

# How To Maximize BD Pipelines In Life Sciences

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## OVERVIEW

This article distills the key takeaways from a recent webinar titled *“How To Maximize BD Pipelines In Life Sciences: Newsletters, Webinars and Targeted B2B Strategies”* focused on optimizing BD pipelines in the life sciences sector. It highlights actionable strategies for combining human-centered outreach with scalable digital tools, aligning messaging with key events, and turning content, such as webinars and newsletters, into powerful top-of-funnel assets.

## KEY POINTS

- **Blending Personalization and Automation.** Successful BD today requires a mix of personalized, human-centered outreach—like manual emails and calls—and scalable automation. When combined thoughtfully, this approach expands reach without losing authenticity.
- **Diversifying Outreach Channels.** Top-performing life science vendors are using more channels, including LinkedIn messaging, digital ads, newsletters, webinars, and sponsored content. Still, many underuse or fail to integrate these tools into a unified outreach strategy.
- **Aligning Outreach with Industry Events.** Outreach tied to major industry events (ASCO, BIO, JPM, etc.) drives higher engagement. Even companies not attending can time messaging to leverage event buzz and create relevant conversations.
- **Newsletters as Top-of-Funnel Tools.** Newsletters that focus on people, process, and technology can nurture early-stage interest, generate inbound traffic, and create natural openings for warm follow-ups.
- **Webinars as BD Engines.** Beyond brand awareness, webinars provide valuable data through polls, Q&A, and participant behavior, which helps tailor follow-up efforts. Repurposing webinar content into thought leadership assets further extends their value.
- **Leveraging Engagement Data.** Webinar and podcast platforms track attendee engagement—who stays longest, interacts most, or downloads materials—providing critical insights to prioritize leads and guide sales follow-ups.
- **Balancing Scale with Personal Touch.** The key takeaway is to avoid either fully automated or fully manual outreach. A semi-automated system that adapts messaging based on current events and individual prospect behavior is the most sustainable path to growth in life sciences BD.

## ABOUT THE EXECUTIVES

**James J. Sarene** has over 30 years' experience in the Life Sciences working with companies from emerging biotech to large pharmaceuticals. With special expertise in Business Development, M&A and Licensing, Mr. Sarene was Managing Director at Madison Keats, a boutique Charlotte based transactional firm, where he focused on providing clients with strategic partnerships enabling growth opportunities. Mr. Sarene also led North American activity as Sr. Director, Business Development for the Indian based clinical research organization CliniRx Research. While at i3 Statprobe, he managed the relationships for Wyeth, Schering-Plough, and GSK along with many smaller biotech and pharmaceutical clients. As an independent consultant in the Life Sciences, Mr. Sarene established relationships for such companies as Lorus Therapeutics, Ockham Development, Maaguzi, eCclipse, ERA Clinical, Biovator, OrtoWay, SpringFire Laboratory Network, and between Pheromone & Healthwatch Systems that successfully launched the product OV Watch to the market. Mr. Sarene has a B.A. in Psychology from Youngstown State University.



**James J. Sarene**  
Managing Director  
BioAlliance Strategies

**Claudio Rota** has over 20 years of experience in the life sciences industry, specializing in business development, strategic consulting, and entrepreneurship. As the Founder and Managing Director of Outbound Pharma since 2017, he has spearheaded initiatives that foster growth and forge partnerships in the biopharmaceutical sector, successfully supporting hundreds of clients. His global clientele includes top 100 pharmaceutical companies, CROs, API manufacturers, CMO/CDMOs, and various service providers. Claudio has led over 120 business development projects worldwide, with a total estimated value surpassing \$50M within the biopharma industry. Prior to founding Outbound Pharma, he held prominent business development roles at Dentsply Sirona, EmPartners, Ardigen, Reckitt Benckiser Pharmaceuticals, and Nanopharma Technologies, among others. He has extensive experience in both the U.S. and global markets, where he led project delivery teams specializing in lead generation, client acquisition, market research, and deal closures—ensuring consistent sales pipeline growth. Dr. Rota is widely recognized as an authority in new business development. Claudio earned a Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Rochester, a B.S. in Physics from Southern Polytechnic State University, and a Master's in Fundraising from Bologna Business School at the University of Bologna.



