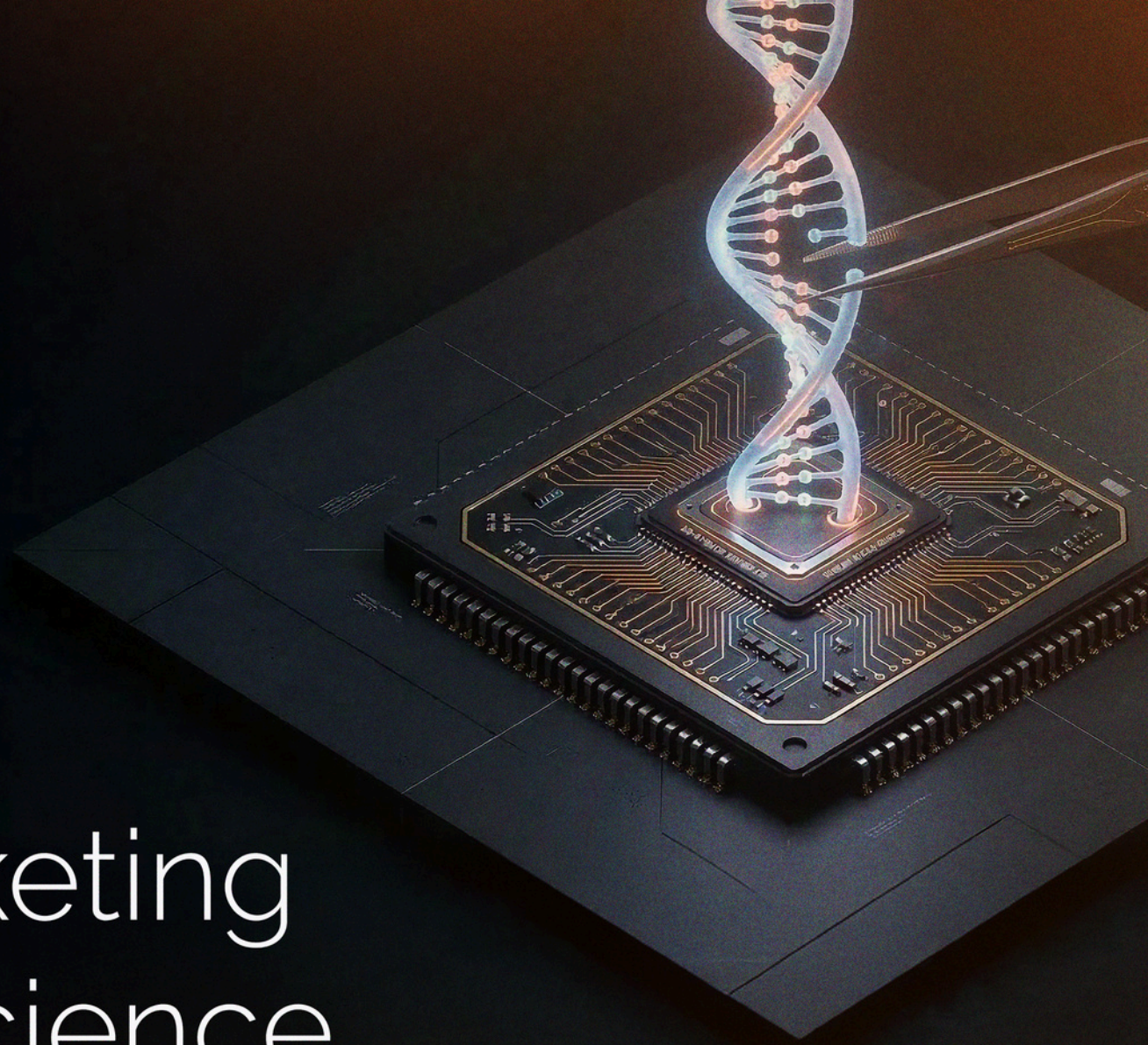




Product Marketing in B2B Life Science

Building Marketing Excellence

Pre- and Post-Launch of High-Tech Products

Preface

Thank you for downloading this playbook. The central marketing challenges for high-tech products and tech-enabled services center around choice. What strategies to employ, who should be involved, and which key performance indicators really matter.

