

# The Modern Medical Affairs Impact Playbook | Turning Insight into Influence in 2026

Includes perspectives from MAPS Americas 2026 Annual Meeting

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# Medical Affairs at an Inflection Point

Medical Affairs is operating in a fundamentally different environment than it was even a few years ago.

The volume of data has expanded exponentially, from field insights and congress learnings to real-world evidence and digital engagement data. At the same time, expectations have evolved. Medical Affairs teams are now being asked to move faster, engage more strategically across channels, navigate increasing compliance complexity, and demonstrate measurable impact - all within tighter resource constraints.

Artificial intelligence has introduced both opportunity and pressure. While it promises to accelerate insight generation and decision-making, it has also raised important questions around where and how it should be applied. Meanwhile, omnichannel engagement is no longer optional, yet many organizations are still grappling with how to operationalize it without significant infrastructure investment.

The implication is clear.

**The mandate for Medical Affairs is no longer engagement.  
It is converting insight into measurable influence.**

To do that effectively, organizations must rethink how insight is captured, synthesized, and applied – as well as how engagement is orchestrated and impact is defined.

This playbook outlines a three-part model for driving impact and concludes with five emerging mandates shaping Medical Affairs in 2026.



## Insights Directly from MAPS 2026

- **Strong debate around AI adoption: speed vs intentionality**
- **Increasing pressure to demonstrate value in business-relevant terms**

# A Three-Part Model for Turning Insight into Influence

Medical Affairs leaders are not facing a single challenge - they are navigating a series of interconnected shifts. Addressing them requires a more integrated approach.

This playbook outlines a simple but powerful model:

## SIGNAL → SCALE → PROVE

- **Signal:**  
Extracting clear, actionable insight from an overwhelming volume of data
- **Scale:**  
Orchestrating scientific engagement in a coordinated, efficient, and meaningful way
- **Prove:**  
Demonstrating measurable impact in terms that resonate across the organization

Together, these capabilities enable Medical Affairs to move from activity-driven execution to influence-driven strategy.



# SIGNAL SCALE PROVE

## From Data Overload to Strategic Insight

Medical Affairs does not lack data. It lacks signal - the ability to extract clear, actionable insight from an overwhelming volume of inputs.

Field medical teams generate a constant stream of observations. Congresses produce dense volumes of new information. Advisory boards surface nuanced perspectives from key opinion leaders. Real-world evidence continues to expand the data landscape. Increasingly, digital channels add yet another layer of inputs.

Individually, each of these sources is valuable. Collectively, they can become overwhelming.

Without a structured approach to synthesis, critical insights are often buried, delayed, or underutilized.



## Centralize and Synthesize Insight

The first step in strengthening signal is reducing fragmentation.

In many organizations, insights live in multiple places - CRM systems, slide decks, meeting notes, and individual inboxes. This creates friction not only in access, but in interpretation.

Leading Medical Affairs teams are moving toward more structured models for insight intake and synthesis. This includes:

- Standardizing how field insights are captured and categorized
- Consolidating congress and advisory learnings into shared repositories
- Establishing clear processes for prioritizing and escalating key signals
- Creating cross-functional visibility into emerging themes

The goal is not to collect more data. It is to make existing data more usable.

# Use AI as Time Compression, Not Strategy Replacement

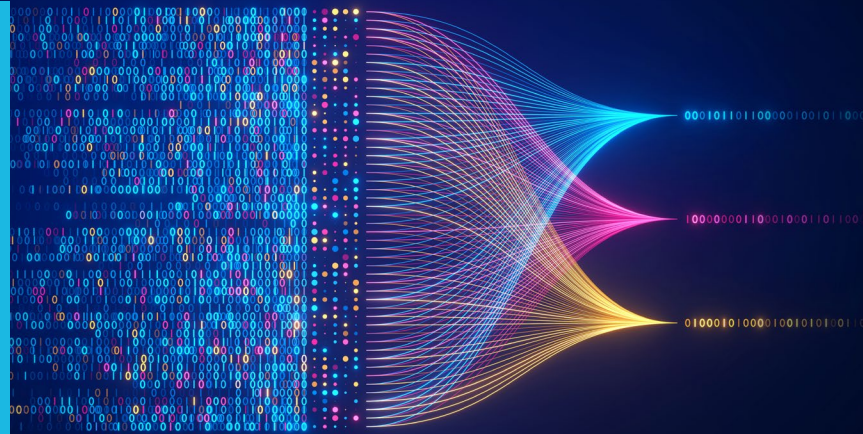
Artificial intelligence has quickly become one of the most discussed topics in Medical Affairs. Across the industry, organizations are approaching it in very different ways.

