

Michael R. Russo

Pharma Digital, Data & AI Executive | Omnichannel HCP & Patient Engagement | AI Strategy & Digital Health
New York, New York | michael.russo@mac.com | linkedin.com/in/michaelrrusso | michael-russo.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Pharma digital, data and AI executive with 25+ years across the United States and Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA), trained first as a scientist, then as an enterprise systems architect, before building pharma digital marketing from the ground up. Led launches and digital growth for Ampyra, Zanaflex Capsules and INBRIJA, then served as Global Head of Digital Strategy at Merz Therapeutics for XEOMIN, INBRIJA, AMPYRA and FAMPYRA. Today focused on applied AI in pharma commercial work: AI roadmaps, next-best-action, and GenAI in content and engagement.

SELECTED IMPACT

- **\$100M+ per year:** led the digital campaigns behind INBRIJA and AMPYRA combined net sales of over \$100 million per year.
- **Global portfolio:** led digital strategy for XEOMIN, INBRIJA, AMPYRA and FAMPYRA across the United States, Canada and EMEA, with a team of 12 and full P&L accountability for a €7M budget.
- **AI at enterprise scale:** led the company-wide AI roadmap at Merz Therapeutics and built AI next-best-action models at Acorda that lifted HCP sales conversions.
- **Digital health:** team built a post-stroke rehabilitation app developed with HCPs in France and launched with the World Stroke Organization in Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Global Head, Digital Strategy

Merz Therapeutics | Raleigh, North Carolina / Frankfurt, Germany | July 2024 – August 2026

- Led global digital strategy for the neurology portfolio: XEOMIN, plus INBRIJA, AMPYRA and FAMPYRA after Merz acquired them from Acorda, across the United States, Canada and Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA), with a cross-functional team of 12 and full P&L accountability for a €7M annual digital budget, including agency and vendor management.
- Led the company-wide AI roadmap strategy and drove adoption through company-wide AI training.
- Led the global analytics platform and strategy: modernized the analytics framework for unified reporting across all brands and markets, and designed a common attribution model integrating sales, CRM and digital data across Europe and the United States.
- Led customer journey orchestration across HCP and patient channels, built on a customer data platform (CDP) with GDPR-compliant data governance.
- Responsible for the company-wide Veeva CRM to Vault migration strategy: business case, request for proposal (RFP), technical harmonization and cutover plan with Commercial, Information Technology, Marketing and Medical.
- Team owned a digital health app for home-based post-stroke spasticity rehab, built with HCPs in France, which went on to launch with the World Stroke Organization in Nigeria and Sierra Leone.
- Developed patient support and adherence programs designed to reduce treatment dropout by 15%, with all assets, processes and approvals ready for market rollout.
- Led a migraine digital health strategy with industry partners, and a global Parkinson's disease patient acquisition and adherence program.
- Organized the worldwide Digital Summit to align stakeholders on digital vision, key performance indicators (KPIs) and governance for Customer 360 and omnichannel readiness.

Vice President, Digital Strategy & Innovation

Acorda Therapeutics, Inc. | Ardsley, New York | July 2020 – July 2024

- Led the digital and omnichannel campaigns behind INBRIJA and AMPYRA combined net sales of over \$100 million per year, partnering with brand strategy and planning teams.

- Developed and launched three connected television (CTV) commercials for INBRIJA (two branded, one unbranded) as part of the direct-to-consumer (DTC) program, and engineered targeting profiles to place them cost-efficiently on streaming television services, boosting brand recognition while optimizing advertising spend.
- Designed and implemented AI-driven next-best-action models based on existing CRM and sales data, improving targeting accuracy and increasing HCP sales conversions through personalized engagement and rep recommendations.
- Spearheaded the integration of advanced digital analytics platforms, leading to better measurement of campaign effectiveness and more informed decision-making.
- Led all Acorda medical congresses with Medical Affairs, including interactive, gamified booths with robust data capture that enabled HCP targeting and post-show follow-up.
- Directed patient testimonial video production for INBRIJA, from concept and filming to editing, deployed across social media and the brand site to build patient trust and engagement.
- Initiated direct-to-consumer Facebook campaigns generating leads within the Parkinson's Disease audience, significantly increasing patient inquiries and treatment program participation.
- Directed digital innovations for clinical trial recruitment, including social media initiatives that improved enrollment speed and data quality.

