

COMPETITIVE SIMULATION : AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH

CASE STUDY

This case study explores a launch scenario in which we put a unique spin on the traditional competitive simulation workshop for our client.

Due to time and resource restrictions, our client was unable to conduct a one to two day cross-functional workshop, but still needed to explore their main competitor's impending launch plan and assess how to counteract it. We offered a strategic, nimble approach that still allowed our client to focus on what mattered most - building a robust, pressure-tested launch plan based on a deep understanding of competitor strategies and tactics.

Client situation

Our client, Client X, was a small biotech firm with an asset that had completed Phase 3 development and was in the Pre-NDA submission stage. Their asset was in the hematology disease area, which hadn't seen an approved product in decades, and was on an accelerated approval pathway about one year from launch. However, our client's asset was predicted to launch approximately three months after a competitor's asset.

Their competitor was a big pharma company, Z-Pharma, also with an asset out of Phase 3 development and a few months ahead of Client X in the Pre-NDA submission stage. Whilst these two assets had different RoAs and MoAs, our client was facing a situation in which two products were to be approved for the same disease area within a very short window, and our client's asset would be the 2nd to market.

Client X was facing a major pharma player in a highly lucrative and rare disease space. They wanted to ensure that they had a chance to analyze Z-Pharma's launch plan but they did not have the time to conduct a cross-functional, traditional workshop. They came to us to discuss their goals and assess the most strategic way forward.

Client questions

Client X came to us with some questions around how they should strategize for their launch, and what they should know about their competition ahead of hitting the market. Their key questions were:

- › How do we ensure a successful launch in the face of our competitor going to market before us?
- › How can we remain competitively fit? How do we find success given there are about to be two very distinct options on the market?
- › How is our competitor approaching their launch, and how should we incorporate that information into our strategic plan?

Our approach

The traditional approach for this launch planning scenario would involve running a one to two day workshop cross-functionally to steep Client X in the mindset and strategic tactics of Z-Pharma. These insights would then directly inform Client X's launch plan and counteractive approach.

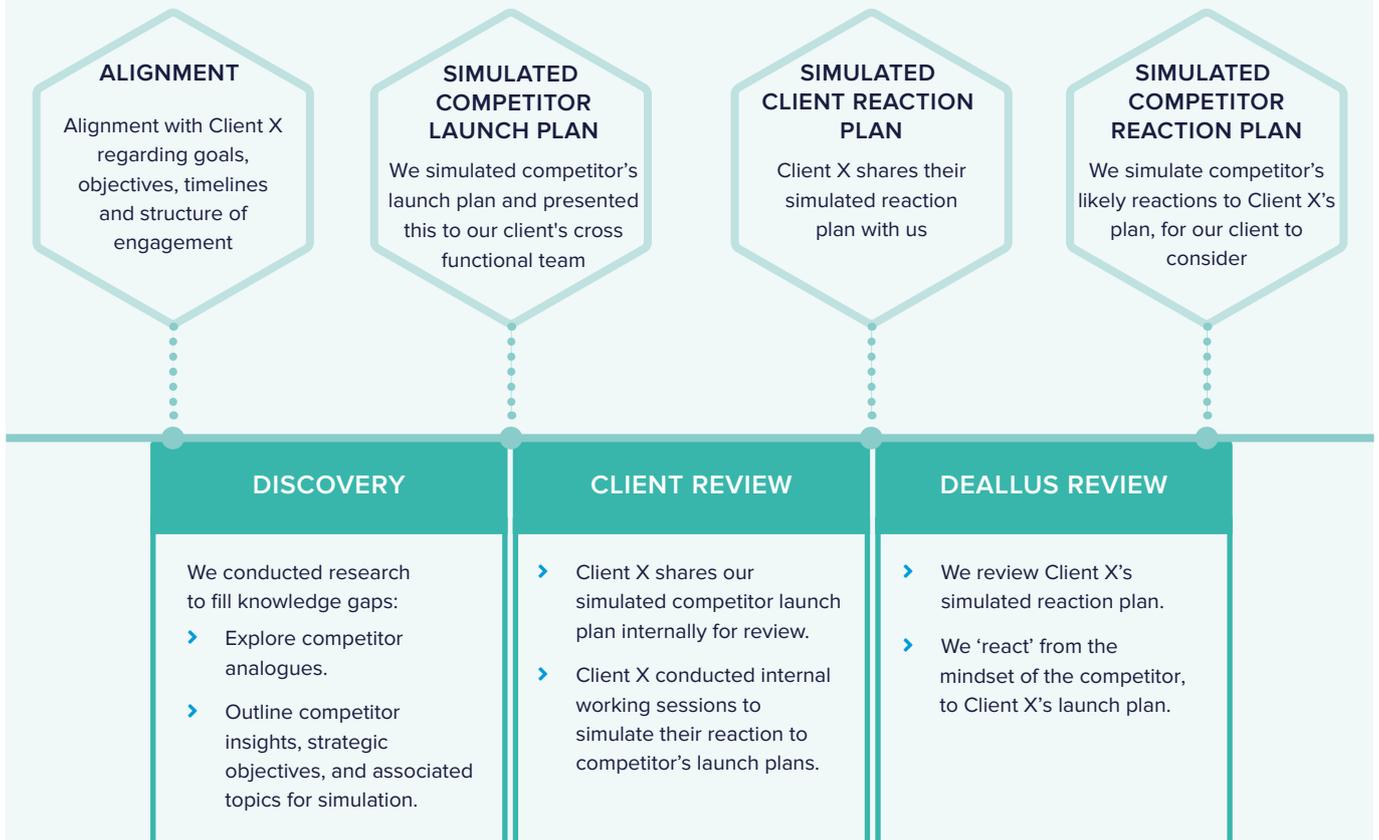
However, our client required an innovative, more objective method in which we could shoulder the bulk of the competitive research, analysis, and exploration. In turn, Client X could focus on and benefit from the insights and analysis.