Some see AI as a competitive advantage - a way to move faster, synthesize more information, and stay ahead of evolving scientific and market dynamics.

Others emphasize caution, noting that without clear use cases and defined success metrics, AI risks becoming another layer of noise rather than a driver of value.

**As one MAPS 2026 panelist noted:**

“Organizations that move too fast risk losing more than they gain... you don't want your organization to suffer from *pilot-itis*.”



The most effective approach is not choosing between speed and caution. It is applying AI with intent.

In practice, this means using AI to compress time to insight in targeted, high-value areas, such as:

- Clustering and synthesizing KOL feedback across interactions
- Rapidly summarizing new literature and congress outputs
- Identifying patterns in field intelligence that may not be immediately visible
- Monitoring sentiment and engagement trends over time

In each case, AI enhances - but does not replace - strategic judgment.

# From Data Collection to Signal Clarity

Ultimately, strengthening signal is about shifting the role of Medical Affairs from information collector to insight engine.

This requires discipline in how data is captured, clarity in how it is synthesized, and intentionality in how it is applied.

When signal is strong, organizations are better equipped to:

- Identify emerging scientific and clinical trends earlier
- Align more effectively across functions
- Adapt engagement strategies in real time
- Inform decisions that drive meaningful impact

Without it, even the most robust data ecosystem struggles to translate into action.



## Insights Directly from MAPS 2026

- **Ongoing challenge: large volumes of KOL and field insights with limited synthesis**
- **Lack of tangible AI use cases across organizations**
- **Continued tension between speed of execution and strategic clarity**

## Orchestrating Scientific Engagement Without Rebuilding the Tech Stack

If signal defines what matters, scale determines whether it has impact.

Medical Affairs teams are under increasing pressure to engage more broadly across stakeholders, yet many are doing so within existing systems and constrained resources.

This is where omnichannel often becomes misunderstood.

It is not about adding more channels.

It is about orchestrating the ones you already have.

## Redefine Omnichannel for Medical Affairs

In a Medical Affairs context, omnichannel is not a commercial tactic. It is a scientific engagement strategy.

Rather than viewing engagements as isolated events, leading teams are treating them as part of a connected experience where each interaction builds on the last.

This shift enables Medical Affairs to move from episodic interaction to sustained scientific dialogue.



