM	PANELIST INTRODUCTIONS & PRESENTATIONS	SANDRA HELLER, BEN LEMELIN, RODRIGO REIS & TOM SLOWE
11:40 AM	LIVE PANEL DISCUSSION	
11:55 AM	CONCLUSION	BEN PARRY & MITCH SHANNON

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