Zelena Khan ([00:00](#)):

Welcome to NEXT, brought to you by ContentLabs. I'm Zelena Kahn, your host, and I'm so excited to bring you season four with a brand new set of guests to educate, motivate, and hopefully inspire you in and out of the workplace.

Zelena Khan ([00:17](#)):

Over the last few years, the healthcare industry has faced unprecedented challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic, from accelerating the pace of drug development to rapidly adapting new patient needs and shifting regulatory landscapes, pharma has had to step up its game like never before. Today we have Katie Lewis, Vice President of Life Sciences, and Kaarin Gordon, Vice President of Technology Solutions for Life Sciences, to discuss how the industry has risen to the challenges of the last few years emerging stronger and more agile than ever before. Welcome Katie and Kaarin.

Katie Lewis ([00:50](#)):

Hello. Thanks for having us.

Zelena Khan ([00:52](#)):

Hi. Hi. Oh, thank you for joining us. I'm glad we were able to all get together. I know you both have really busy schedules. Why don't we start with intros from each of you. Katie, do you want to go first?

Katie Lewis ([01:07](#)):

Sure. hi everyone. My name is Katie Lewis. I'm a Vice President of Life Sciences with TransPerfect. I've been with the company now for 15 years, and my journey at TransPerfect, well, my journey within life sciences really started in university. I started out pre-med and really loved it, but also was passionate about language and culture, and so I ended up taking a segue and majoring in languages. And so I've had the amazing opportunity of working alongside life sciences organizations for over a decade. And just the changes, especially in the past, like five to 10 years, have just been incredible and so excited to talk about them today.

Zelena Khan ([01:55](#)):

Thank you. Thank you, Kaarin.

Kaarin Gordon ([01:57](#)):

Yes, great to be here today. And I've been working with healthcare and life sciences companies for the better part of 25 years, and have really enjoyed not only the global and multilingual aspect, but more so in the last 10 to 15 years, really looking at different technology tools and solutions to really help particularly life sciences clients drive efficiencies. And I` think again, with, with Covid and now coming out of the pandemic, really being able to work with our clients and drive different solutions related to not only digital transformation but customer experience and really explore and implement these different solutions is really exciting.

Zelena Khan ([02:51](#)):

Perfect lead in to my first question. Kaarin, maybe you can start with this. What are the big changes we're seeing right now in the life sciences industry?

Kaarin Gordon ():

So, there are multiple, and I think honing in on a couple that are really related to the global aspect, you know, the multilingual challenges. I think one of the first is that pharma companies are still really stuck in a very document oriented content lifecycle. A lot of that is driven by the health authorities, but they're also looking at different ways that they can drive efficiency and automation. So a lot of this is coming out in digital transformation initiatives where they're not only looking at different aspects of their content and how they can manage either the actual content or the translation of the content more efficiently. But then in R&D, how they can really use different aspects of AI to really accelerate the identification and bringing new products, new drugs to market faster, to rethinking the way they engage with their customer base from a sales and marketing, that whole commercial aspect. And looking at customer experience in omnichannel. So being able to provide content in different formats and a way that is relevant and more timely for their different clients, whether it's healthcare providers, patients and alike.

Zelena Khan (04:46):

Yeah. do you, you, you presented at GLNEXT and you were talking about Veeva, correct?

Kaarin Gordon (04:53):

Yes. And that's something, you know, Veeva and their different applications have really been transformative. And many of the large global pharma have one or more initiatives where they are incorporating Veeva Vault products. And so we've developed a very close relationship, a very close partnership with Veeva and have a direct integration with Veeva Vault. So that really enables a very tight transfer of content to facilitate the translation process and really minimize the manual effort into maintaining metadata and adding that for the different language versions of content. So, super exciting. It's something that is a really important initiative to us internally and, you know, work very closely with them because it's an important initiative for so many of our clients.

Zelena Khan (06:01):

Yeah, it definitely sounds like a game changer when it comes to their content. So, Katie, what have you seen recently with client requests and what are you noticing with how it's changed?

Katie Lewis (06:11):

So, when I started with the company 15 years ago, when you looked at pharma companies, I can't think of one that had like an innovation team or an innovation lab, and I would say in the past five or so years, there's just been a huge increase in really building out those structures within life sciences organizations. And I think there's a couple reasons for that. First, we've just had such an exponential growth in the power of AI and technology in the life sciences space. And also the past, you know, five or so years, there's been a huge change in different regulations too. We had the, if you're in the medical device space, the medical device regulation, more recently, the European Clinical Trial Regulation. You know, even just a couple weeks ago, the FDA launched a new guidance on diversity in clinical studies.