**Claudio Rota, Ph.D.**  
Managing Director  
Outbound Pharma

## EXECUTIVE DISCUSSION

**James Sarene:** Welcome everyone from around the world to this joint webinar with BioAlliance and Outbound Pharma. This webinar is titled “How to Maximize BD Pipelines in Life Sciences”. This involves newsletters, webinars, and targeted B2B strategies. I'm Jim Sarene, and I have the pleasure of hosting Claudio Rota, Managing Director at Outbound Pharma.

**Claudio Rota:** Thank you, Jim and everyone for attending..

**Jim Sarene:** Thank you for joining. A little bit about each of us: I've been in the industry for over 30 years. I founded Bio Alliance in 2011. It is life science focused. We work on behalf of marketing, BD, M&A, and some licensing strategies. Our target clients are CROs, biotech, and pharma. We do believe that we offer very cost-effective and efficient strategies and programs for our clients. .

**Claudio Rota:** And I'm the founder and managing director of Outbound Pharma, a US-based business development consultancy that's been around since 2017. We are 100% life sciences focused, and our strength is in doing primarily activities like lead generation and new business development for our clients, which in most cases - I would say 80% of the times - are pharmaceutical service providers and vendors of all sorts. One of the things that we have been able to witness over the years has been a dramatic change in the way that outreach is being performed. Many years ago there used to be obviously manual emails going out and cold calling was one of the primary channels for outreach. Things have changed a few years ago

where we had the means to actually do email blasts as well as automated emails. But in the last ten years, when LinkedIn started to become more popular after the IPO in 2011, you started to see more presence on this social media platform. It became increasingly important to the extent that many people actually decided to stop doing emails. So this multi-channel approach — emails, manual emails, automated emails, LinkedIn, and to some extent also cold calling — is still happening. But in the life sciences, in my opinion, there are more channels that are still underutilized. This is really the topic of today's discussion: how to actually leverage these other channels to make your outreach much more effective. So the reason why we are involved in omni-channel is because we want greater customer expectations and more effective engagement.

**Jim Sarene:** Thank you Claudio, very good synopsis of how this model works. A little bit about the BioAlliance side of this. Again, the way this model will work is coordination between these two entities that fit seamlessly to support your outreach efforts. What BioAlliance has created is something we call fractionalized BD, and it's just designed to increase your business development ROI. Some of the metrics that our clients have seen over the last 14 years: we've got 40,000 plus life science contacts, our delivery rate success for emails and newsletters is 95%, our clients have the benefit of having over 4,000 people a month see their newsletters, and we've had over 200 successful webinar sessions. Some of the clients that we're engaged with — obviously you can recognize some of these names — they're small, midsize, and large companies. We're very proud to be able to have served them.

**Jim Sarene:** The way that the model works, here's our process: everything we're doing is to feed your B2B pipeline effort and we are the front end of this to feed what Outbound Pharma will ultimately do for you.

We start with a calendar that ties industry events to your activities. By building your marketing calendar — and believe it or not, many companies don't build a calendar that we actually work with. It's quite surprising — but we'll tie them to industry events, conferences such as ASCO, Bio, DIA, and we're promoting them 6 to 8 weeks prior, even if you're not attending. The goal would be to get you an audience with them if you're there, but if you're not, you're still speaking to an audience whose ears are up about the industry. For instance, for ASCO, about oncology and any oncology experience you have, we're tying it to that timeline in the market where more companies would be likely to see it and read your information. Again, everything is planned out for you.

How we do this is we'll reach out initially with newsletters, and what we're promoting is your people, your capabilities, and services. I always say: it's people, process, and technology that matters. So by pushing out these newsletters to the 40k+ contacts we have, we're using images and links to draw the readers to your website or your social media channels that involve your case studies, white papers — everything is to demonstrate your success. If there's any type of a case study, anything like that, we're showing how your people, process, and technology can benefit your clients.

