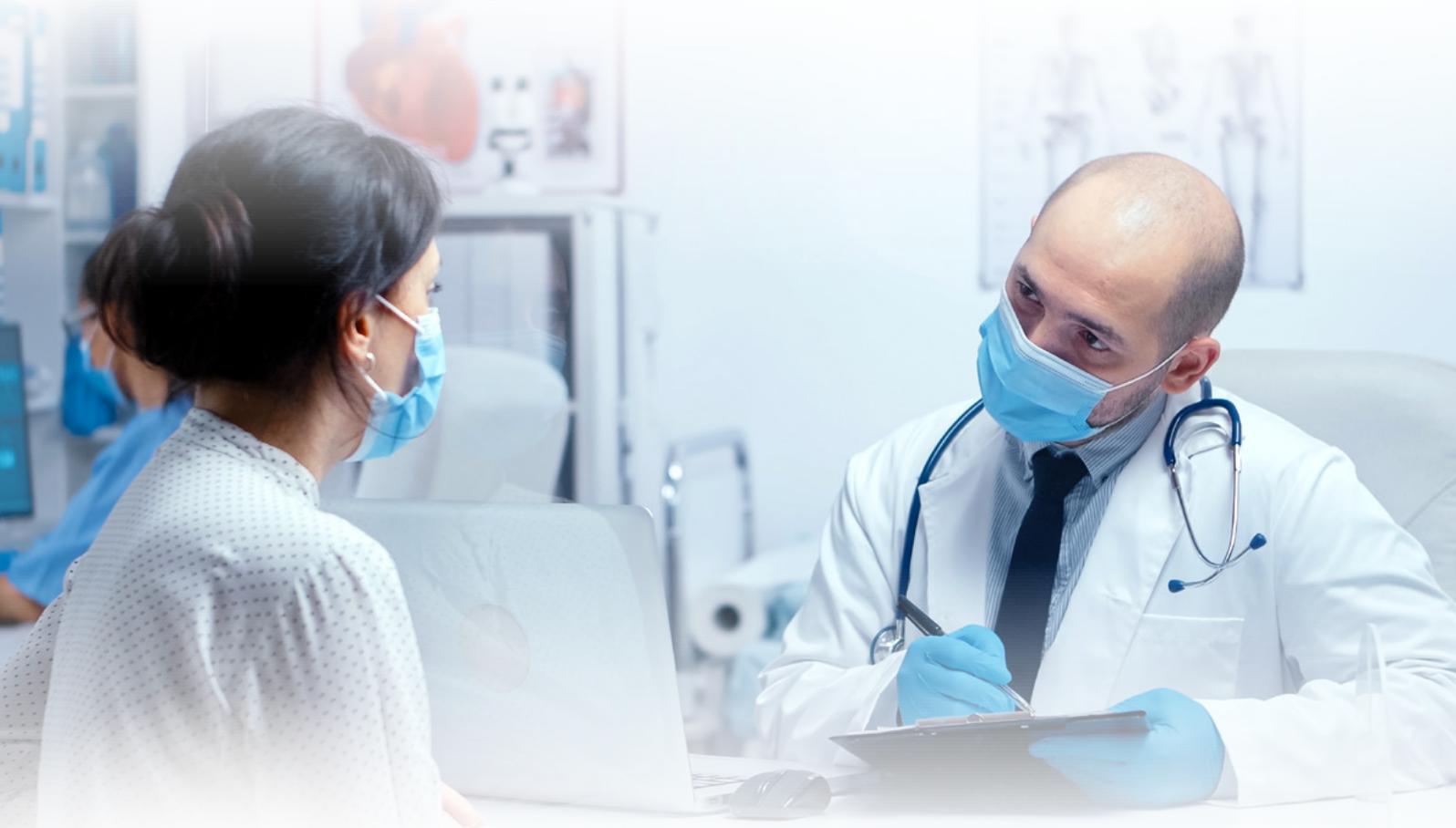


Reimagining the pharma landscape with design thinking

How design-led strategies are helping pharma firms stand out from the crowd and overcome challenges from changing consumer expectations, disruptive healthcare technologies and increasing competition



Discover inside:

- The pharma industry's perspective on design thinking and how it can optimize success by focusing on the customer experience.
- How Covid-19 accelerated the adoption of design thinking as a means to combat the crisis.
- Design trends and best practices from other industries that pharma can learn from to overcome challenges quickly and efficiently.

