

# The Strategic Art of Pharma Partnerships

A Digital Health Company's Guide to  
Navigating Pharma Partnerships to  
Scale Patient Impact

An Ipsos / Dario Collaboratory Point of View

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# INTRODUCTION

Strategic partnerships with pharma are a powerful catalyst for digital health growth and impact. These collaborations enable digital health solutions to reach wider patient populations and address healthcare needs more comprehensively. Digital solutions can effectively complement medications by providing patients with the necessary tools and education to implement the behavioral changes required for optimal health management. For companies offering digital therapeutics, medication management, remote monitoring, or educational tools, pharma partnerships can be stepping stones toward broader commercial success.



Despite the shared goal of improving patient health and wellbeing, digital health companies can, however, face challenges with a pharma partnership strategy due to divergent business models, operational models, and cultures. To successfully navigate these partnerships, digital health companies must develop a deep understanding of the complex priorities and operational landscapes within pharma.



**By grasping the key drivers behind collaborations with pharma, digital health companies can position themselves to seize unparalleled opportunities for growth and patient impact.**





# Benefits of Pharma Partnerships

Pharma partnerships offer a range of compelling benefits for digital health companies seeking to grow and expand their impact.

- ▶ **Revenue generation & funding:**  
While partnership terms vary, partnerships with pharma can incorporate upfront payments, development funding, and sales royalties for digital health companies.
- ▶ **Access to commercial resources:**  
Since digital health companies generally have small-scale commercial resources, they can benefit greatly from leveraging their pharma partners' global marketing and sales capabilities to bring solutions to patients.
- ▶ **Expansion of offerings:**  
Collaborating with pharma to develop customized offerings can help digital health companies reach new therapeutic areas and patient groups.



# Challenges of Pharma Partnerships

However, navigating the complex landscape of pharma partnerships requires a nuanced understanding of the distinct operational contexts. While the potential for synergistic patient care is significant, several challenges must be addressed to foster successful collaborations.



- **Demonstrating Clear Value to Pharma:** Pharma is structured around a business model that generates revenue by bringing effective and safe treatments to patients. Digital health companies must present a compelling case for how their solution will help pharma further achieve their core business objectives to be considered as viable partnership opportunities.
- **Navigating Change:** The high turnover rate in pharma, with roles that can change every 12-18 months, can disrupt the continuity of partnerships. Those in new roles do not always want to continue the digital health partnerships that their predecessors formed. Therefore, digital health companies must be prepared to adapt to changing priorities and new project owners.
- **Cultivating Trust:** Pharma and digital health companies operate very differently in terms of their work cultures, communication styles, and overall approaches. Rushing into a partnership without a foundational understanding of each other's values and goals may lead to miscommunication and potential conflict.



## Examples of Digital Health Companies with Successful Pharma Partnerships

**Dario** provides a Patient Engagement as a Service Platform, integrating patient communities for peer-to-peer support, educational content to empower patients along their health journey, digital therapeutics for evidenced-based activities to address symptoms, virtual human coaching, and interventional referrals for clinical care access. Dario is partnered with **over half of the top 20 global pharma companies** and has a clear value story with claims-based evidence demonstrating that partnerships will:

- ▶ Lead to improvement in clinical outcomes, including 25-30% reduction in mental health symptoms, over 10% weight loss, and 2.0 improvement in A1C
- ▶ Enable pharma to identify and engage new patients for their treatments, with a 4x higher conversion rate than pharma's best digital media experience
- ▶ Help patients overcome the psychological and social barriers to improved mental and physical health, which leads to 10-20% higher medication adherence
- ▶ Ultimately, translate into a 10:1 ROI for the pharma partner

**Click Therapeutics** creates digital therapeutics, using cognitive and behavioral strategies to treat conditions like depression and substance use disorders. Through partnerships with **Otsuka, Boehringer Ingelheim, Indivior, and Magellan Specialty Health**, Click leverages its partners' sales and marketing networks, generating revenue through upfront payments, development funding, and sales royalties.

**Huma Therapeutics** develops digital platforms for decentralized clinical trials, companion apps, and educational campaigns. With **Bayer**, they created the Aspirin Heart Health Risk Assessment tool to raise public awareness. The tool launched in the US in 2023 and given success, is expanding global markets. Huma's partnership with **AstraZeneca** led to recognition as an exemplar of innovation in medical research.





# Key Factors Contributing to Companies' Successes in Securing Pharma Partnerships

## Compelling value story & education:

To effectively engage potential pharma partners, it is essential to provide a compelling value proposition that directly impacts business objectives. This can include:

- **Increased adherence**
- **Expanded reach to more patients**
- **Patient journey insights**
- **Access to patient data**
- **Increased efficiency in conducting clinical trials**

Given the novelty of digital health for pharma, education on how the solution works and the practical steps involved are imperative. Value metrics should be clearly articulated with educational context.