Katie Lewis (07:01):

And so when you pair all of the changes from an AI and technology perspective to all the changes from a regulation perspective, paired with what Kaarin was just talking about with the increase in, you know, customer-centric approach, there was really a need for significant change. And so that's why I think that we're seeing such an increase in these innovation teams. You know, many large pharmas are focused on

how to bring startup companies internally and give them the infrastructure and support to look at new compounds and really start and accelerate those. We're seeing more focus on bringing outside collaborators into organizations like nonprofits or academic researchers, and that's really important to, you know, get some diversity in the different perspectives. And then lastly, you know, probably what we're seeing the most of is a lot of like digital incubation hubs. So looking at what different platforms can help unburden the people on the ground at pharma companies and help them accelerate the speed with which they're launching their products.

Zelena Khan ([08:05](#)):

And how do you think or how, what have you noticed about client requests, and how it's changed with all of that?

Katie Lewis ([08:13](#)):

So much! When I look back at my days you know, when I had just started out here, everything that we did for pharma companies was document based. And it, like, I, to put it in perspective, like I sat right next to a fax machine and like all day companies would fax in, like inform consent forms and say, "Hey, can we get this translated," and this isn't like, you know, decades and decades ago. This is like 2008. So it kind of shows you just kind of where they were and essentially how far they've come. But it has really changed in the past, you know in the past five to 10 years. And companies are really looking for more communication from the patient perspective. And so I've been working on, you know, a number of programs with clients where they don't want to send documents to patients in clinical studies anymore.

Katie Lewis ([09:06](#)):

They're not engaging. It might take them a really long time to read through. And in a lot of cases, you know, if you're not a medical expert, you really can't understand it. And so how are we empowering the patients with this type of information? So I've worked on a number of projects where companies are looking more at like leveraging video for, you know, frequently asked questions or, you know, questions about their products. Leveraging video for the consent process. We have been launching a couple of other really cool channels and mediums like podcasts, so customers can tune in and learn more about clinical studies and what's happening in this space. So I think kind of making that transformation from like, you know, document based to what are those new channels that patients are tuning into and are going to be able to get the correct information in an engaging way has been a really exciting thing to be a part of.

Kaarin Gordon ([10:06](#)):

And just building on that too, I think we've seen just an openness to explore areas that, you know, previously they just were, I think, a bit more reluctant. And one of those areas is like around regulatory, regulatory labeling and looking at how they can really leverage machine translation, but in a programmatic way. So knowing that quality is important, but approaching it so that you're using trained engines for content where you just need, you know, say for internal communications or like communications with the health authorities where the accurate or perfect quality isn't imperative. And then looking at different levels of post editing, but still leveraging that machine translation and then setting it up as a program so it continually learns and gets better and gets smarter. And so we're actually working with a couple of clients and the results that we have been validating and sharing have been really promising, both from a cost and time savings, but then also the added benefit of being able to use

really valuable and skilled resources in more meaningful ways versus, you know, more mundane or perfunctory tasks.

Kaarin Gordon (11:40):

So, really exciting.

Zelena Khan (11:42):

Let's shift into how we solve these requests, right? I think it's great to talk about diversity when it comes to vendors and just patients and things like that. So I'd love to jump into how we're solving some of these requests and how we're considering the larger group when con you know, when talking about this industry. So who wants to take it?

Katie Lewis (12:12):

I can start off with initial thoughts.

Zelena Khan (12:15):

Sure!

Katie Lewis (12:16):

Well, diversity and inclusion in clinical studies has become a really important focus for the industry. And this has been happening for years, but even more recently, there's new FDA guidance around making sure that companies are representing, you know, racial and ethnic populations across the U.S. So that's super important. And, you know, we see, you know, so many, just so much data around why it's important. So 30 years from now, it's estimated that 30% of the UK is going to be made up of minority groups. There was also a recent study in 2020 where Black Americans in clinical studies were reported as being 4.5%, and Black Americans account for over 13% of the U.S. population, and over 20% of yearly cancer cases. So clearly there's a disparity there and there's a lot of work to be done. And so we've been seeing a big shift in how life sciences companies are approaching this.

Katie Lewis (13:16):

I think first they're really designing studies with patients in mind, you know, especially with the pandemic, decentralized clinical trials became a huge focus. So giving patients more flexibility to, you know, to be part of a study from home. Also we're seeing a lot more companies looking at how do we choose sites for studies that are going to best support diverse populations. So looking at areas that are like very rural, where there haven't historically been sites set up. And when we look at like the content perspective, that kind of translates funny enough into a couple things. The first is companies are looking a lot at language. So if you want to best support patients, it's really important that you can communicate in their language. And especially with more studies happening in emerging markets, we're seeing a variety of new requests for languages and increases in different languages so that they can, you know, best communicate with their customer.