With this in mind, we co-developed a launch-planning process that gave Client X more robust information surrounding Z-Pharma's launch and enabled them to more deeply explore how to formulate their own strategy for entering the market.

Our 'workshop' format was spread out over more frequent, shorter-form meetings and presentations that allowed time for Client X to process Z-Pharma's launch plan and come up with strong tactics to combat it. Put simply, this workshop involved three key steps:

- We acted as the competitor, researching Z-Pharma's pre-launch activities and planning, and developed a simulated launch plan for Z-Pharma. We then presented this simulated launch plan to our client's cross-functional team, for them to analyze internally.
- Client X analyzed that simulated launch plan and utilized key insights while building their own.
- Client presented their strategic launch reaction plan back to us, at which point we analyzed and responded to provide further insights on the best strategic tactics for success.

Full structure of engagement

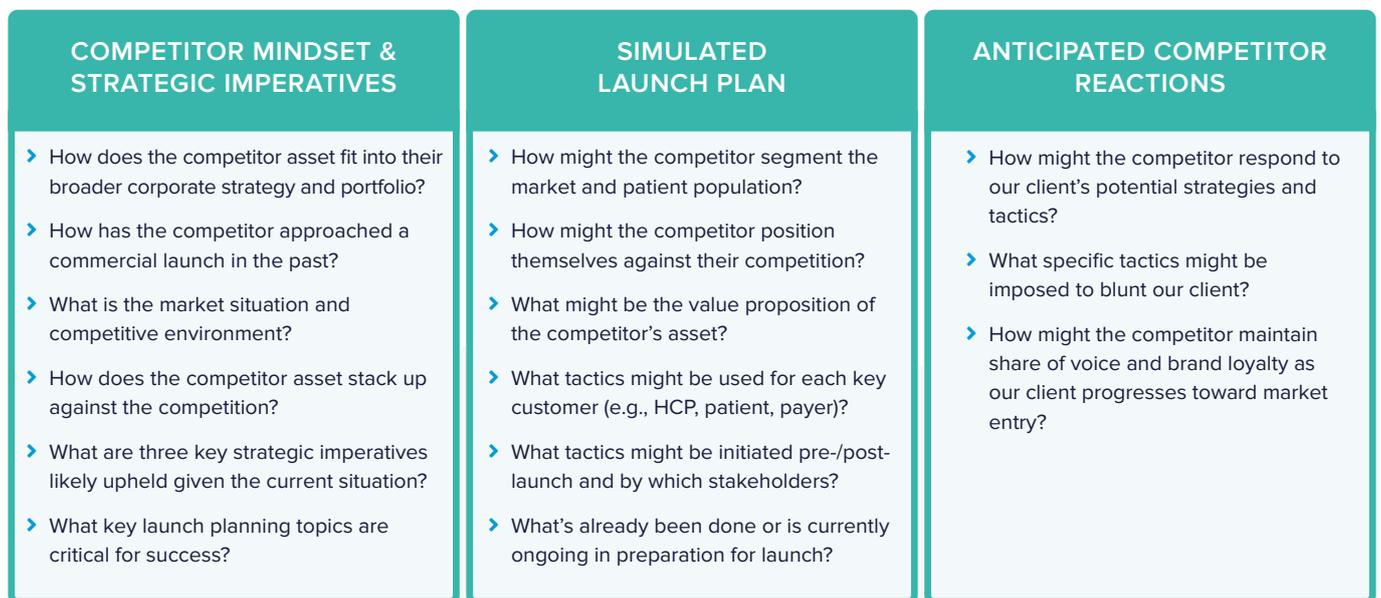




Our objectives were to steep ourselves in Z-Pharma’s mindset, strategies, and tactics:

- › **Gather** information about Z-Pharma in order to get into their mindset and understand their corporate, therapeutic area, and brand objectives.
- › **Formulate** Z-Pharma’s strategic imperatives (SIs) for their asset and associated key launch planning topics.
- › **Simulate** Z-Pharma’s launch plan to try and elucidate specific strategies and tactics possibly implemented upon launch, including simulated promotional campaigns.
- › **React** to Z-Pharma’s simulated launch plan to form a more robust internal strategic plan for Client X that factors in potential threats.
- › **Finalize** Z-Pharma’s simulated launch plan with consideration of countering potential strategies and tactics enacted by Client X.

We sought to answer the following key questions throughout this engagement:



Our methodology

We focused on probing into the Z-Pharma and their asset in the following areas:



We utilized our extensive primary research capabilities and networks, supplemented this with targeted and relevant secondary research, and conducted competitor analogue studies to round out our understanding of the approaches and tactics of Z-Pharma.

We also integrated senior Deallus member industry expertise in executing product launches throughout the engagement, to paint the fullest picture possible.



Impact and outcomes

Extensive learnings were directly integrated into Client X's launch plan and combative strategies as they headed for market.

The engagement provided the foundational set of intelligence each stakeholder group needed in order to develop their part of the launch plan. It identified where Client X wanted to compete, where they did not want to compete, and where they need to have parity with the competition in order to be successful.