**Jim Sarene:** As for webinars, everyone knows how popular webinars have become, and again, thank you for attending ours. But what are the real benefits of a webinar and what are the hidden benefits of a webinar? Obviously, you can get a global audience. It does increase your brand awareness. They're extremely cost-effective when you can have hundreds of people attending a webinar. I will show you examples of just that with some of our clients. Also, it increases your database pipeline, because you're getting people to attend who aren't necessarily in your database, and you're building your database for that. The webinars can be recorded or they can be live, and the key is - these videos can be repurposed for targeted individuals after the event for the next 12 months. That's the hidden value of a webinar and I'll show you a little bit of that a little bit later. What Bio Alliance has done is we built the Bio Alliance Video Network (BAVN). It's for recorded and live webinars and podcasts. We're reaching out to the databases that we have both within sponsors and CROs. We're promoting your capabilities, case studies, white papers, and most importantly, we're reporting all of the activity for the webinars — who's attending, who isn't, the polling questions that we have during the webinar, the Q&A. It's all information in this model that would be forwarded to Outbound Pharma for follow-up activity. Everything that we do is branded for the client, so when people are registering for your webinar, they're seeing your logo. Bio Alliance is invisible as far as webinars are concerned, so it looks as though you've made the investment for your platform, and it's branded for you. So what do we do with this content that we establish — all of these webinars and corporate videos? Well, posting them to your corporate channel, your website, social media, and again, we will use newsletters to pull these readers to download this video. I'll show you exactly how we're going to capture this contact information and how it feeds your pipeline.



**Jim Sarene:** Here are some real world examples. In one case, we had a client with 209 people registered for their event, but over the next 12 months, between their two webinars, they had 1,885 and 1,349 people click to download their video. That's the hidden value of webinars. A lot of people can't attend the day of the actual event, but they want the information, so pushing out newsletters and doing outreach like that, pulling readers to your links to download is invaluable information for targeted clients.

Which leads us to the reporting — how do we get information to you? Basically, for newsletters, we look at anyone who's opened and clicked on specific links so your BD team has a good idea of what they're looking at already. If someone's looking at a case study about oncology, a BD person following up already has that intel. More importantly, they're not hunting blindly — they're getting lists literally of thousands of names who have opened information, and looked and clicked on certain links. So this supplements your existing database. This is a year's worth of data, and I wanted to highlight a couple things with this client: we pushed out 1.29 million newsletter emails, we had close to 100,000 people opening them, and if you look down at the very bottom highlighted in red, there are seven events that are webinars and you can see the number of people that have clicked on and went to the registration page, totaling 39,851 people. We had 3,756 people attending. That's like having 3,756 presentations to individuals within a year's timeline. So it's tremendous value for webinars and newsletters that we're able to provide.

Another real-world example is that of a newsletter that went out for a large client, and these numbers are legitimate, and they're unbelievable. We had 16,000 people open within the two distributions that we have, we had a 95% delivery rate, and we had 116,000 people click on links within that. They received all of this information via Excel. We're able to download the information, provide it to the clients, show them who opened and who clicked on what links — again feeding your BD team, in this case it would be Outbound Pharma. And now this is where the handoff would come in: once this report comes, it would be turned over to the BD team, and in this case Outbound Pharma, and I will hand it over to Claudio.

**Claudio Rota:** Jim, thank you very much for the introduction. These statistics are really remarkable. This is why I'm so excited about working together and about this collaboration that we've been having for quite some time now. The handoff will really be designed to pursue these opportunities even further through targeted emails, targeted outreach in general—even through social media—with the goal of securing quality appointments. Cold calling is a part of what we do, even though it's not the predominant thing. Most of the time, we reach out to very senior-level people, and so therefore it's not the most appropriate route, at least in the beginning of the conversation. One of the things about emails is that lately it has been incredibly difficult to get to the inbox. These are statistics that are coming from multiple sources, one of them being Apollo.io—not the only source—but the open rates range anywhere between 5% and 6% in the industry. So it's really, really grim.

**Claudio Rota:** The goal is for us to really improve these statistics. Even though open rates are not the ultimate goal, it's certainly an important part of it. We actually did a survey specifically on lead generation in our industry. We did this last year with contract research organizations globally. One of the things that we discovered, unsurprisingly, is that companies have multiple challenges when it comes to generating leads. It's not one single reason. Many companies struggle with lacking the time—for the grand majority, perhaps the main difficulty is the prospecting: how much time and resources it requires, incomplete data, making the initial contact, setting up the appointment, and so forth. So there are multiple reasons why it's a very time-consuming effort. On top of that, most companies don't even have a dedicated person doing the outreach. In many cases, this is split between sales and marketing—and in some cases, business development. These are not individuals that spend 100% of their time actually doing new business development. So there is definitely a need for specialized expertise in this area.