These questions require diverse expertise and patience to answer. When commercial teams aren't aligned, efforts are dispersed, friction ensues, and blame is dealt.

No one person can make all the right choices, but working together more effectively can make them clearer. That's the purpose of product marketing, and in this playbook, you'll find a step-by-step plan you can adapt to make more deliberate and less reactive choices.

Avi Saha, Founder of KlarBio

About the Author

I briefly considered a career in academia, but I was passionate about storytelling since my undergraduate studies and decided to pursue a career in marketing. The lab was not my playground, but websites, words, and building audiences drew me to spend the last 9 years supporting medical clinics to B2B brands like Miltenyi Biotec, Ardena, Visiopharm, Lyfegen, and Ribbon Bio to shape how their complex offerings are presented and explained. But I didn't escape the lab. I've had the pleasure of exploring many of them, testing equipment and software, and immersing myself in the businesses of my clients.



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Introduction

You built a great product. Now it's time to market it and get the word out, right?
Wait, you mean you haven't even started yet?

This is the status quo. As I hope to convince you, **it's really the other way around.**

Marketing precedes product development. It starts by identifying a problem and forming a hypothesis around how a product, or a suite of solutions could solve that problem and attract paying customers. The insight that follows drives the creation of a winning product, from its functionality to its design. If you have done that, then congratulations! You are a strategic marketer.

Product development and marketing should be connected in a loop, rather than through the passing of a baton. Marketing is not the anchor leg of a race, but rather a foundation comprised of customer data and market insight that leads to predictable growth.

It's the football coach who studies before the match and reacts to real-time changes. On top of the foundation marketing builds is the glitter and glam—the part of marketing people think of, *Mad Men* style. The leads, the opportunities, the closed deals. The *pipeline*.

But that's not marketing. That's advertising, one element of downstream marketing. They will be referred to as such for the remainder of this ebook.

Figure 1. The Product Marketing Loop.

Marketing understands the market (that's why someone added the *-ing* suffix to the word "market"). Product teams are experts in creating the product. Great products are a marriage of the unmet needs (and desires) of the market and an irresistible offering.



Who This Playbook Is For

This ebook is for those responsible for the success of complex products and tech-enabled services sold to the life science industry which require downstream marketing and a sales force. Think: "Project management software" vs. "multiomic data analysis." There are a multitude of products and services in this value chain, but product marketing tends to be more relevant for companies that can develop new offerings in months or a few years compared to a therapy that takes over a decade to commercialize.

Types of Products That Need Product Marketing

Physical or digital products and services sold to pharmaceutical, biotechnology, academic, medical, or governmental entities:

- Laboratory instruments
- Software
- Productized services
- Reagents or assays
- Medical devices

Company Categories That Benefit

- Non-therapy biotech
- Pharmatech & Labtech
- CROs/CDMOs/CMOs*
- SaaS
- AlxBio and TechBio
- SynBio
- MedTech & SaMD
- HealthTech
- Deep Tech
- Digital Health
- Diagnostics
- FoodTech

*The principles of product marketing are relevant, but the tactics are different for service providers.

Companies That Don't Need This

These companies still need strategic marketing but it is done differently.

- Pharmaceutical companies
- Biotech or TechBio companies developing therapies
- Medical clinics
- Academic institutions
- Life science hubs and office spaces
- Logistics companies
- Not-for-profits
- Hospitals

This playbook is designed to stimulate the mindset shifts needed to prevent stagnation and build the marketing infrastructure needed to scale at life science tools companies.

What is Product Marketing?

Product marketing starts before all other traditional marketing roles—before digital marketing, email marketing, social media marketing, content marketing, event marketing, etc. These roles are downstream marketing roles. Product marketing spans upstream and downstream marketing functions.

From most job descriptions, we see that the main responsibilities surround positioning the product, messaging, go-to-market, and lifecycle management, but it varies. Some product marketers are responsible for product pricing as well.

