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What Your Omnichannel Strategy Can Learn From a Forest

Author: Annemarie Crivelli, EVP, Managing Director,
Omnichannel Enablement at BGB Group

During a recent client presentation, I found myself explaining omnichannel marketing using an analogy that has stuck with me: think of your marketing ecosystem like a forest.

When you walk through a forest, what captures your attention? The towering trees, vibrant wildflowers, and diverse plant life creating a rich canopy above. It's beautiful, dynamic, and alive with activity. But here's what most people miss: everything you see above ground is only possible because of the intricate root system thriving beneath the surface.

The same principle applies to omnichannel marketing. Your campaigns, content, and customer touchpoints are the visible forest canopy. But without a robust infrastructure below, even the most creative campaigns will struggle to survive, let alone flourish.

The Visible Canopy: What Everyone Sees

Most pharmaceutical brands focus their energy on the visible elements: the email campaigns reaching their high-profile HCPs, the conference presentations showcasing clinical data, the sales rep visits discussing treatment protocols, and the digital ads targeting important IDNs and key accounts. These touchpoints are your forest's canopy, the part that stakeholders experience and remember.

Like trees competing for sunlight, these individual tactics often operate independently, each trying to capture attention without coordination. An email campaign runs on its own timeline, disconnected from the conference strategy. The sales team operates with different messaging than the digital team. Content gets created in silos, with each channel developing its own materials.

The result? What appears to be a lush marketing forest is actually a collection of isolated plants, each struggling to thrive without the support system they need.



In an increasingly competitive landscape, the brands that cultivate strong foundational systems will be the ones that flourish while others struggle to maintain their footing.

The Hidden Root System: Your Infrastructure Foundation

Beneath every thriving forest lies an interconnected root network that shares nutrients, water, and information between plants. Scientists have discovered that trees communicate through these underground networks, warning each other of threats and sharing resources during times of scarcity.

Your omnichannel infrastructure should function the same way. The data flows between your CRM and marketing automation platforms are like root networks sharing vital nutrients. Your content management system acts as the soil that feeds every touchpoint. Your analytics platforms serve as the communication network, sharing insights across all your marketing “plants.”

When a physician opens an email about your diabetes medication, that action should flow through your root system to inform every other touchpoint. Your sales rep should know about the engagement when they visit next week. Your digital advertising should adjust to avoid over-frequency. Your content system should serve up related materials that build on the established interest.

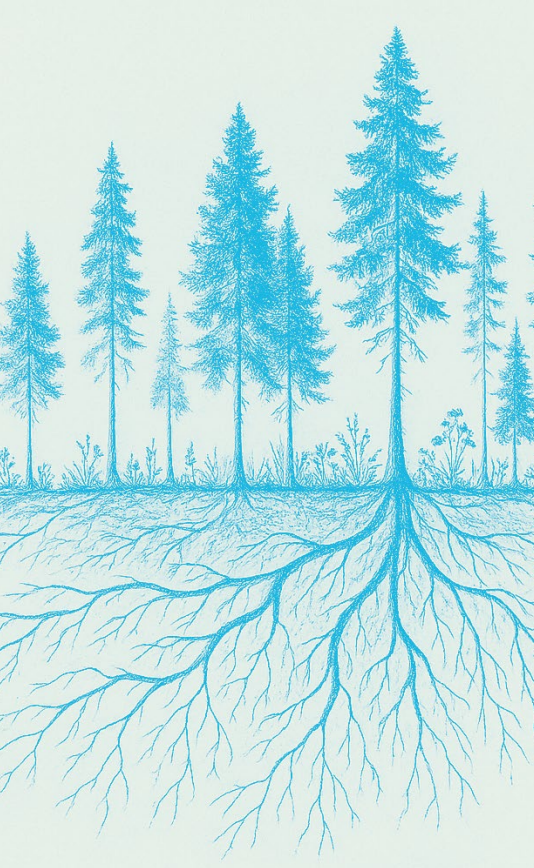


Why Most Marketing “Forests” Fail to Thrive

I’ve worked with countless pharmaceutical brands that have invested heavily in beautiful canopy elements while neglecting their root systems. They launch sophisticated email campaigns that can’t talk to their CRM. They create personalized content that takes months to get through approval processes. They measure each channel in isolation, missing the interconnected growth patterns that indicate real health.