Katie Lewis (14:14):

We're seeing companies really looking at the consent process and making it much easier, making the, you know, consents more brief making it more engaging. You know, I mentioned a little bit earlier looking at video content. We're also looking at companies providing information for patients in a variety

of different formats. So really deploying omnichannel approaches and different digital types of opportunities like wearables, etc. And then lastly you know, there is new regulatory requirements to publish a lot of study information. So clinical study reports and clinical lay summaries, and having access in that transparency to your clinical studies is really meant to you know, drive awareness of these studies and get people more comfortable with the structure and the way that it's been designed. And so, you know, we've been doing a lot of work helping to author this content and translate this content for our clients.

Kaarin Gordon ([15:20](#)):

And this is where you're also seeing some videos, right, Katie? You know, because from an accessibility perspective, and, a lot of people are just more from a visual perspective, it's easier to, it's A more engaging and easier to understand. So when you're talking about compliance, when someone, when a patient's participating in a clinical trial I think they're seeing some nice results with videos over just a paper format or a document format.

Katie Lewis ([15:52](#)):

100%.

Zelena Khan ([15:54](#)):

Kaarin, we know AI has an enormous benefit across every field in the world. I mean, especially within TransPerfect you know, everyone loves talking about CHAT GPT right now. Can we talk a little, or can you talk a little bit about how AI is playing a role in the pharmaceutical industry

Kaarin Gordon ([16:16](#)):

I was just speaking with someone last week and in regulatory too, it's something that pharma's thinking a a lot about and talking a lot about too. And I think in some respects, it's, you know, when we use this, we want to make sure that we're confident, confident in the results, and confident like you can almost trust the results. And we had an interesting chat about confidence, but also setting up a process in a way that leverages AI and technology. But there also is then that overlay of human oversight, right? So you're not using it full stop to replace human, you're just figuring out how can you use it in a way that is really efficient so you're not relying on people to do the end to end. And I think we see that all the time with machine translation and smarter approaches where instead of using a human linguist to do the whole thing, where can we get smart about using MT for different levels, but still having that human oversight, whatever degree that is to get the right quality that can be with tagging images and understanding where that confidence level is, but then using it in a way that narrows down to the most important data or information that the human needs to assess and needs to apply logic to.

Kaarin Gordon ([17:57](#)):

You know, there's a lot out there about pharma using AI for R&D, you know, really narrowing down and using it to get to specific data sets or leverage data sets in different areas of research to reduce time and reduce effort. And that's just, I think we're just seeing the tip of the iceberg, but I think that's going to have an enormous impact in the next 10 to 15 years. Similarly with GPT as you mentioned, I mean, this is going to be huge but I think it's also figuring out the right use cases in the right ways to use it. So in order to get really strong results we've got to get really good at asking the right prompts and how do we leverage it? So I think for people it's not, it's not getting nervous. I mean, sure, this is going to change, but this is how things evolve. Like this is, I mean, if you look at history, this happens over and over again,

but it's figuring out where we can add the most value, but also use GPT or different areas of AI in a way that makes the most difference in for pharma and healthcare companies. That's about patients.

Zelena Khan ([19:25](#)):

What are some examples of omnichannel marketing in life sciences? Because when I think of omnichannel marketing, I don't necessarily think of life sciences. So can you run through an example of what that would be?

Kaarin Gordon ([19:38](#)):

One of the prominent examples of omnichannel and for a lot of pharma is that historically they would have a sales team that would be responsible for detailing. So they would then go and visit healthcare providers or physicians in person and had different ways of providing content that would be largely educational in nature, either about the disease state or their specific drug. And with the goal of encouraging that healthcare provider to write more scripts, which then leads to more revenue and, and, you know, more prominence, and also to get on different formularies within hospitals and health systems. But, that went sideways during the pandemic because no one was meeting with people in person. So I think just as the pandemic was happening, there was also kind of this emergence of technology and thinking of how their healthcare providers want to engage with them.