**Evidence-based value metrics:** Evidence is extremely important when communicating value to pharma companies. Evidence metrics generally fall into the following three categories:

1. **Activation and engagement on the digital platform**
2. **Clinical measures of improvement**
3. **Claims-based validation of economic value**

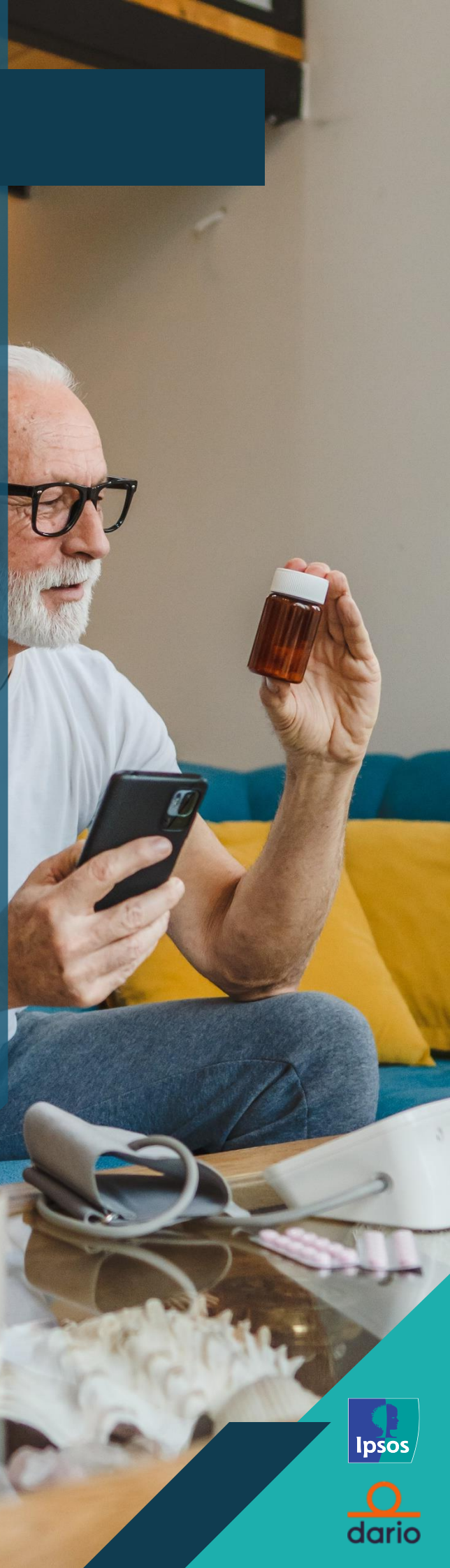
With each level increase, the cost to obtain the evidence increases, and the value to potential pharma partners becomes stronger. For example, medication adherence, which can be measured through script conversion and the proportion of days covered, is a claims-based validation of economic value that directly impacts drug sales and demonstrates the value of the partnership.

**Easily configurable solutions:** Platforms that are easy to configure to pharma partners' unique needs significantly reduce product development time and time to market. This flexibility allows for rapid scaling and adaptation to meet the specific requirements of each partnership.



## IN CONCLUSION....

Partnerships with pharma can help digital health companies significantly scale their solutions and reach more patients by leveraging pharma's commercial resources and global presence. Success hinges on demonstrating value to pharma, communicating how partnerships will lead to revenue generation, and providing foundational education about digital solutions.



# HOW IPSOS HEALTHCARE ADVISORY PARTNERS WITH DIGITAL HEALTH COMPANIES

**Ipsos partners with digital health companies to help them succeed in their commercialization efforts.**

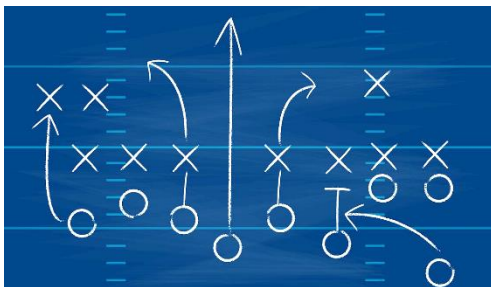
**We customize our approach for each of our clients, which may include some of the following components:**

## Go-To-Market Strategy:

Develop a multi-phase and dynamic commercialization strategy for a digital health solution focusing on identifying the types of companies best suited for strategic partnership and those most likely to be receptive to the solution.



## Pharma Partnership Playbook



Develop a multi-phase and dynamic commercialization strategy for a digital health solution focusing on identifying the types of companies best suited for strategic partnership and those most likely to be receptive to the solution.

## Patient Demand Value Story

Assess the likelihood of adoption for a digital health solution among specific member populations to generate the data necessary to pique health plan interests based on their goals related to member engagement.





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