In essence, it set the direction for Client X's launch plan, gave them clarity to their approach, and provided confidence in the robustness of their plan and the insights that informed it.

Benefits of our approach

This innovative and strategic approach was very well-received by our client, and elucidated the robust, pressure-tested strategic intelligence they needed to launch more confidently.

By approaching the engagement in a slightly less traditional way, Client X had more time to digest and react to their competitor's launch plan. We provided them with the ability to build a fully cross-functional launch plan based on Z-Pharma insights and realities we discovered through our research. And the two-fold approach meant Client X not only built their launch plan with key strategic intelligence in hand - they also were able to revisit their strategy in the face of our second round of analysis into their plan, fortifying it even further. This approach allowed Client X to focus not only on Z-Pharma's overall strategy, but also on specific actions Client X should adopt as they launch to combat it.

In addition, we were able to spend less time hypothesizing on what the competitor might do, and more time capturing Z-Pharma's actual tactics and strategies via deep, powerful, well-conducted and well-synthesized research. Given that, anticipated competitor actions were factual instead of hypothesized, Z-Pharma's simulated launch plan was exponentially more robust and powerful for Client X. The depth allowed our client to take a thorough look at the 'why' behind Z-Pharma's strategies in order to understand and counter accordingly. In this way, Client X had more time to prepare for realities, and spent less time hypothesizing or waiting for key information to become available.

Additional benefits include:

- ▶ Our client spent less time attempting to decipher Z-Pharma's mindset - we embodied the competitor on their behalf and crafted Z-Pharma's launch plan for Client X directly. This also eliminated any sort of client bias and kept the process objective.
- ▶ Our approach did not require a large number of important cross-functional partners and team members to be out of the office for one or two days. Instead, their time was required for a few touchpoints and presentations throughout, and the time they did commit was spent directly shaping and strengthening the thing that mattered most - building their launch plan.

Our best-in-class competitive and strategic intelligence enabled our client to sharpen their competitive focus, arm themselves with robust and pressure-tested insights, and build a launch plan that engendered confidence in those delivering it.