The product marketer's job is to be a market expert and the voice of the customer. One could argue that this is the start of marketing, so why should one call it product marketing? The answer is because product marketing is for companies selling products, compared to say a life science hub or a not-for-profit.



The term has gained popularity in the tech world because products and features can be shipped faster than ever before, forcing marketing and sales teams to be well connected.



Defining Product Marketing

There are several definitions of product marketing that I like. As someone with an appreciation for detail, here is mine:



Product marketing is a process of collaborating between product development, downstream marketing, sales, and the CEO, with the aim of a product or productized service to reliably gain market share or maintain its standing in a defined segment by better serving the needs of its customers and better communicating value to both external audiences and sales teams.

The key word and perhaps the most important skill, is **collaboration**. For a more succinct definition, refer to the Product Marketing Alliance.

Product marketing is:



Collaborative—it's the marketing job most exposed to roles outside of a marketing team.



Always seeking ways to meet customer needs by becoming the market expert



Influencing sales conversations with customer insight



Responsible for the narrative—which shapes all communications

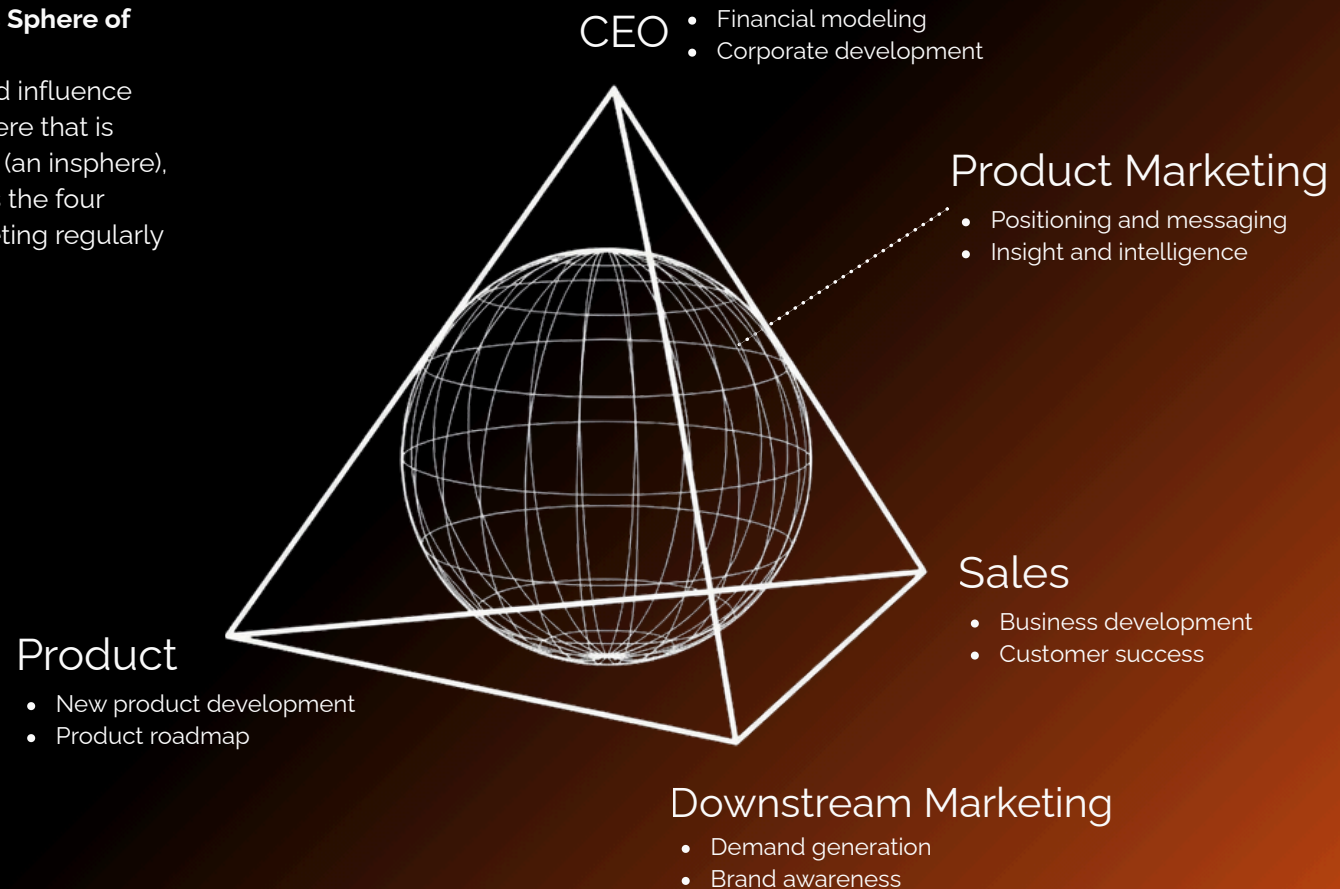


Impacting customer acquisition and retention through alignment

The Product Marketing (In)Sphere of Influence

Figure 2. Product Marketing's Sphere of Influence

Product marketing has a broad influence and can be depicted as a sphere that is inscribed within a tetrahedron (an insphere), where each corner represents the four main functions product marketing regularly collaborates with.



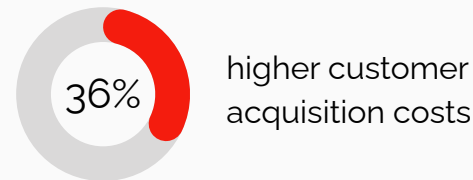
Why Product Marketing Matters in B2B Life Science Sales

When careful consideration is made for the launch of a product or feature and during lifecycle management, the following happens

- You understand which markets your messaging targets
- Leaders are aligned on product launches instead of deciding last minute what to promote
- You have sales collateral with proof points to support buyers throughout the entire journey