One very important channel for us are conferences and events. These are some of the conferences that we actually were physically present last year. This is for a particular client of ours, which was a CDMO. We can reach out to their preferred targets either in person or virtually. The point is for us to be their partner for increasing their visibility and number of quality appointments. When emails are done properly, we do think that they can be a very effective channel. In spite of what many people say in the industry—or in other industries as well—emails are still very effective.

Our email open rates, for example, that we have seen in recent campaigns, range anywhere between 50% to 100%. Part of the reason is not just the content, but also the fact that we are targeting the right people at the right time—for example, in the case of conferences and events. So the key takeaway, I would say, is that from over 20 years in the industry, what I would say is that the top 1% companies actively invest in lead generation, which requires very specific skill sets. They do invest both in terms of resources as well as outsourcing, if they choose to do so.

It is absolutely critical in our industry to do your research *before* you do any outreach. The spray-and-pray approach does not work. It's severely ineffective these days—certainly in 2025. That's why we take a very personalized approach, applying the 20/80 rule. So in other words, only 20% of our campaigns are actually automated, and 80% of cases are all manually written, manually validated, and executed. The overall approach needs to be omnichannel. We call this omnichannel as opposed to just, let's say, multichannel, because one channel feeds the other. So, based on everything that Jim has said a few minutes ago, we can collect all this information and actually use that to our advantage to secure more leads.

**Jim Sarene:** Thank you, Claudio, for that very informative presentation.

**Jim Sarene:** This is the time for questions and answers. We do have many questions in the queue. We will address as many as we can. Again, we've allotted about 30 minutes for this presentation. So let's start with the first question. It's from a mid-sized CDMO. So Claudio, if you wouldn't mind responding to this question:

**Q: *How do you strike the right balance between automation and a personal touch in outreach?***

**Claudio Rota:** Oh yes—this is definitely a very relevant question. As you know, we have worked with a lot of CDMOs of all different sizes over the years. More so these days—this year and last year—there's never been a more important topic than how much automation you need to have. And I've talked about it a few moments ago already. We have a process whereby almost everything is manually driven. So we keep automations at a minimum. Usually, there are follow-up emails, for example. Everything else is done 100% manually. It's obviously more time-consuming, but it's also more effective—for us and for our clients. So this is really nothing new. It's not rocket science. It's really about doing your homework. There's been a lot of discussions lately about how to write effective emails and the importance of copywriting. Yes, subject lines are important and all these other tricks that they teach you, which are absolutely important—but not as important as your ability to send a thoughtful email with a human touch. This is our approach. It has worked for us. Most definitely, there are things that you should avoid doing. But for the most part, it's about understanding the art and the science of the psychology of sales - how to stimulate people's attention and curiosity. So in essence, that's what we do. It's mostly a personal touch and not much automation at all.

**Jim Sarene:** Thank you very much. We've got another question here. It looks like it's from a small CRO. So if you don't mind, I'll take this one. The question is:

**Q: *How does this marketing model work over a short and longer period of time—for example, 3, 6, 12 months down the road?***

**Jim Sarene:** I'll answer this one. This is a multifaceted response, I would imagine. Believe it or not, a lot of companies just unleash their sales team to go sell something, and there's really no planning or strategy. What this model does is it really works in alignment with what's happening in the market. So if there's a conference coming up and we're talking about, say, again, ASCO—oncology—we're going to talk about your oncology experience 6–8 weeks in advance, highlighting your key thought leaders, your execution team, your operations team—profiling them, making them front and center. We can work essentially by quarters, mapping this out. And it's basically planning what you're going to be talking about, tying it to industry events so that there is a greater level of interest within the market for what we are presenting. And planning this allows for ample time to reach your audience. It also can have a bit of serendipity—where, if we've got a webinar coming up and someone doesn't want to wait until the webinar, I've actually had a scenario where someone wanted to talk immediately because there was kind of an urgent need and didn't want to wait the extra month to get to the webinar. That's a good thing. Who cares if they don't show up at the webinar if you're already in discussion with them? That's really what this is all about anyway. And thirdly, this also will build a content library for you—having these types of tools, which are videos, newsletters—where people can go back to and hopefully be able to at least identify you when they qualify people and companies as vendors. That's really what part of the targets are for this model. I hope that was an efficient answer for you.

