Google-ize Pharma R&D Apps

T he worlds most famous app looks like it has been designed by a dedicated Zen Buddhist with a serious creativity deficit. Apart from the occasional seasonal gimmick like a hopping Santa the Google app just has a logo, a keyword entry field and a search button, that's it. Compared to the average Pharma R&D app Google is extremely puristic.

When Google started business, the number of websites was less than 10 million. Two decades later this number approaches one billion but the Google app has not changed. What is the reason?

The Google business model is as simple as the app. Get users to run all searches (at least most) with the google app. Use this process to collect an immense amount of valuable data. Sell it with a huge profit. Google business is running fine, so they seem to succeed in funnelling the worlds searches and data into their app. Simple works for Google because it works for the users as well.

The Pharma business model depends on Innovation Productivity and the Industry claims that the underlying R&D processes are data driven. Consequently, Innovation Productivity depends on funnelling all R&D data into R&D apps. Contrary to Google however, many Pharma R&D apps go for complexity – to put it mildly. Demands of the app and demands of the process were primary design criteria, demands of the user secondary at best. And frequently that does not seem to work for the users.

Different Concepts

Unless the user clientele of Google and Pharma apps differs significantly in terms of laziness or demand for convenience, the complex Pharma apps should face acceptance problems – and that is what we frequently observe. Unless apps are simple and comfortable to use – more comfortable than any available or conceivable alternative – they will not be used. At least not with the stringency and consequence that would be necessary for a data driven industry.

Is Googles puristic "enter – search" concept the way to go for Pharma apps? Maybe not but Googles focus on user convenience is. R&D apps need to serve the user, not the other way around. Otherwise, acceptance problems will have a severe impact on Innovation Productivity.

Simple Works for Google
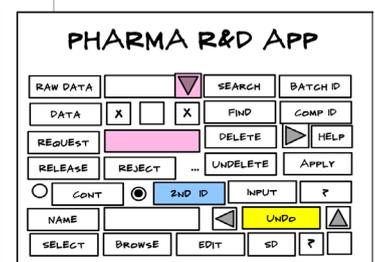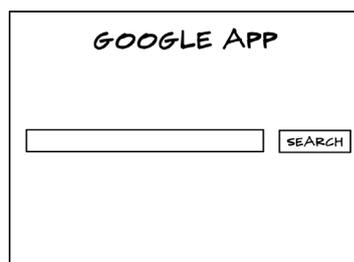
User first, Process second, App third

1