- The sales team understands the competition and knows what to say in each situation

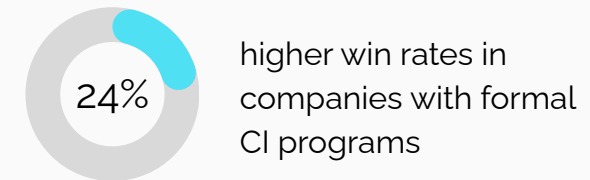
Crayon. 2024 State of Competitive Intelligence Report.
Mutiny HQ. State of Sales and Marketing Alignment Report. 2025.

Misaligned sales and marketing teams see



2X increased chance of missing revenue targets

Competitive intelligence (CI) improves performance



 30% increase in closed-won deals from using battlecards

Case with a Pharma SaaS

I worked with a company that struggled to explain what their flagship product did. Leaders at this company had PhDs in different fields, yet could not agree on what to say. The technology was powerful and the company had achieved impressive results, yet, sales reps were turning over or avoided selling the product.

Using “outside-in” thinking and storytelling, I created sales assets in less than 30 days using existing materials. These assets showcased the various applications of the product with examples from customers and became the gold standard.



Telling a compelling story requires putting these puzzle pieces together: 1) customer needs, 2) documented results, and 3) product benefits.

What Is Marketing, Actually

We need to understand what marketing is at its core before explaining how product marketing should be done. Marketing's purpose is to support value creation. In business schools, it's taught that marketing consists of four "Ps": product, price, place, and promotion. Anyone with responsibility in these domains is a marketer. Marketing can influence the product's features, its price, and how it is sold and where. However, it is common today for marketing teams to be solely devoted to promotion.



Because its purpose is to create a customer, the business enterprise has two—and only these two—basic functions: marketing and innovation. Marketing and innovation produce results; all the rest are “costs.”

-Peter Drucker

Product

Price

Place

Promotion



Takeaway

Marketing is broader than promotion. Understanding that is be the first order of business for a technical founder or CEO to improving commercial alignment.

Why TechBio and HealthTech in Particular Need It

Have you noticed that booths at major events often sound similar? Part of the product marketer's job is to create messaging that stands out. But there's a bigger problem.

