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6 Ways Life Sciences Leaders Are Solving Chargeback Errors, Forecast Gaps, and Fulfillment Delays

Lessons From TraceLink's NJ Leadership Seminar

Life sciences companies are under tremendous pressure to deliver medicines to patients while managing complex supply chains. Rising costs, ongoing geopolitical disruptions, and pricing pressure make it harder to ensure product availability and maintain strong partner relationships, creating pressure for manufacturers to improve efficiency, reduce costly errors, and modernize outdated processes.

At TraceLink's recent Life Sciences & Healthcare Leaders Seminar in New Jersey, senior executives from leading pharmaceutical manufacturers, including Aurobindo, Epic, Fosun, Genus, Merck, and more, gathered to share strategies for maximizing revenue, strengthening service, and navigating this complexity. Through real-world case studies and interactive discussions, they explored how digitalizing key processes—like forecasting, order management, and chargeback reconciliation—can boost resilience, enhance collaboration, and drive more reliable performance.

Here are six takeaways that show how end-to-end supply chain orchestration and real-time links between partners can help manufacturers build stronger, more agile operations.

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1. Chargebacks Remain a Major Source of Revenue Leakage

The Problem:

Chargebacks dominated the conversation at the seminar—and for good reason. Up to 75% of chargeback and return claims contain discrepancies, leading to delays, revenue leakage, and strained wholesaler relationships. Attendees described late or inconsistent data, teams spending hours combing spreadsheets, and disputes dragging on for weeks. The costs extend beyond lost revenue—trust between manufacturers and wholesalers also suffers.

The Conversation:

One manufacturer shared how a single batch of misaligned contract data triggered hundreds of disputed claims, tying up millions in chargeback claims for over a month—and forcing their finance and customer service teams into daily reconciliation calls. As one VP put it, “We had 14 different spreadsheets circulating for the same set of claims. No one knew which version was correct. By the time we caught the error, our wholesaler had already paused payments.” Another attendee described how the constant back-and-forth had become “a full-time job for two analysts.”

The Path Forward:

Manufacturers need **real-time visibility into chargeback data** and a standardized way to exchange information across contracts, pricing, returns, and product transfers. Automating verification and reconciliation can quickly resolve discrepancies, accelerate reimbursements, and ensure pricing accuracy. By shifting from disjointed processes to a shared digital approach, companies can reduce operational strain, protect revenue, and rebuild trust with trading partners.

2. Digitalizing Order Fulfillment Processes Improves Performance and

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Reliability

The Problem:

Attendees discussed how gaps in order fulfillment and shipment tracking create inefficiency, delays, and risk across their operations. Many still rely on email and spreadsheets to manage purchase orders, confirmations, and shipment updates, leaving teams without up-to-date insight into order status or inventory.

One manufacturer described plans to expand into specialty markets, including a future direct-to-customer channel, and acknowledged that their current processes won't scale. Without live visibility, missed purchase orders and delayed confirmations can quickly lead to late deliveries, reactive firefighting, and lost revenue.

The Conversation:

One supply chain director recalled a launch week where, "We were refreshing inboxes instead of tracking systems. We didn't realize half the orders hadn't shipped until the phone started ringing." Another noted, "We're spending more time chasing data than moving product."

The Path Forward:

Leaders emphasized a vision of end-to-end digital fulfillment supported by real-time milestone tracking and a single source of truth. This includes:

- Live visibility into inventory, orders, and shipments across partners
- Proactive issue resolution and better available-to-promise control
- Shared data and milestone tracking for aligned collaboration

The impact is clear: fewer delivery disruptions, improved OTIF performance, stronger partner trust, and the ability to scale as new products and channels launch. By replacing manual, disjointed processes with integrated digital workflows, manufacturers can ensure reliable deliveries today while laying the groundwork for growth.

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3. Faster Partner Onboarding Accelerates Growth and Speed to Market

The Problem:

Onboarding was one of the hottest topics at the event. Manufacturers described how bringing on new trading partners often requires building custom point-to-point integrations—a slow, expensive process that can take several months per partner. Because it takes so long and is so costly, only a portion of partners are onboarded digitally, leaving others to continue operating through email and spreadsheets. The result is a disjointed process where some partners are fully digitalized while others rely on manual, error-prone workflows—creating inefficiencies and slowing growth.

The Conversation:

“Every new partner feels like reinventing the wheel,” one commercial operations leader said. “It’s three months of IT tickets and testing before we can even start sending orders.” Another joked, “We spend more time onboarding partners than selling product to them.”