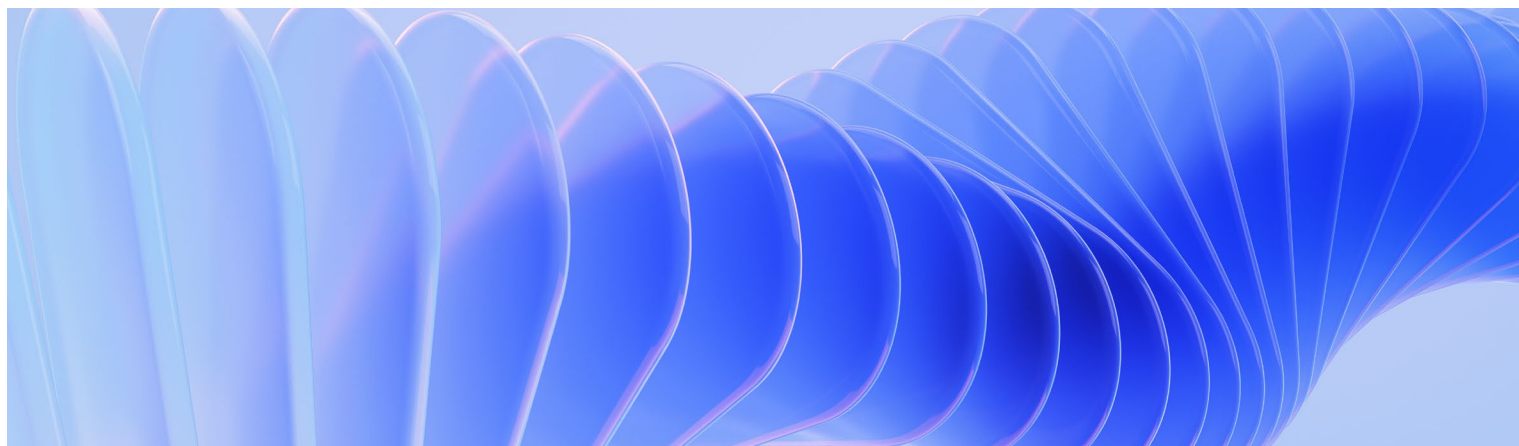
# Do More with Existing Assets

Many organizations are not lacking tools. They are underutilizing the ones they already have.

Opportunities to scale engagement often exist within:

- Existing CRM systems
- More structured MSL reporting
- Hybrid congress strategies that extend engagement beyond the event itself
- Digital platforms that support ongoing scientific dialogue

The goal is not to replace infrastructure. It is to align it.



# Expand the Definition of Influence

Influence today extends beyond traditional academic KOLs.

It includes:

- Digital opinion leaders shaping peer-to-peer dialogue
- Patient advocates contributing real-world perspective
- Policy and access stakeholders influencing adoption pathways

Expanding this ecosystem enables more relevant and effective engagement.

# Navigating the Medical–Commercial Interface

A growing tension exists between alignment and independence.

Some organizations are working to break down silos to improve efficiency and reduce HCP fatigue.

Others maintain that separation is essential to preserve scientific credibility.

**As one MAPS 2026 panelist noted:**

“Focus on the opportunity for overlap vs where the silos are. This ensures you hit the objectives of both sides of the debate. Work smarter together.”

The most effective organizations are not choosing sides. They are designing more intentional interfaces, allowing for shared insight where appropriate, while maintaining clear boundaries where it matters.



## Insights Directly from MAPS 2026

- **Ongoing tension between medical–commercial alignment and independence**
- **Increasing concern around HCP fatigue from uncoordinated engagement**
- **Continued shift toward hybrid and digitally enabled interaction models**

## What a Modern Medical Affairs Impact Model Looks Like

If scale determines reach, impact determines value.

For years, impact has been measured through activity. Today, that is no longer enough.

The question is no longer:

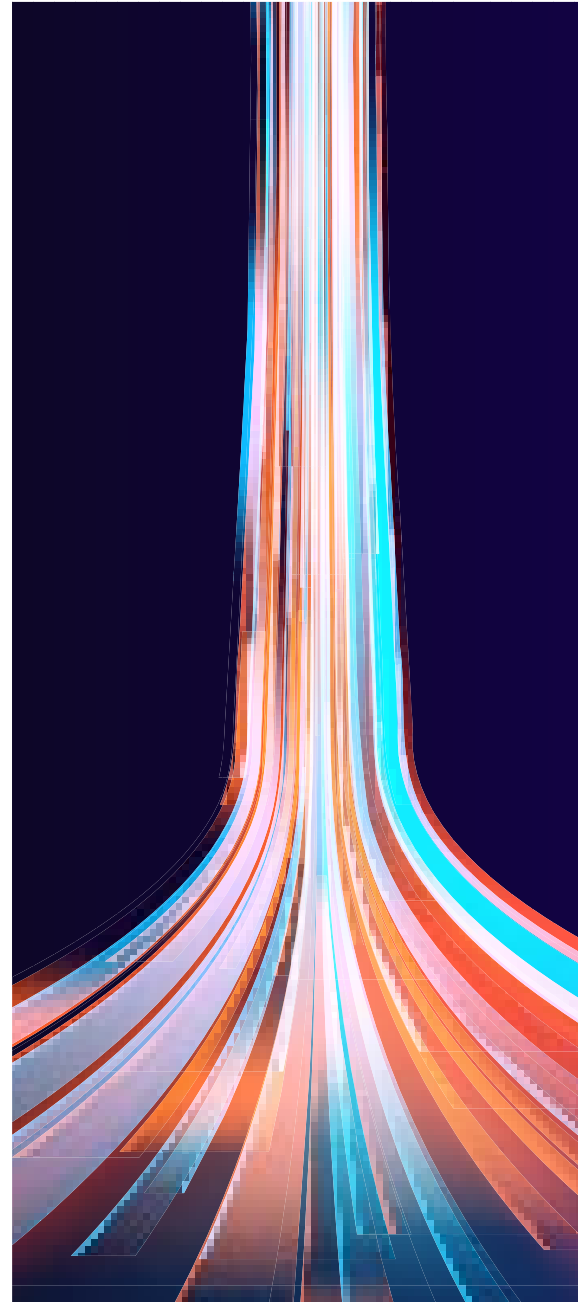
**What did we do?**

It is:

**What changed because we did it?**

Leading organizations are focusing on four interconnected dimensions:

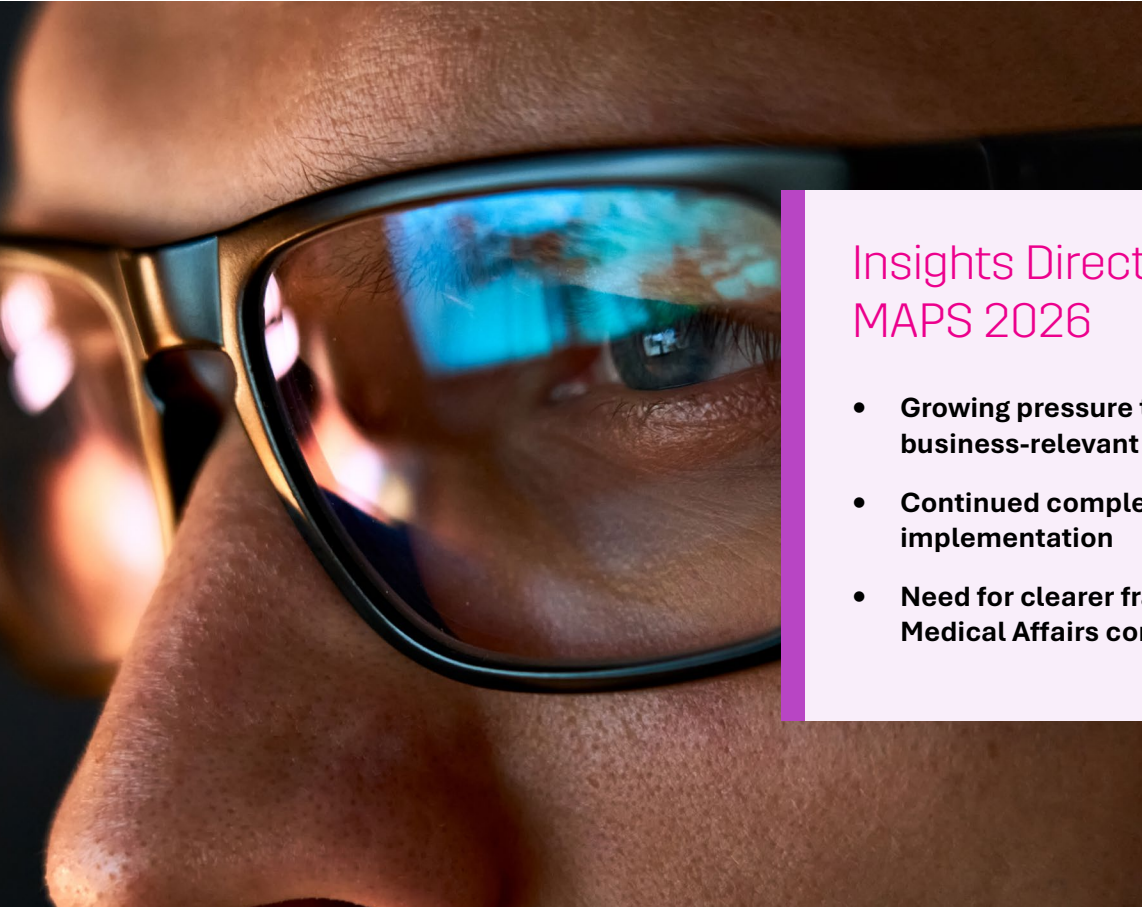
- 1. Insight Velocity**  
Speed from signal to action
- 2. Engagement Depth**  
Quality and progression of scientific dialogue
- 3. Evidence Translation**  
Movement from data to clinical relevance
- 4. Enterprise Alignment**  
Contribution to broader organizational strategy



# Snapshot: A Modern Impact Framework

Dimension	What It Reflects	Strategic Signal
Insight Velocity	Speed of synthesis and action	Agility
Engagement Depth	Relationship strength	Influence
Evidence Translation	Operationalization of RWE	Scientific credibility
Enterprise Alignment	Cross-functional contribution	Business value

This is not about grading performance. It is about making value visible.