For software products, features are becoming commoditized, and therefore, don't differentiate platform as they did 5-10 years ago. **What's more important than ever is the power of brand and story.**

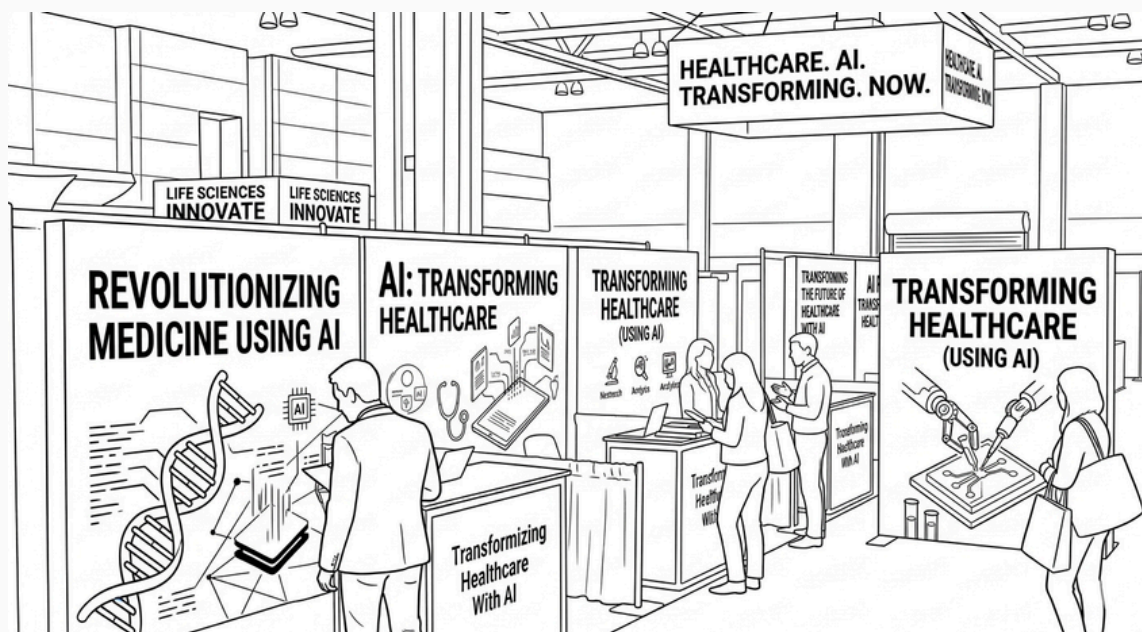


Image: Generated with Google Gemini's Nano Banana 2.

Ways to differentiate in the AI age:

Brand equity

Customers want to associate with your brand because it carries an image of trust and expertise, or if makes them feel positively in other ways.

Thought leadership and "doership"

Regularly posting educational content puts you at the forefront. Communicating what you've done and the results you've achieved adds further credibility.

Storytelling

Stories are relatable and break free from generic product communications. Tech companies are posting jobs with "storytelling" in the job title more than ever.

Search everywhere optimization (SEO):

Get chatbots and Google to recommend your product or brand.

How to Get Started With Product Marketing

No matter who does the product marketing, the central idea behind KlarBio is that there is an *order of operations* for turning product strategy into a tactical marketing plan. As enterprises navigate launching new offerings, building awareness, meeting customers, and doing everything else they do, it's normal to skip over some of these. After an initial assessment, I recommend initiating the following four phases to build a robust marketing infrastructure. During each phase, several questions are answered, and commercial leaders should not only be able to answer them, but also be aligned.

