



## Best Programs & Best People

### Managed Markets Customers: Relationship Status and Customer Facing Access

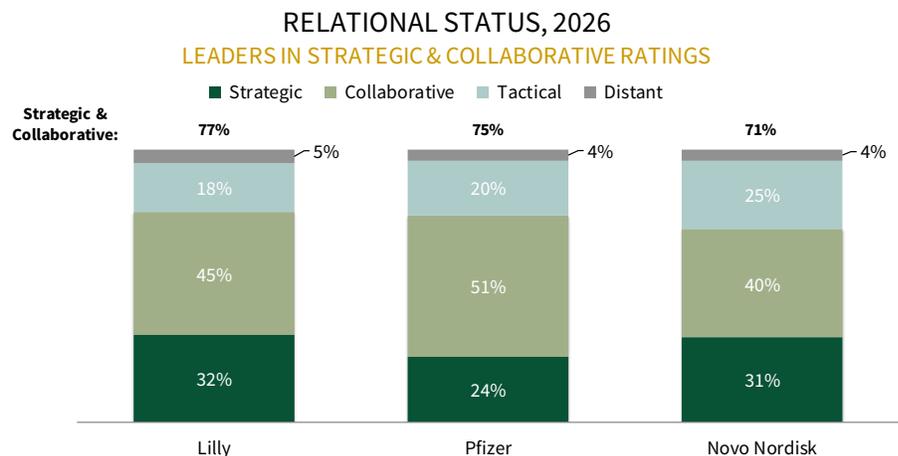
Only a small share of manufacturer-payer relationships are viewed as truly strategic – new HIRC research reveals what separates leaders from the rest. HIRC's *Relationship Status and Customer Facing Access* report benchmarks 30+ leading pharmaceutical manufacturers based on payer customer evaluations of relationship status and customer-facing personnel access to key decision-makers. The report addresses the following questions:

- How do commercial health plan and PBM decision-makers rate their relationships with 30+ pharmaceutical manufacturers?
- Which manufacturers lead in cultivating strategic and collaborative relationships?
- How can a pharmaceutical firm move from having distant/tactical relationships with key accounts to those that are more collaborative/strategic?
- What attributes are critical to enhancing manufacturer account team customer-facing access and strategic relationships?

**Key Finding:** Customers indicate that a flexible contracting approach is among the top factors in determining positive relationships. This shows up in a willingness to problem-solve and be adaptive, provide options, and in early, good-faith engagement.

### Lilly Leads with the Most Collaborative Payer Relationships in 2026

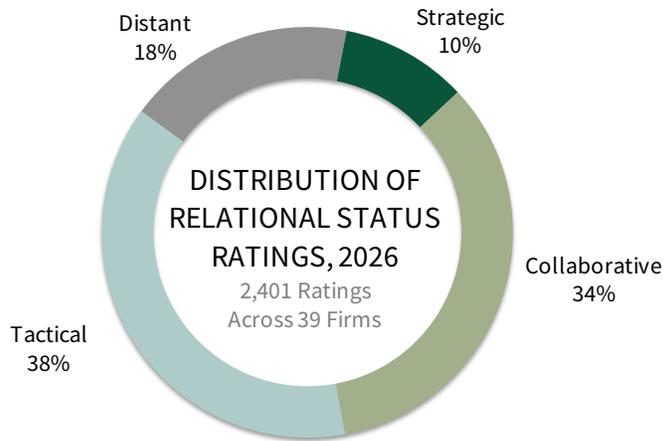
Managed markets customers were asked to rate their relationships with 30+ manufacturers from distant to strategic. Lilly leads with about 77% of panelists reporting their relationship as collaborative and/or strategic. Pfizer and Novo Nordisk follow, with over 70% of respondents rating their relationship with each company as collaborative and/or strategic.



The full report includes a full listing of 30+ manufacturer relational status ratings across national plans, regional plans, BCBS plans, and PBMs.

## Relationships with Pharmaceutical Manufacturers

Managed markets key decision-makers rate 10% of their relationships with manufacturers as strategic, 34% as collaborative, 38% as tactical, and the remaining 18% as distant.



There are multiple levers within the control of a manufacturer to drive more collaborative & strategic relationships beyond its size and contracting value. Size and portfolio breadth simply determine how many chances you get, not whether you succeed. The complete report provides detailed customer feedback on exemplary manufacturer relationship building and how manufacturers can move from distant/tactical relationships to those that are more collaborative/strategic.

Relational status ratings for 30+ manufacturers are segmented by manufacturer cohort size, as well as by the following customer groups:

- **Commercial Health Plan Pharmacy Directors**
- **Commercial Health Plan Medical Directors**
- **Pharmacy Benefit Manager Decision-Makers**
- **Health Plan Type: National, Regional, BCBS**
- **PBM Size: Very Large, Mid-size, Small/Upcoming**

## Research Methodology and Report Availability

In January, HIRC surveyed 86 key decision-makers from leading commercial health plans and pharmacy benefit managers. Online surveys and follow-up telephone interviews were used to gather information. The *Relationship Status and Customer Facing Access* report is part of the Best Programs and Best People Service and is now available to subscribers at [www.hirc.com](http://www.hirc.com).

## The Best Programs & Best People

**Service** provides strategic and tactical information to assist pharmaceutical manufacturers in maximizing the impact of their account managers, medical science liaisons, and value-added marketing programs. The service provides insights into the skills and attributes critical to account manager and medical science liaison success, as well as guidance for the development and implementation of support resources that meet customers' evolving needs. For subscription information please contact:



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HEALTH INDUSTRIES RESEARCH CENTER (HIRC) is an independent, nonpartisan organization that conducts strategic market research on trends in health care, pharmaceuticals and managed care businesses. HIRC's benchmark studies focus on the marketing needs of pharmaceutical companies by providing research critical to the development of successful customer-focused marketing strategies.

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