**Insights Directly from MAPS 2026**

- **Growing pressure to demonstrate impact in business-relevant terms**
- **Continued complexity around RWE and SIUU implementation**
- **Need for clearer frameworks to measure Medical Affairs contribution**

# The 5 Mandates for Medical Affairs in 2026

These shifts are not isolated trends. Together, they point to a new operating model for Medical Affairs.

1. **Centralize signal**
2. **Operationalize AI realistically**
3. **Orchestrate engagement strategically**
4. **Design evidence with exchange in mind**
5. **Measure influence, not activity**

Medical Affairs is evolving from a function centered on information delivery to one defined by insight, influence, and impact.

Organizations that embrace this shift will be better positioned to navigate complexity, strengthen scientific credibility, and play a more strategic role in shaping the future of healthcare.

**If these themes resonate, we welcome the opportunity to continue the conversation.**

**Contact us at [medaffairs@bgbgroup.com](mailto:medaffairs@bgbgroup.com) to explore how BGB Group can support your Medical Affairs strategy.**



## Selected Resources

[Elevate Your Impact: The 7-Point Checklist for High-Stakes Scientific Communications](#)

[4 Unseen Hurdles: Why Even Brilliant Scientific Data Gets Lost in Translation](#)

[Strategic KOL Engagement in Medical Affairs: A Playbook for Maximizing Impact](#)

[5 Must-Do Med Comms Actions to Close 2025 Strong and Set a Foundation for 2026](#)

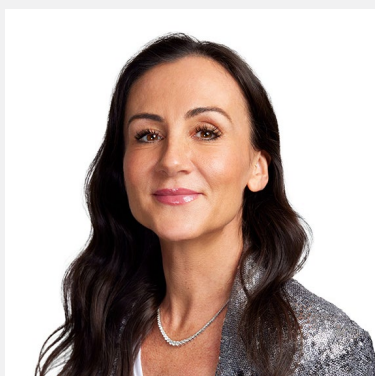
[The Human Dimensions of Cancer Care Deserving Our Attention](#)

[Beyond Blood Sugar: Embracing Complexity in Diabetes Care](#)

[Gut Check: Aligning Ambitions and Realities in the Competitive World of Gastroenterology Brand Promotion](#)

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## About the Authors



### Amanda Eckel

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With two decades of experience, Amanda excels at the art of translating insights and data into powerful customer experience. She has worked in the US and EU across traditional HCP and consumer advertising, innovative digital marketing, and medical communications, launching multi-indication brands across all major therapeutic areas. Her work has resulted in industry award winning unbranded disease awareness and branded campaigns. After graduating with a degree in writing from Johns Hopkins University, Amanda has worked in client services, strategy, and growth roles. Her responsibilities include getting behind the “why” of everything and asking that of customers, her clients, her peers, and herself.



### Denise Lee-Thorp

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PhD in Pharmacology, Cornell University

Denise is a PhD-trained cancer researcher with nearly a decade of experience in medical communications and healthcare marketing, specializing in medical strategy. She brings deep expertise partnering with both medical affairs and commercial teams to translate complex science into clear, impactful narratives across the product lifecycle. Her experience spans scientific platform development, launch and lifecycle strategy, KOL engagement, advisory boards, and promotional medical education/advertising. She has worked across a broad range of therapeutic areas, from oncology to rare disease and immunology.

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## About BGB Group

BGB Group is a commercial solutions partner to the life sciences industry, delivering integrated Strategic Advisory, Advertising, Medical Communications, and Market Access solutions that help brands navigate complexity and achieve measurable commercial impact. With integrated capabilities and a commitment to client success, BGB Group helps clients achieve meaningful outcomes that improve patient lives. Learn more at [bgbgroup.com](https://bgbgroup.com).