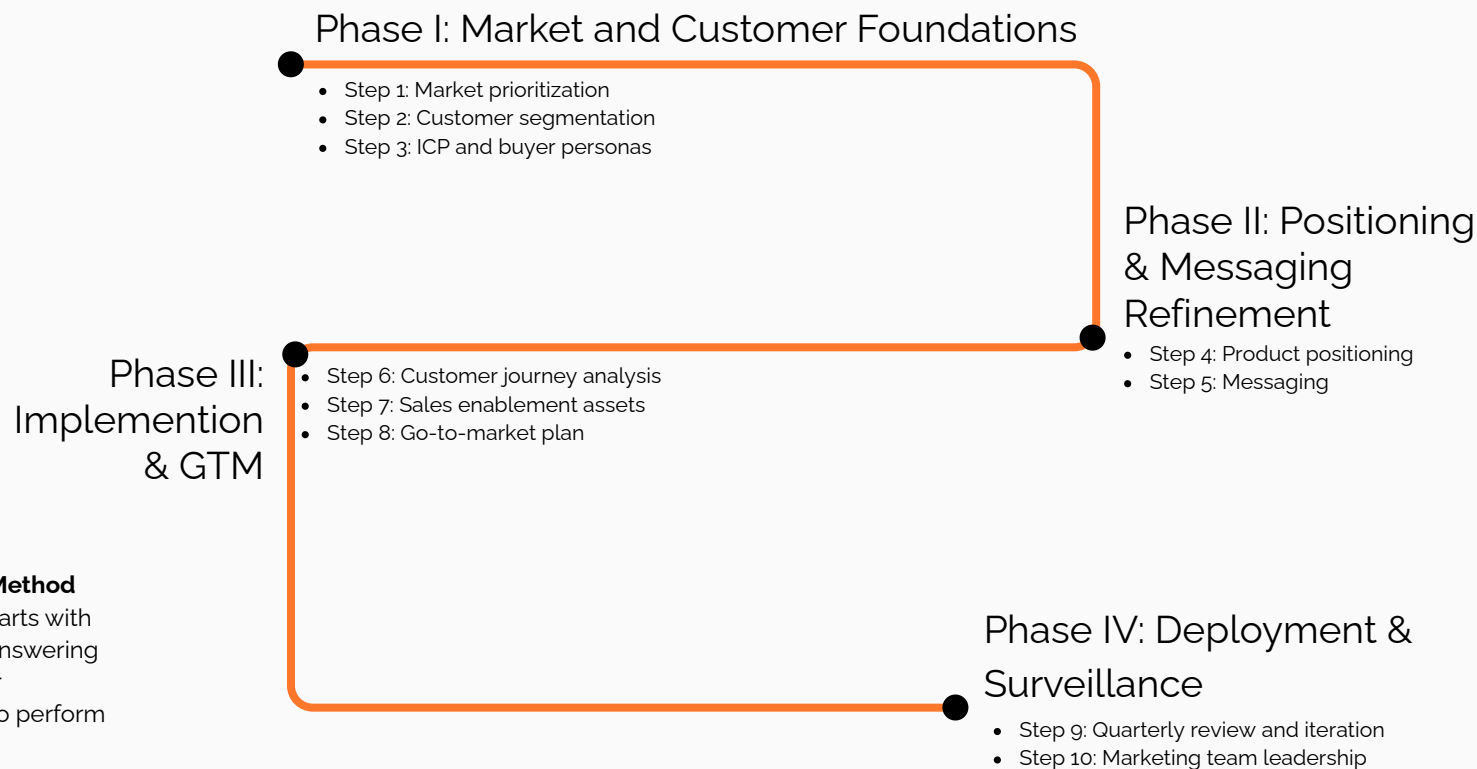


Figure 3. The KlarBio Method
Upstream marketing starts with asking big questions. Answering these pave the road for downstream activities to perform well.

Phase I: Market and Customer Foundations

The work completed in Phase I is upstream, and will influence the commercial direction of the company. The answers to these questions are relevant for board- and investor-level conversations as they highlight the plan to grow the business. Contributors to Phase I would include the strategic leaders of your commercial team who influence sales, product, and marketing. In HealthTech, regulatory is also part of it, but not as much in research-use-only markets or in B2C.



Phase I involves answering the following “where to play” questions and are the hardest to answer. Typically, this is the business leader’s job at a smaller company.