It’s like trying to grow prize roses by focusing only on the blooms while ignoring soil quality, root health, and nutrient distribution. The flowers might look impressive initially, but they won’t sustain long-term growth or weather competitive storms.

Consider what happens when a new treatment enters your therapeutic area. Brands with strong root systems can quickly adapt to their entire ecosystem, sharing competitive intelligence across all touchpoints and adjusting messaging throughout their forest. Brands with weak infrastructure watch their isolated campaigns struggle to respond coherently, sending mixed signals that confuse rather than convince stakeholders.



Cultivating Your Omnichannel Root System

Building robust marketing infrastructure isn’t glamorous work. It doesn’t win creative awards or generate immediate excitement in boardroom presentations. But it’s the foundation that determines whether your visible campaigns will flourish or wither.

Start by mapping your current root system. How does data flow between your platforms? When a physician downloads a clinical paper from your website, does that action inform your email frequency? Does your sales team know which prospects have been engaging with your digital content? Can you quickly deploy new messaging across all channels when clinical data updates?

Next, identify the gaps where your roots aren’t connected. Maybe your content approval process creates bottlenecks that prevent timely responses to market changes. Perhaps your analytics platforms provide channel-specific insights but can’t show cross-channel patient journeys. These disconnected roots limit your forest’s ability to thrive.

Finally, invest in the infrastructure that connects your ecosystem. This might mean integrating platforms that currently operate in isolation, establishing content frameworks that enable rapid deployment across channels, or implementing measurement systems that track stakeholder progression rather than channel-specific metrics.

The Reward: A Thriving Marketing Ecosystem

When you get the root system right, magic happens above ground. Your campaigns stop competing with each other and start reinforcing shared objectives. Physicians experience coherent, progressive conversations with your brand rather than random tactical touches. Your content creators can focus on crafting compelling messages rather than wrestling with operational bottlenecks.

Most importantly, your marketing ecosystem becomes resilient. When competitive threats emerge or market conditions shift, your integrated root system can quickly redistribute resources and adapt messaging across all touchpoints. What looks like effortless coordination above ground is actually the result of sophisticated infrastructure working invisibly below.

Tending Your Garden

The forest analogy reminds us that omnichannel marketing isn't about managing individual campaigns, it's about cultivating an ecosystem. The most successful pharmaceutical brands understand that their visible marketing activities are only as strong as the infrastructure supporting them.

Like any gardener will tell you, healthy soil and strong roots aren't just nice to have, they're essential for sustainable growth. Your omnichannel strategy deserves the same level of attention to its foundational elements.

Your campaigns may look impressive on the surface, but sustainable success requires investing in what lies beneath. In an increasingly competitive landscape, the brands that cultivate strong foundational systems will be the ones that flourish while others struggle to maintain their footing.



About the Author

Annemarie Crivelli is EVP, Managing Director of Omnichannel Enablement at BGB Group, where she leads the development and implementation of data-driven omnichannel strategies for pharmaceutical and biotech brands. With over 25 years of experience in healthcare marketing, she specializes in translating complex scientific innovations into compelling stakeholder experiences.

About BGB Group

BGB is an independent agency of 500+ employees delivering comprehensive solutions across healthcare advertising, medical communications, payer and market access, and strategic consulting with a commitment to speed, efficiency, and superior results. www.bbggroup.com

Ready to cultivate an omnichannel strategy with a strong foundational system?

Email **Amanda Eckel** at BGB Group at aeckel@outreach.bbggroup.com to start building a resilient marketing ecosystem that truly flourishes.