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The business value of design

All too often pharma companies are accused of being distant from their customers, but in countering this perception, many have been looking toward the world of design as a way of enhancing their customer focus and accelerating their position in the market.

Kiran Joshi, Senior Director of UX Design at Indegene, says: "Thinking like a designer is not a new solution-based approach, but has only recently come to fruition in pharma. This is because the industry came to define "the customer" as not only the doctors, nurses and clinicians, but also the non-clinical staff, patients and family caregivers.

"Pharma organizations are recognizing the importance of developing and maintaining relationships with the people for whom they are designing their products and services," Joshi adds. "Design thinking and human-centered design are fast becoming part of the core membrane in pharma's research methodology to ensure empathy is embedded into the industry's culture."

By definition, design thinking is a process that looks to understand the "problem", broadly assessing an industry's landscape, often in an effort to create innovative products or services that fit the needs of its core audience.

Human-centered design is a mindset, used under the umbrella term of design thinking, which is applied to businesses in order to put the human perspective at the center.

When used in conjunction, the pharma industry can create long lasting value for customers by uncovering their pain points, changes in behavior and unmet needs.

Vittal Iyer, Senior Manager, Creative Services at Indegene, explains: "Design thinking can really help pharma companies hunker down and evaluate key industry challenges and cater to solving the innate desires of customers through human-centered innovation. Take for example the Covid-19 pandemic; it is the ultimate design thinking use case for the pharma industry. Public health measures have significantly affected how patients can interact with their healthcare providers (HCPs), so by reaching into the designer's toolkit, pharma companies can deploy desirable solutions from a human point of view with what is technologically feasible and economically viable to the organization."

In this report, *Pharma IQ* – in collaboration with Indegene – dives into how to achieve human-centered innovation in the pharma market today and why a design-thinking approach is critical for driving commercial transformation to deliver customer excellence at scale.



Human-centered design:

Pharma's next frontier for commercialization

The period between 1995 and 2005 ignited a change in the pharma industry toward “bigger is better” following a **series of intense mergers and acquisitions** between Astra and Zeneca, Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz, Pfizer and Warner Lambert, Sanofi and Aventis, Glaxo and SmithKline, and Pfizer and Pharmacia. Often, as businesses merge and workforces grow, the customer-centric focus can get lost in the adoption of a new company culture. In the same respect, as the big pharma model pushed its way to the forefront, customer engagement took a back seat and problem-solving approaches were geared toward lowering risk and costs rather than human-centered design.

In recent years, however, pharma companies have turned to smart technologies and advanced analytics to improve their return on investment (ROI) in drug development. Increasingly, many are utilizing genomics, connected devices, big data and artificial intelligence to generate vast amounts of customer data, enabling HCPs to make faster diagnosed and more informed treatment decisions.

In response, pharma companies have to take steps to do more for customers than deliver safe and effective drugs by improving the customer experience from end-to-end of the supply chain - from drug discovery and manufacture, to packaging and marketing. To do this, they have to become more agile in their commercial approach by bringing the focus back to the human.

Heidi Padilla, Director, Customer Engagement at GSK, **told Pharma IQ**: “A [human]-centric approach can offer organizations numerous benefits if implemented correctly and which positively link to patient safety and clinical effectiveness. This approach can also solve the unmet emotional needs of [customers] while ensuring they are more engaged and well managed, especially in terms of adherence and control.”

By leveraging design-thinking methodologies at each stage of the commercialization journey of a drug – and to that, specifically adopting a human-centered lens – the pharma industry will be better placed to empathize with customers and improve the usability and user experience of a particular product or service.

Indegene's Iyer explains: “Design thinking can be the underscoring competitive differentiator to set any pharma company apart. Drawing from the designer's toolkit can help the pharma industry solve its patient-centricity crisis by seamlessly integrating the needs of the people with the possibilities of technology and the requirements of the business.”

Design thinking can also help to address biases such as product-led practices that are deeply rooted in the status quo of the pharma industry and which hamper innovation. While the design methodology is geared toward molding the experiences of customers, it can also have a profound effect on the innovators themselves as it helps them set aside their own views and uncover deeper insights of customer patterns, restoring customer trust in the pharma industry through empathy.