Questions to answer in this step:

- Which markets do our products have the best fit in?
- What is the serviceable obtainable market (SOM)?
- Who are the best-fit customers?
- Which partners could help us obtain more of them?
- Who is the competition?
- Where are we better than the competition?

Steps to take:



Market prioritization

Segmenting the market is the first step. Niche markets are tricky to define. It's not just “biopharma” or “academia” but it could be biopharma companies developing advanced therapies and insourcing.



Customer segmentation

Customer segmentation is a similar concept, but refers to types of customers within each market. For example, in academia, customers may be interested in spinning out, or obtaining a grant, or running a clinical trial.



ICP and buyer persona development

The ICP is the result of customer segmentation and includes information about the target company. The buyer persona is an individual responsible for the decision, e.g., computational lead (buyer persona) at a CRO (ICP).

Phase II: Positioning & Messaging Refinement

How you think your product is positioned is usually not what customers think. Addressing this *gap* is the positioning work. Do you want to be seen as a premium option? Why would customers care? How can you exploit the weaknesses of your competitors for each ICP to explain that you are the better choice? The biggest issue in Phase II is ignoring the competition. The competition may not be just a company, but a particular solution for a particular ICP.



After answering the “where to play” questions comes “how to play.” This requires creativity and obtaining feedback from the market and potentially synthetic users.

Questions answered in this step:

- What is the value proposition for each of our products?
- What is the key message for each ICP?
- What claims can we make to showcase our value?
- What is the gap between how we would like a product to be perceived and how it is actually perceived?
- What's our vision for the product?

Steps to take:



Product positioning

The final output of this step is the positioning statement, which serves as a ground truth on the product's advantages for each ICP and how you would like buyers to perceive it.

Consider a 3D microscope. Many markets and customers may be a good fit, others not so much. It may be better at imaging certain kinds of samples. The positioning statement reflects its capabilities and defines success.



Messaging

This is the foundation for a consistent narrative across customer-facing teams and marketing materials. One tool commonly employed is the messaging house, which consists of a pillar statement and supporting statements with proof points.

Phase III: Implementation & GTM Strategy

It's time to figure out *how to win*. Some products can be added to a cart and ordered by one person, even in life science. But most of the time, it's a sales-led motion, and buyers don't talk to sales in B2B until they are 80% of the way through the buyer journey as of 2025. That's the reason why Phase II is so important for a successful go-to-market plan. The messaging must be implemented throughout the company and not just in a sales deck or landing page. Who to hire and how much to spend are also key considerations in this phase.



To create an effective GTM motion, you must understand how your company's products are discovered and what is working so far. From there, you can crunch some numbers.

Questions answered in this step:

- How can we reach more customers?
- What content should we create across the customer journey?
- What key questions do buyers have at each stage of the customer journey?
- How do we get more customers to find out about us?
- How much should we spend on sales and marketing and what would be the expected result?
- What narrative is sales using currently and what do we need to do to align them with the new positioning and messaging?

Steps to take:



Customer journey map

Where are your customers? Are they in hospitals? Are they on search engines? Are they at conferences? Are they on LinkedIn?



Sales enablement

To give the sales team a clear direction, create sales enablement materials like battlecards and conversation guides *early*. Get them to use them and work with the sales leader to train them to handle each ICP.



Go-to-market

Define the activity now, coordinating with sales. Devise a clear marketing plan that highlights lead generation tactics, marketing campaigns, events, and create dashboards for monitoring effectiveness.

Phase IV: Deployment & Surveillance

The final challenge for all companies is defining the right metrics for success, i.e., key performance indicators (KPIs) and objectives and key results (OKRs). Have you ever been excited by the number of leads generated by one campaign only to see later that they were worthless? Instead of continuing to chase “leads” then, redefine what a lead is and reallocate budget to better performing tactics. Agility is therefore key.



This step is the execution of the GTM plan. Regular alignment is crucial here because people will pull in different directions. One can refer to this as product lifecycle management.

Questions answered in this step:

- Are our expectations matching reality?
- Are we investing too much time in an underperforming area?
- Does marketing feel reactive or are we on top of things?
- Are we tempted to try and change the strategy every week or can we wait one quarter?