The Path Forward:

Manufacturers need a faster, more scalable way to link with new partners that eliminates repetitive, one-off integrations. A shared digital framework can make it possible to link once and reuse that link across multiple partners, dramatically cutting onboarding time and effort. By streamlining these processes, companies can accelerate growth, bring new products to market faster, and strengthen supply chain agility.

4. Real-Time Forecast Sharing Reduces Stockouts and Excess Inventory

The Problem:

Many companies have invested heavily in planning systems yet continue to face stockouts, excess inventory, and last-minute production changes. The problem

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isn’t the tools—it’s the data feeding them.

Forecast updates are often delayed, outdated, inconsistent, or incomplete because they’re exchanged manually via spreadsheets and emails or inaccurate EDI files. This leaves planners scrambling to piece together a reliable demand picture, often too late to act.

The Conversation:
One demand planner described spending weekends stitching together six versions of a forecast, only to learn the largest wholesaler had cut their order by 30% the day before production began. “We’re flying blind,” she said. “By the time we get clean data, the market has already moved.”

The Path Forward:
Manufacturers need real-time, automated sharing of forecast and planning data across every trading partner, regardless of system or format. This seamless data exchange delivers the accurate, timely insights required to anticipate demand shifts, reduce stockouts, minimize waste, and align production more closely with true market needs.

5. Reliable Product Supply Requires Visibility and Seamless Collaboration With CMOs

The Problem:
Managing relationships with contract manufacturing organizations (CMOs) was a major focus at the event. Manufacturers discussed how difficult it can be to coordinate production, inventory, and quality when each CMO uses different systems and workflows. As one attendee noted, "CMOs are already asked to use multiple applications in their daily work—minimizing this complexity is critical."

The Conversation:
One operations executive described calling three different people at their CMO just

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to confirm which batch was in production: “It shouldn’t take half a day to answer a yes-or-no question.” Another shared that quality records sometimes arrive weeks after shipments, forcing their team to hold product unnecessarily.

The Path Forward:

Manufacturers and CMOs need a unified way of working with shared access to live production schedules, inventory, and quality data. This transparency helps both sides respond quickly to demand changes, maintain quality standards, and strengthen partnerships—all while ensuring a reliable, uninterrupted supply.

6. Multi-Modal Integration Supports Companies of All Technical Levels

The Problem:

One of the highlights of the event was a live demo showing how easily companies can interact with the TraceLink Network. Attendees were impressed by how the interface allows teams to navigate the platform, manage partners, and monitor transactions all in one place—without heavy IT lift.

The Conversation:

Several attendees commented on how transformative it felt to see smaller regional partners participate in the same system as global enterprises. “We’ve been told for years they’d need EDI,” one IT lead said. “Watching them onboard through the UI in minutes was eye-opening.”

The Path Forward:

The TraceLink Network supports multi-modal integration, enabling some partners to link through B2B or API while others participate through a user interface. This flexibility brings every trading partner—regardless of technical maturity—into a shared digital ecosystem, reducing complexity and improving responsiveness across the supply chain.

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The Solution

TraceLink's Multienterprise Information Network Tower (MINT) is at the heart of solving these challenges. Built on the **OPUS platform** and powered by the **TraceLink Network**, MINT enables manufacturers to link once and immediately exchange data with 100% of upstream and downstream partners—from suppliers and CMOs to wholesalers, health systems, and pharmacies. This includes a complete set of commercial and manufacturing transactions such as forecasts, purchase orders, acknowledgements, advance ship notices (ASNs), invoices, inventory balances, and chargeback data.

By eliminating custom point-to-point integrations and creating a single source of truth, MINT provides the foundation for seamless, real-time collaboration across the entire supply chain. **OPUS Reports & Dashboards** builds on this foundation, giving companies the visibility and analytics needed to monitor performance, track trends, and make data-driven decisions.

With TraceLink, companies gain the capabilities to:

- **Standardize and automate chargeback reconciliation** to resolve discrepancies faster and strengthen wholesaler relationships
- **Digitalize order fulfillment processes** for real-time visibility, faster issue resolution, and improved on-time, in-full (OTIF) performance
- **Accelerate partner onboarding** with a single, reusable link that scales across the entire network
- **Enable real-time forecast sharing** to reduce stockouts, minimize waste, and align production with market demand
- **Unify collaboration with CMOs** to simplify interactions and ensure reliable,

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high-quality product supply

- **Support every trading partner** with multi-modal integration, from B2B and APIs to intuitive user interfaces for manual participants

Contact TraceLink today to schedule a meeting and explore how MINT, OPUS, and OPUS Reports & Dashboards can help your organization strengthen its supply chain, improve service levels, and deliver greater value to both patients and partners.

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Meet with TraceLink to learn more about MINT!
Fill out the form to schedule a meeting now.

Thank you! We will contact you soon!

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