Kaarin Gordon ([20:57](#)):

And I think it really prompted pharma to rethink. So a healthcare provider might go to our website or might go to a landing page to access. . . ask a question or access certain information depending on what they are looking for, that could then trigger an outreach or an email with additional information. So it's making it very specific to what that healthcare provider or patient is showing interest in and can then dictate the way that journey looks and it can be in different formats. So it could be in document form via a webpage, or it could be a video or a podcast. It could be, you know, it could be any number of things that could be really engaging or more engaging than the way it's done historically. So that's where, like when omnichannel, I think of like different format and different timing of delivery based on what that client, be it a healthcare provider or a patient is interested in. And that I think has really challenged pharma to rethink not only the way they do sales, but then also marketing, because a lot of times from a marketing perspective, it's you've got a brand, but then you've got different teams associated with types of content, whether it's training or the the web team and creating similar content, but in different formats. And now if you think that shift, it's all becoming more interconnected.

Katie Lewis ([22:57](#)):

Yeah. I think the omnichannel focus is super, super exciting, and we're seeing companies just approaching so many different channels now. They're launching web content, mobile applications, social media, and so it's a really exciting time and it's, it's, it's great to see that the customer is a really key focus of that. But as companies are trying to deploy these omnichannel strategies, a big question comes like, A, how do you automate this if you have to now communicate with your customers in like five plus channels, how do you do that in a way that is efficient internally? And second is like, how do you recycle content? So how do you make sure that what you put on an application is going on your website and it's in a trifold and it's in social media? And so you know, we've been focusing on a couple different areas here.

Katie Lewis ([23:51](#)):

And, and the first is automating that process for companies. And so we have technology which is able to integrate with a variety of backend systems, whether it's your document management system or your electronic trial master file, or your web content management system. And our goal is that we can automate the way that the content lives in those systems and be able to share that across all the different platforms. Another key focus for us is helping clients to better recycle their content. And we're doing that in a few ways. First is we author, we have a medical writing team, and we author content in a way that makes it easy to recycle across, you know, a variety of different channels. And so and in addition to that, another key focus is like, once you author this content, how are you going to go about getting visibility for it?

Katie Lewis ([24:46](#)):

So we've been working very closely with companies on their global SEO and SEM strategies. And then lastly, and a really key component is looking at things like component-based content management. So we've seen recently that a lot of companies are exploring how to create structured or component content management. So it's basically little pieces that you can recycle across a variety of channels. And so we have our own technology solutions that do that. We're also able to integrate with other solutions on the market. And really the goal is to, you know, take all these different pieces of the puzzle and be able to easily put it into a piece that can be deployed across any channels. But in short, I think it's, you know, just the focus on the customer first, what's best for the customer, how we can get information to them in a way that's easy to understand and consume is a really important step forward for the pharma space.

Zelena Khan ([25:45](#)):

When I think about industries innovating, industries moving quickly and just trying to evolve and . . .

Kaarin Gordon ([25:52](#)):

Right.

Zelena Khan ([25:53](#)):

listen to the customer. I just don't necessarily think of life sciences.

Kaarin Gordon ([26:00](#)):

No. And it's never going to be, it's never going to be the it's not fast follower, the innovative, you know, like the leading it never will be. But what we're seeing is an interest in healthcare and life sciences and also really wanting to learn from other industries. And that's a shift. I didn't see that as much five years ago. So I think we're only going to see you know, and that pace accelerate as, you know, more more technologies or more innovation is adopted and proven and looking for different ways to to impact that.

Zelena Khan ([26:42](#)):

Where do you think the industry is heading in the next five years?

Kaarin Gordon ([26:47](#)):

So I think it's heading in a couple different places. I think after Covid, I think some of the challenges within the health authorities and how they manage the data and how they communicate with one another, or the lack of ability to share data amongst health authorities. I think all of these things are

being, I'm just going to say actively explored right now that can be game changers. And once that changes and certainly if data standards can be agreed upon across different countries or health authorities, this can have a massive impact and can really open up what pharma and biotech are able to then do within their own organization. So it's interesting, it's very interconnected and you don't see that with other industries. But I think that we're at a really incredible point in time and have the ability to see some incredible change happen in the next five years.

Zelena Khan (28:06):

Katie, I just asked Kaarin, how can pharma reinvent its business? Why don't you tell me, how do you think they can make a bigger impact moving forward?

Katie Lewis (28:15):

Well, the great news is pharma's already having such an incredible impact on patients and on their customers globally. And, you know, as we've talked about over, you know, the, you know, the past couple minutes, it has evolved so quickly too. So we have made excellent progress, but there's still a lot to be done. And I think that there's a couple ways that pharmas can really connect with their patients and better support them. I think first is you know, working closely to understand what patients and customers want. I know we've been doing a lot in the area of like patient advocacy review. So before pharma even like publishes any content, we go to patient populations and we say, give us your feedback on this. Is this poignant? Does this engage you? Is this something that you can easily understand? So getting that feedback from patients is number one.