Post-launch maintenance:



Engagement and education

Successful communications in B2B life science educate customers about the highly nuanced problems present in their work. Some call this “edu-selling.”



Monitoring results

There so many KPIs to choose from. Some are *lagging* indicators of success, meaning they take time to materialize, like sales. *Leading* indicators are a proxy for success, like the number of sales qualified leads, or cost per lead.



Leadership and culture

Now that you see how marketing is less of a promotional function, you can make it part of your company's culture. By embracing the need for being aligned instead, you can better lead individual teams to produce their best work.

The Path to Product Marketing From Other Departments

Product marketing can start from any section of the *sphere of influence* shared earlier. For smaller companies, it doesn't make sense to hire multiple GTM roles, so one person travels far and wide throughout the sphere. That's why it helps to consider how sales, product, or marketing roles can make a bigger impact by answering the following questions in their work. An experienced product marketer will not only answer these questions but connect the answers to shape the narrative and go-to-market.

Business Development

- What message are prospects responding most to?
- How are we perceived in different markets?
- Which customers are the ideal customers?

Marketing Communications (MarCom)

- Does the message on the website match what sales is saying?
- Are the leads marketing generates consistent with marketing efforts and campaigns? Or are they random?
- Where are leads finding out about us?

CEO/CCO/CBO/CMO

- What are our customer acquisition costs?
- Where should we invest to most predictably increase sales?
- Who are our best-fit customers?
- Have we achieved product market fit?

Sales

- What are the burning desires of customers in each market?
- What triggers move people to take action?
- Where do prospects drop off along the journey?
- Which sales collateral is working best?

Customer Success

- Is the promise advertised consistent with customer experience?
- What problems are customers having that our products aren't yet solving
- How can we get customers to love our product more and even turn into evangelists?

Product

- What new features or products will differentiate us in the market?
- Which customers do we not serve as well compared to competitors?
- What new trends should we pay attention to?
- How are current customers using the product?

Setting Up Your Team

The central idea in this ebook is that product marketing is a process. Whether you are hiring a Director of Product Marketing or not, the **Product Marketing Triad** is a core element in being consistent.

This triad can ensure alignment between sales, marketing, product, customer success, business development, and other commercial leaders in the company that are responsible for strategy, product development, innovation, partnerships, onboarding, and more.





Conclusion

Great products don't sell themselves, nor do they succeed alone. Life science sales is a team sport, and one with perhaps the most skeptical audience. Long sales cycles and a blend of technical, commercial, and creative people result in frustration, misalignment, turnover, and confusion.

Alignment is the key and it's why product marketing exists. Although we see such roles more commonly in the B2B tech world, I believe it will play an increasingly important role for life science companies selling hardware and software products.

You may already be a product marketer, without realizing it. I hope this guide helped you find ways to make a bigger difference.

How KlarBio Can Help

Every organization needs a unique blend of tactics. I create bespoke solutions based on your needs and wants, combining elements from each of the four phases of the KlarBio™ Method.

Diagnostic and Audit

If we decide to work together, the first step is a diagnostic assessment of your organization's capabilities and an audit of the marketing function.

Bespoke plan

From there I suggest an engagement that works with your timeline and fills in the gaps in your product strategy.

Full-stack product marketing services

Finally, I work as your marketing partner by providing promotional services that convert higher because of the strategy work we completed. Includes SEO/AEO, thought leadership, sales enablement content, targeted advertising, and even business development work.



KlarBio's mission is to make marketing a science, within the life sciences. By creating repeatable marketing processes, companies can experience reduced friction and capture more revenue from aligning teams on strategy.

Marketing complex products for the life science industry requires creativity, advanced understanding of the science, and commercial experience. It necessitates a shift in focus from the product and the science to the customer and what they need. Innovation continues when products are created, acquired, or offered to meet broader needs.

Scaling is easier when the market understands not what features a product has but how it transforms the business and helps them achieve their goal on more favorable terms. The art of science—asking the right questions and testing them with the right experiments—is also in the spirit of marketing.

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