**Jim Sarene:** We've got other questions here—and this looks like it's from a SaaS provider. So I'm going to turn this over to you, Claudio. The question is:

**Q: *What types of companies benefit most from your proposed strategy?***

**Claudio Rota:** Yes, for sure. Obviously, we've worked also with IT companies selling into the biopharma space. I guess one could argue that any company selling products or services in this area would benefit from this type of targeted approach. But having worked with hundreds of different vendors and service providers across the globe over the years—even companies that have more than 1,000 employees—I think the pattern I've seen is that the companies that benefit the most are the ones that either (1) don't want to hire, onboard, or train more SDRs, or (2) companies that may have lots of competition and a weak value proposition. So what we bring to the table together is experience helping these companies refine their unique value proposition. We have the experience to help them stand out and highlight the true value. This means we can target the right companies for them, uncover opportunities, and also monitor what's going on in their specific industry. We have turned down offers from companies who are maybe a little bit arrogant—thinking that all they need to do to win more business is put their contact information out there to every pharmaceutical company. That doesn't work. It doesn't in 2025. If you do this type of personalization at scale without any rationale behind it, it doesn't work.

You need to know how to communicate your value prop—whether you are selling regulatory SaaS products or digital transformation services, for example. Also, one final comment is: companies that benefit the most are the ones who understand that business development doesn't happen overnight. They understand that securing quality meetings takes a very long time. It's a tedious process, which is why it's challenging. If you're only interested in quick sales, then this framework is not going to work—and it doesn't work for us, unfortunately, because we are in a relationship business and not in a transactional one. Hopefully, this clarifies a bit. Sorry for the long explanation...

**Jim Sarene:** No, no—thank you for speaking about the elephant in the room as far as managing client expectations with what it takes. There's time for about one more question, and it looks like—based on the name—it's from a mid-sized CRO. The question is:

**Q: *We're a mid-sized CRO, and we don't have a large sales/BD team. So how can this marketing strategy improve our team's performance?***

**Jim Sarene:** There are a couple ways that this can do this—and this actually happened with a client where I had a client that had 22 salespeople. They engaged this model, and they reduced their sales team by three, because we were able to do what I call "getting more shots on goal"—because we're pushing out 40,000+ email newsletters to the world. This allowed their team to have larger territory, which means, obviously, it's going to help their salespeople sell—which reduces turnover, which reduces cost of training—and everybody's happy. It also enables you to have a consistent message across the BD team.



I've been in CROs where I've been on meetings with a couple other BD people, and things were said that I was like: why would you ever say that in a meeting? Promise something like that? We don't know if we can deliver. Well, by presenting information through this model—both with newsletters and your experts speaking on webinars—the message is out and it's clear and it's given by the authority. So this is another thing that it helps. The other thing is, it can really help identify key people where your sales team isn't necessarily hunting, or if companies don't want you to talk to them. There's a scenario—say for instance, like GSK—they have their vendor list locked up for 18 months, and they tell you, "Call me in 15 months." How do you communicate with that vendor manager or that individual who's managing the sales process? You do this through this model. So at least they're getting information, and you can do follow-up emails in a very benign way to say: "Thanks for reading our recent newsletter" (with a link to the newsletter). "I'll contact you in 15 months, as you requested.". It's just a soft touch. So it's a tremendous tool to tell your story over a long period of time.

**Jim Sarene:** And with that, I've got to say that we must conclude this webinar. We thank everybody for joining today. Claudio, do you have any final comments?

**Claudio Rota:** Thanks for hosting this webinar. I really enjoyed it, and hopefully we can do more of these in the future. Thank you, Jim. And thanks, everyone, for joining.

**Jim Sarene:** Thank you. And as a reminder, this recording will be available on both of our websites. So we do encourage you to take a look at it and download the video, should you have any questions. Also, there will be QR codes and email links to be able to communicate with us as well. Thanks very much—and until next time.