Katie Lewis (29:09):

Number two, look at different channels for engaging your customers. So, you know, it's no surprise that the amount of videos that exist in the world now is on a dramatic increase. And so, you know, similarly, you know, patients are really harnessing and, you know, looking for opportunities to consume that too when it comes to their health. So, you know, pharma should look at, you know, how do we create and leverage more video content? How do we look at things like podcasts, like we're on right now? You know, patients are listening to that. It's a really great channel and medium for, for getting information. How do we do that to better communicate? And then lastly you know, a cool thing that we're seeing is, you know, pharma companies really tapping into what's available on social media to understand trends, understand what their customers are saying, what are they looking for, what are their challenges, and then using this information and this data in order to make decisions about how they best communicate with their customers. And I think, you know, so really at the heart of this all is how, you know, if pharmas want to have a bigger impact, it's really listening to the customer.

Zelena Khan (30:20):

Katie, Kaarin, thank you so much for your time. But before I let you go,

Katie Lewis (30:24):

Yes.

Zelena Khan (30:24):

we want to do one more thing. It's kind of fun, but,

Katie Lewis (30:28):

Oh god!

Zelena Khan ([30:29](#)):
a little word association. Are you game?

Kaarin Gordon ([30:32](#)):
Of course. I'm game.

Katie Lewis ([30:34](#)):
I'm game.

Zelena Khan ([30:35](#)):
All right. First word is life sci.

Kaarin Gordon ([30:41](#)):
Change.

Katie Lewis ([30:41](#)):
Health.

Zelena Khan ([30:43](#)):
Pharma.

Katie Lewis ([30:46](#)):
Care.

Kaarin Gordon ([30:48](#)):
Lifesaving drugs.

Zelena Khan ([30:49](#)):
Clinical trials.

Katie Lewis ([30:51](#)):
Patience.

Kaarin Gordon ([30:53](#)):
Diversity.

Zelena Khan ([30:55](#)):
Patients.

Kaarin Gordon ([30:57](#)):
Customer experience.

Katie Lewis ([30:59](#)):

Patient as in a patient.

Zelena Khan ([31:02](#)):

Omni.

Kaarin Gordon ([31:03](#)):

Omnifocus.

Katie Lewis ([31:05](#)):

Multiple.

Zelena Khan ([31:05](#)):

Last one, AI.

Katie Lewis ([31:09](#)):

The future. Oh, that's two words. Oops.

Zelena Khan ([31:12](#)):

Great, great, great. So if people want to learn a little bit about you, some of the events going on, where can they learn more?

Katie Lewis ([31:23](#)):

If people want to learn more, quite simply, feel free to connect with me on LinkedIn. I'm always happy to have new connections and learn more about what you're working on and share some of the cool things we're doing around clinical content. But also we have a series of upcoming summits happening across the globe. They'll be in San Francisco, Boston, London and Philadelphia. It's called the C3 Summit. And we bring together a variety of industry leaders to talk about some of the most pressing areas in the life sciences and pharmaceutical space. So things like diversity and inclusion, decentralized clinical trials, AI and automation. And so we'd love to have you and your teams there. To get more information on the C3 Summit, just go to the C3summit, that's T H E C, the number three, and then summit, s u m m i t.com. And on that site, we have all of our events happening across the globe, as well as the agendas and the opportunity to register.

Kaarin Gordon ([32:31](#)):

The best place to find me is on LinkedIn, reach out via direct message and would love to connect.

Zelena Khan ([32:42](#)):

And you're Kaarin with two A's?

Kaarin Gordon ([32:44](#)):

That's correct.

Zelena Khan ([32:46](#)):

The technological change in the healthcare industry over the last five to 10 years has brought new opportunities and new challenges. Whether it's improving clinical trial design or implementing patient-centric approaches to drug development, it's no doubt that our life sciences division is committed to making a difference in the lives of patients. Thank you for joining us today. If you want to connect with Katie or Kaarin, you can check out the links in our show notes. We hope you found this episode informative and insightful. Thanks for tuning in. See you next time.

Zelena Khan ([33:16](#)):

If you made it to the end of this episode, thank you for listening. Make sure you hit the like button and follow us wherever you get your podcast. If you have a question, comment or suggestion, we'd love to hear from you. Email us at nextpodcast@transperfect.com or visit our website at nextpodcast.transperfect.com. Support for this podcast comes from TransPerfect, a family of companies providing language and technology solutions for global business.