

Pharmaceutical Case Study

Seamless Access To Knowledge Speeds Up Discovery For Boehringer Ingelheim





The Company

Boehringer Ingelheim (BI), an \$18B, 50,000-employee enterprise whose history spans 130 years, is one of the pharmaceutical industry's top 20 companies—a distinction it owes to an innovation-driven culture across three business areas: human pharmaceuticals, animal health, and biopharmaceutical contract manufacturing. BI invests 20% of its revenues into its R&D operations. To learn more, visit www.boehringer-ingelheim.com

The Scientific Information Center

At the heart of BI's research engine is the company's Scientific Information Center, managed by Karlheinz Spenny and Katrin Clemens. We spoke with them about how Research Solutions' Article Galaxy Enterprise Platform keeps the company's 8,000 knowledge workers humming with a steady stream of scientific content to advance their research and regulatory activities.



The Problem

RS: Tell us about Boehringer Ingelheim's Scientific Information Center. What is its role in the organization?

BI: The Scientific Information Center, which reports into discovery research, is responsible for providing seamless access to scientific information sourced primarily from published articles and journals.

Previously, each of the company's 145 global operational units (OPUs) was free to manage its research spend as it saw fit. But we in the corporate library envisioned a lean and centralized knowledge access platform, powered by copyright-compliant document delivery services, that would result in cost savings on a global scale. That's the vision we promoted to all OPUs.

RS: What were the difficulties around document delivery prior to this reorganization?

BI: Each OPU had its own way of doing article procurement. And in the corporate library, we also had a document delivery provider. But the quality of service, pricing, and access to the content was not what we had expected. There were many disappointments.

RS: In what ways has scientific literature consumption contributed to the challenges?

BI: Both employees and external people working for BI order thousands of articles every month. The external stakeholders are primarily concerned with pharmacovigilance (PV) to disposition any adverse drug events. And it is their usage that is driving the usage trends we see.

Interestingly, PV usage is rising despite the fact that we are screening much fewer BI compounds than before. Why? Because more authors are writing about more compounds in total. It's a steadily increasing number also because of generic and off-patent compounds—they don't disappear even when the compounds are no longer marketed.

In some countries the obligation to screen the literature remains, because in some rare cases they remain accessible for patients even if they are no longer available in pharmacies. The numbers of journals and books are also continuously growing, and they include new titles about drug side effects. Consequently, PV objectives represent half of all articles consumed. And that half is growing.

The Solution

RS: How did you go about selecting a new literature solution provider?

BI: We started looking around and talking with our contacts in the industry and in associations, and we discovered that there were alternatives on the market. Subsequently, we invited proposals. In the process of reviewing the proposals, Research Solutions really stood out. The solutions, the services, the flexibility, and the customer orientation were far superior to what we had seen or experienced before. Selecting Research Solutions was a decision we have never regretted in any way. It was absolutely the right decision.

On the articles we order, we see almost **immediate delivery**, which translates into significant **time savings** for our researchers.”



Karlheinz Spenny
Head of Scientific
Information Center

RS: Were there other considerations that went into the decision?

BI: There were many important considerations. For example, we wanted to save costs and be more compliant by avoiding duplicate article orders. The Research Solutions’ solution includes filters that perform a double check of our holdings and subscriptions, as well as a check for Open Access availability, before procuring a document or article. We spend a lot more money on subscriptions than document delivery, and the filters ensure that we get the most from those investments.

RS: How would you characterize the productivity and overall performance of the solution?

BI: Research Solutions’ analytics help us as we look very deeply into the subscription metrics and make calculations based on true usage— whether it’s better to go with a subscription versus on-demand access—and this is done for each journal title every year. On the articles we order, we see almost immediate delivery, which translates into significant time savings for our researchers.

While we measure costs, the number of articles, and processing time from order to delivery, as long as we don’t hear any complaints, we know that we’re enabling a fast and customer-friendly process for our users.

Frankly, at this point, the investment has more than justified itself. Our cost per article is much lower than before, and that becomes increasingly important as the volume of procurement goes up.

RS: How did you go about rolling out Article Galaxy across the company?

BI: We had a series of meetings with Research Solutions’ executive team—which is remarkable in its own right—on how to set up the auto alerts, because our OPUs consume such a huge volume of literature. We spent some time setting up automated processes, uploading and downloading batch articles, and so forth. And when we deployed, it all really worked seamlessly. We did it literally overnight, and we did not hear about a single problem. It was very easy to do.

RS: How did the users experience the switch?

BI: The user experience—that is, the workflow itself—did not change. They did not even notice that we changed our provider. All the things that make this system work are behind the scenes; our scientists do not see it. They also continue to use the databases they like best for literature searches, whether it’s PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar, or any of the others. The integration with Article Galaxy takes them automatically to the journal we have licensed or to Research Solutions for document delivery, directly from the order form. It’s fast and simple. If they don’t use this method, they end up at a dead end and don’t get access to the full text. And that ensures compliance.

The Conclusion

RS: To close, how would you summarize your experience with Research Solutions?

BI: We can summarize it in one word: trust. Trust in your processes, trust in what you have promised, trust in your solutions, trust in your flexibility—all of which you proved. Especially for the PV aspect. It was also the demonstrated respect for the customer. It’s not usual that a company’s executive team comes to a customer to discuss solutions and talk about ways to solve problems. Everybody was very helpful, very flexible, very pragmatic, and knowledgeable. There is no question that Research Solutions is one of our very preferred partners.



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