Executive Director, Digital Strategy & Innovation

Acorda Therapeutics, Inc. | Ardsley, New York | December 2014 – July 2020

- Directly responsible for achieving and surpassing sales goals for key pharmaceutical products; INBRIJA and AMPYRA consistently exceeded annual sales targets.
- Developed high-impact digital campaigns tailored to HCPs and patients, leveraging data analytics for targeted outreach and substantial market share increases.
- Optimized digital media spend through refined analytics and agile marketing, maintaining budget discipline while scaling value across brand portfolios.
- Championed high-profile digital projects: brand website redesigns, advanced eCRM rollouts, and patient-centric mobile applications that improved treatment adherence and outcomes.
- Spearheaded corporate intranet and medical app development, enhancing internal communications and supporting clinical trial recruitment.

Sr. Director, Corporate Digital Strategy & Innovation

Acorda Therapeutics, Inc. | Ardsley, New York | June 2012 – November 2014

- Built the in-house digital marketing team.
- Managed digital marketing, media, and social media projects, focusing on innovation in digital spaces to improve corporate and brand visibility for Ampyra.

Director, Corporate Digital Marketing Strategy

Acorda Therapeutics, Inc. | Hawthorne, New York | June 2010 – June 2012

- Introduced the organization to digital strategy in pharma through workshops, board and senior leadership offsites, and corporate planning initiatives.
- Built and integrated digital marketing strategies with core marketing functions, emphasizing digital initiatives for Ampyra and a "digital-first" corporate ethos.

Assistant Director, Marketing

Acorda Therapeutics, Inc. | Hawthorne, New York | October 2008 – June 2010

- Led marketing strategies for the launches of Ampyra and Zanaflex Capsules, managing all aspects of eCRM, website development, and digital promotion.
- Led live event and tradeshow activities including multiple sclerosis walks and HCP conventions (American Academy of Neurology, Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers), and established the Medical, Legal and Regulatory (MLR) committee for promotional review operations.
- Advised on salesforce automation tools and designed marketing research programs to assess digital initiatives.

Business Systems Architect

Acorda Therapeutics, Inc. | Hawthorne, New York | January 2005 – October 2008

- Provided strategic advice on software infrastructure decisions to the C-suite and executive information technology, encompassing financial and information technology management systems.
- Served as liaison between information technology and Commercial for Ampyra and Zanaflex Capsules.

Project Manager, Technology

Acorda Therapeutics, Inc. | Hawthorne, New York | November 2000 – January 2005

- Managed diverse information technology projects, from helpdesk operations to mobile device management and software development for internal clients.

Research Associate

Acorda Therapeutics, Inc. | Hawthorne, New York | November 1999 – November 2000

- Managed the histology/pathology laboratory, developing standard operating procedures and conducting tissue preparations and staining techniques including immunofluorescence and marker studies.
- Provided surgical expertise for the spinal cord injury and brain neuronal tracer programs; Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee chairperson.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Podiatric Medicine | New York College of Podiatric Medicine, 1997

Bachelor of Science, Biotechnology (Biology) | Fordham University, 1994

Certificate, Marketing Analytics | University of Virginia, 2020

Change Management Professional Certificate (LinkedIn Learning) • GPT-4 Foundations: Building AI-Powered Apps

Federal Aviation Administration Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate: licensed commercial drone pilot

AWARDS

PM360 ELITE Digital Crusader, 2015 • Nielsen Norman Group Intranet Award, 2013

Two Medical Marketing & Media Silver Awards, including Best Branded Website for AMPYRA.com, 2012 • PM360 Trailblazer Award, best professional advertising campaign, 2012

Pharma Choice Awards, Ampyra.com, 2012 • Web Marketing Association, Outstanding Achievement in Website Development, acorda.com, 2011

SKILLS & EXPERTISE

Leadership: P&L Management, Agency & Vendor Management, Strategic Leadership, Coaching & Mentoring, Digital Transformation, Cross-functional Team Leadership, Organizational Leadership

Digital Channels: Connected Television (CTV), Direct-to-Consumer (DTC), Programmatic Advertising, Social Media (Facebook, LinkedIn), Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Platforms & Tools: Veeva, Veeva Vault, Adobe Analytics, Google Analytics, Salesforce CRM, eCRM Systems

AI & Analytics: AI Roadmap Development, Next-Best-Action Models, Predictive Analytics, Attribution Modeling, Customer Data Platforms (CDP), Customer Journey Orchestration, GDPR Data Governance

Campaign Management: Brand Strategy & Planning, Omnichannel Marketing, Patient Support Programs, Patient Engagement Strategies, HCP Targeting, Behavioral Segmentation

PUBLICATIONS, MEDIA & AFFILIATIONS

It's Not Always the Size That Counts in Internal Communication | Simply Communicate, January 2013

This Revolution Won't Be Televised | PharmaVoice, September 2010

A Walk to Remember | Exhibitor Magazine, 2011

Member: Digital Health Coalition • American Marketing Association • American Association for the Advancement of Science