Indegene's Joshi adds: “A human-centric approach or empathy-based design approach can help pharma innovators build a dialogue with their customers. By making each phase of a commercial journey more collaborative between the user and innovator, from the idea generation to product implementation, users can better understand how to integrate the product into their lives, forming a stronger sense of trust in the brand, while accelerating wider business development in the pharma industry.”



Design-led strategies for smarter decision-making

What pharma can learn from other industries

Other industries engaged in commerce that have successfully integrated design-thinking methodologies into their business are those that are prepared to take risks. Fast-paced lives, evolving technologies and the need of several sunrise sectors demands businesses to innovate and adapt to new styles and approaches in order to create that "new" feeling for customers.

Gadget Review, an e-commerce review service, for example, [integrated design-thinking practices into its customer journey mapping strategy](#) and quickly discovered customers were finding the design of their website difficult to navigate. The company took a risk to redesign their website and saw an immediate increase in the number of customers who completed the user journey, and an uptick in customers who opted into their mailing list.

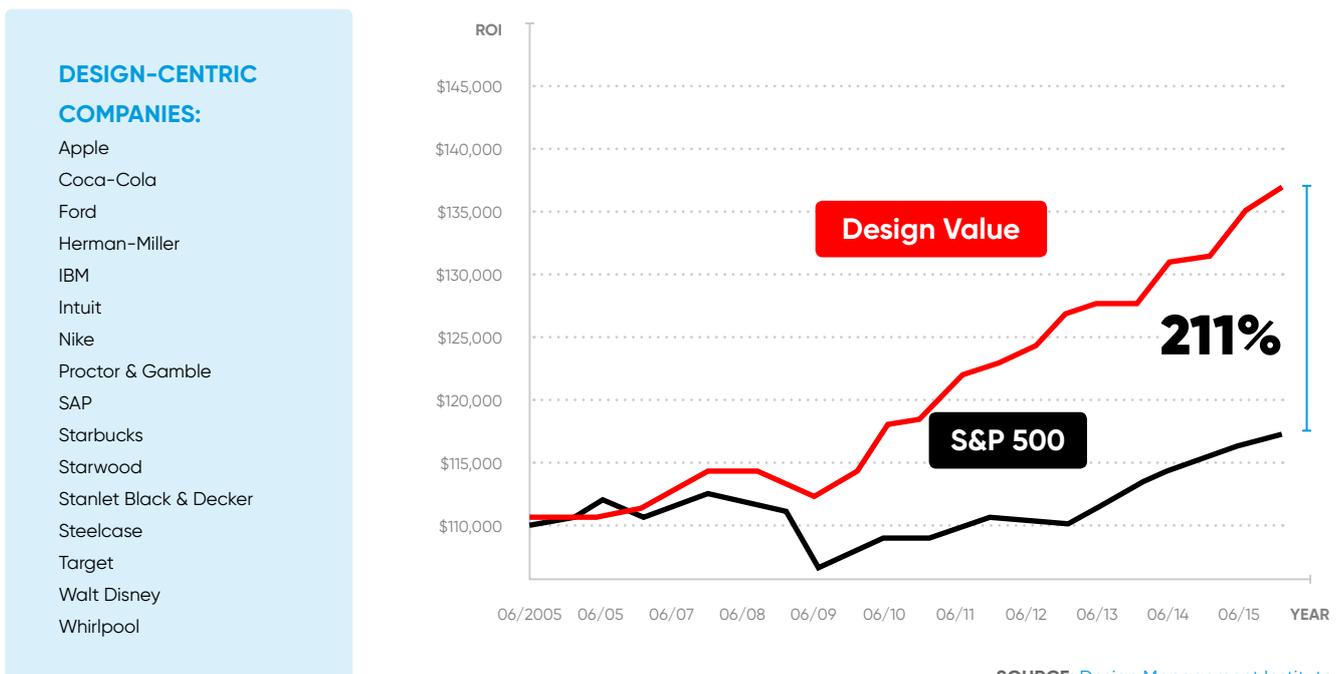
By creating a journey map that had the customer at the center, Gadget Review highlighted how valuable collaborating with customers are for increasing ROI, driving innovation at scale and optimizing processes to enable commercial transformation.

Several brands like Apple, IBM, Nike, Ford and Starbucks, boast on the title of innovators and have too used design-led narratives to create meaningful relationships with their customers, outperforming the Standard and Poor's (S&P) 500 by 211 per cent, [according to the Design Management Institute](#). (See figure one).

While pharma companies do not create discretionary products like the companies mentioned in figure one, the pharma industry can adopt similar design practices to also establish deeper connections with customers. [One healthcare led project in the US](#), for example, has worked to build personalized customer experiences, upon which to design, prototype and commercialize a repeatable and scalable model for personalized medicine.

By seeking to understand how individuals experience the current healthcare system, pharma companies will be in a prime position for transforming its traditional approach to commercialization and innovation, shifting from being engineer-driven to design-driven, from product-centric to customer-centric, and from marketing-focused to user-experience-focused.

Figure one: A study by the Design Management Institute indicates the value of design yields 2.11 times more return in 10 years than that of the S&P 500



Iyer notes: "Design-thinking processes create carefully planned dialogues between companies and users to help teams build on their diverse ideas, reducing all stakeholders' fear of change. They also give pharma companies the opportunity to go "beyond the pill" and create new communication perspectives with customers and products that are relevant to their audiences."

Overcoming Covid-19 challenges with design thinking

Demand for health services increased exponentially on a global scale as Covid-19 cases rose over the past year, while the pandemic caused unprecedented psychological distress on HCPs and caregivers including burnout, stress and moral injury. Exacerbated by the shortage of supplies and social distancing measures, HCPs and pharma companies have been renewing their approach through design thinking as it offers creative and innovation solutions to deliver change fast through human empathy.

In some cases, design-thinking principles are being applied to **medical education to create new educational strategies and programs** to ensure HCPs can continue to have a direct connection with customers and respond to their needs with confidence. The Covid-19 pandemic has ushered in a digital revolution in pharma, creating new opportunities for training in telemedicine and allowing medical students who were displaced from traditional care environments to continue their medical training online using a virtual care model.

An Indegene report titled, *The healthcare customer experience playbook*, recognized HCPs familiarity and comfort with digital channels have gone up significantly during the Covid-19 pandemic, with 48 per cent of HCPs believing digital channels will continue to play a material role in customer engagement and communication (see figure two). In order to continue providing a seamless customer experience pharma companies must prepare to implement an omnichannel strategy leveraging online

"The Covid-19 pandemic is the ultimate design thinking use case for the pharma industry."

Vittal Iyer

Senior Manager, Creative Services at Indegene



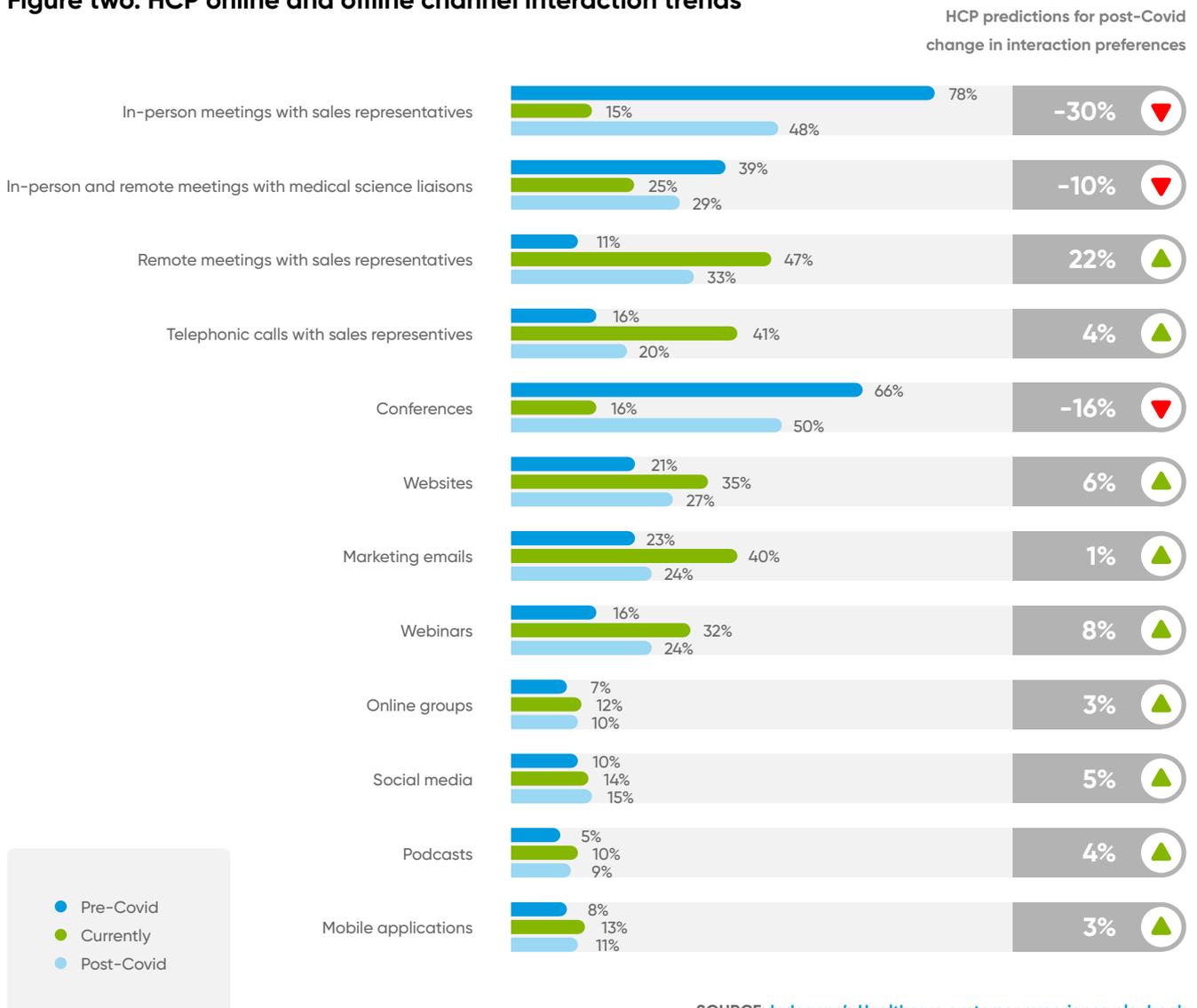
and offline channels including in-person meetings, medical conferences and webinars, and determine which channels are appropriate for what type of interaction.

In other cases, design thinking is helping to **fast track vaccine trials transforming the supply chain** and enabling faster innovation and a greater appetite for change. By empathizing with users through observation and engagement, defining the problem, identifying a broad range of ideas and testing vaccine prototypes with users, pharma companies have been able to accelerate the development of vaccines and their implementation in the current Covid-19 environment where there is rapidly evolving information and quick and wide distribution.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also created an opportunity for the pharma industry to refocus its attention on the needs of the customer, renewing the human connection to patient care through empathy. **Research from the Harvard Medical School** has shown empathy and compassion to be associated with better adherence to medications, decreased malpractice cases, fewer mistakes and increased patient satisfaction.

GSK's Padilla **notes**: "The Covid-19 pandemic has really pushed the pharmaceutical industry to more broadly seek a [human]-centric approach in healthcare, focusing on new infrastructure and remote capabilities that allow patients to continue to access medication and treatment

Figure two: HCP online and offline channel interaction trends



during this time. It makes perfect sense to design solutions and services around the patient, because they are the ones who are fundamentally using the products we are creating, or the therapies and services we provide.”

Putting design into practice

Applying design thinking and human-centered design to pharma's business model boils down to four key activities:



1. Understanding the users.

This is extremely important for keeping up with consumer trends and behaviors. Consumers can change their attitudes in a number of ways – from increased uses of technology and a willingness to share data, to finding out more about managing their own health. [A survey on the future of healthcare](#) found 80 per cent of respondents from pharma companies say changes in consumer attitudes and behaviors to be a key issue that will have the greatest impact on their company. By understanding user needs in the first instance will ensure pharma companies are keeping up with consumer trends by designing and building a service that works well for them.



2. Defining and producing the solutions.

Gaining consumer-centric data and insight firsthand provides pharma companies with a strong basis to build innovative products and design teams to engage the customer. While working to support one global pharma company to deploy better products for their customers, Indegene integrated its [patient support program \(PSP\)](#) that optimizes call centers, field support and mobile applications, into the pharma company's commercial process. This enabled the global pharma company to create higher-quality products based on the real time feedback received from customers.

Indegene's Joshi explains: “Organizations that take into account the customer data that is gathered first, means they will be able to define how and why people interact with their brand. In order to succeed in creating design-led solutions, pharma companies must consider the

human properties for how customers are communicating with their brand, assess the customer's approach over time as performance data becomes available, and have the infrastructure in place to maintain a cohesive approach.”



3. Testing the design.

User testing is an extremely important part of the design processes. Iyer explains, “good design amplifies process efficiency because it aligns all the stakeholders involved at every stage of the product journey”. As Iyer notes, if implemented correctly, design thinking can also increase a product's speed-to-market by revealing how the product resonates with customers.



4. Fulfilling the commitment to be consumer-centric.

Today, customers want to know what pharma companies are doing for them and in turn how pharma care is making the quality of their lives better. By providing consumers with solutions that raise their health awarenesses, inform them on disease management and provide them with access to solutions to improve adherence and health outcomes such as e-pharmacies, pharma companies will be better placed to understand customer behavior and create intervention plans and products that are in line with their customer's needs.

By implementing design thinking processes into one pharma company's PSP, Indegene discovered that their client's patient therapy adherence rate improved from 40 per cent to 85 per cent.

These activities may sounds easy to implement, but they break away from the traditional development approach of building something based on a product developer's best interpretation of the business and trying to market that interpretation to customers. By bringing empathy and the human mindset back into the equation, pharma companies will be able to streamline workflows and improve marketplace agility.

Putting customer experience at the center

Pharma companies that embrace the idea of the customer experience to its fullest will break-down internal barriers in physical, digital and service design. The importance of customer-centricity demands a broad-based view of where design can create value, especially as the global medical health (mHealth) app market is expected **to reach US\$101.6bn by 2026, at a CAGR of 18.4 per cent.**

Indegene's Iyer explains: "There are more than 318,000 mHealth apps available in major app stores today.

"With the boundaries between products and services merging into integrated experiences, customer-centricity needs to be a catalyst for change in the pharma

industry and the driving force behind the design-thinking process. Taking a customer-centric view will help product developers take inspiration from people's needs, motivations, and feelings, while creating meaningful solutions to actual problems."

Pharma companies that prioritize design thinking in their business model will boost their odds of shedding their traditional drug-maker image and instead be looked upon as trusted partners to deliver innovative products and services for their customers. The prize for design thinking and human-centered design are rich in developing customer loyalty, revenue growth and shareholder return over those of their industry counterparts.

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Kiran Joshi

Senior Director of UX Design at Indegene

Indegene thought leaders



Vittal Iyer

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Vittal Iyer is a consummate design evangelist, creative director and digital strategist with nearly 17 years of design industry experience. He is part of the leadership team at the Centre of Excellence for UX at Indegene. Iyer has delivered award-winning success stories through the development of end-to-end UX strategies and design-driven throughput across startups, mid-capitalization's and Fortune 500 ecosystems.



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About Indegene

Indegene is a global enterprise health tech solutions organization. It accelerates medical and commercial outcomes and personalized experiences by applying deep medical knowledge and verticalized technology across the value chain. The company has been appointed 18th in top 20 global biopharma organization list for its agile, customized,

and enduring partnership experience. With over 3,600 Indegeons in the US, Europe, China, Japan, and India, it has delivered more than 100 strategic engagements, fully commercialized about US\$2bn portfolios, and created over \$1m medical and commercial content assets.



About Pharma IQ

Pharma IQ is an online resource for life sciences and biopharma supply chain professionals providing value-rich content and insight through industry reports, customer trends, best practice, latest industry news, interviews with pharma thought-leaders, online events and so much more! Our focus is on the content that matters, providing our members with a primary resource to turn to and giving our partners a clear voice within a crowded spectrum.

By joining our growing network you will be able to connect, learn and interactive with other likeminded industry professionals and keep up-to-date with industry inside advice to help you achieve your business goals.

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