

MEDIA UPDATE

Novartis research shows technology talent increasingly drawn to pharma industry since COVID-19, to solve healthcare challenges

- *83% of technology (tech) professionals would consider working in healthcare and pharma, with 72% more likely to consider it compared to six months ago*
- *86% of tech professionals agree: the healthcare and pharma industry's "digital moment" has arrived*
- *Healthcare and pharma more than twice as attractive as traditional careers in financial services, telecoms and manufacturing*
- *Report includes insights from Microsoft, MIT and Benevolent AI on the powerful pairing of science and technology to reimagine medicine.*

Basel, June 24, 2020 — Novartis revealed the healthcare and pharma industry has emerged as a desired career destination for tech talent during the COVID-19 pandemic, in the [Powerful Pairing research report](#) launched today.

The research – which covered 2,502 tech professionals in the US, UK, Germany, China and India, conducted between May and June 2020 – targeted respondents from a variety of sectors and organizations with the objective to study perception shifts of the industry in the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

For Novartis, a leading global medicines company, investing in and progressing data and digital capabilities is central to its work to reimagine medicine. As the company continues to grow its team of world-leading tech talent, through partnerships and hires, the research explored whether those in tech are aware of the role they could play in helping to solve the world's biggest medicine challenges now and in the future.

The research shows that regardless of the sector they currently work in, the two industries technology professionals would consider switching to are technology and healthcare and pharma (49% for each). Healthcare and pharma is considerably more attractive than traditional sectors for technology professionals, with only 28% reporting that they would consider switching to finance and banking or 24% to telecoms.

Drivers to pursue a career in healthcare and pharma include the opportunity to innovate through tech (52%), improve quality of care and make systems more efficient (49% for each), and to solve real-world problems (48%).

Bertrand Bodson, Chief Digital Officer of Novartis, said: “COVID-19 has caused a seismic shift in the adoption and scaling of digital technologies in our sector, at a pace never seen before. Our existing investment in core platforms has enabled us to respond rapidly to the needs of patients, physicians and our associates – as well as dial up our work rethinking how we discover and develop new medicines; work smarter; and create better customer experiences. Attracting and nurturing highly sought-after tech talent into the sector is now critical to grasping the clear opportunity that comes with combining the power of data, science and technology.”

The report found that the healthcare and pharma response to COVID-19 has resulted in a reputational lift amongst tech professionals. A significant majority of those surveyed (73%) state their opinions have improved due to the sector’s reaction to the pandemic. They think that the industry has been effective in tackling the pandemic (72%) and believe that the application of data science has been a crucial factor in the sector’s response to it (85%).

Despite the interest in the sector, the report found that a barrier to entry remains. Although tech professionals want to work in the industry, many fear they have a knowledge gap, with 40% reporting they wouldn’t apply to a job in the sector due to their ‘lack of industry knowledge’ and 20% saying they ‘don’t feel qualified to work for a pharma company’.

Tech respondents maintain, however, a belief that a data-driven approach could revolutionize the entire healthcare value chain – from increased efficiency (55%) and improved diagnostic accuracy (54%) through to the ability to predict disease prevalence (46%) and improvements to existing healthcare systems (46%).

Bodson continued, “It’s encouraging to see that those with critical tech expertise are recognizing the role they can play in reimagining the future of medicine. We now need to prove to them that their perceived ‘lack of industry knowledge’ is no barrier at all to solving high-impact real-world problems for patients, working hand-in-hand with our scientists and allies from partners like Microsoft, Amazon Web Services or Benevolent AI. I have spent 20 years in technology across a range of industries and launched my own tech start-up before moving into pharma, and I can say that the energy in this sector is palpable; with strong self-belief and a huge appetite to take on some of the most important challenges of our time.”

Novartis has accelerated its digital ambitions during the worldwide lockdown period, including joining The International COVID-19 Data Research Alliance and Workbench together with the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation. This Workbench will provide an environment for focused collaborative research, to accelerate collaboration, discovery and development of therapeutics to combat COVID-19. During the COVID-19 outbreak, Novartis has also been working to discover and test antiviral treatments by sharing data about early results and basic science, as well as collaborating on designs for clinical trials as part of an alliance of several dozen companies. Novartis and life science companies have also stepped up during the pandemic to commit expertise and assets to the fight against COVID-19, and collaboration has been at the heart of Novartis’ latest research report, which features insights from Microsoft, MIT and Benevolent AI.

Research methodology

The FleishmanHillard TRUE Global Intelligence team fielded a survey among 2,500 tech professionals* in five key markets (US, UK, Germany, China, India), in collaboration with research partner Vitreous World. The 21 question survey, in field from May 21st to June 3rd, covered five key research themes:

- *General perceptions of healthcare and pharma*
- *Likelihood to work in healthcare (now and versus 6 months ago)*
- *Expectations of working in healthcare and pharma*

- *Views on the impact of data, AI and machine learning on the healthcare and pharma sector*
- *Perceptions of how AI and data science are being used during the COVID-19 pandemic*

**Tech professionals are defined as workers describing their occupation as:*

Data Scientist / data engineer (339), Machine Learning & AI (199), Data analytics (52), Database administration / management (55), Network administration (19), Tech and IT support (195), Software / hardware research and development (103), Technology design and innovation (31), Information technology (781), Software development (153), Technology / IT department head (491), Technology project management (62), Quality assurance, technology (22).

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development. Novartis products reach nearly 800 million people globally and we are finding innovative ways to expand access to our latest treatments. About 109,000 people of more than 145 nationalities work at Novartis around the world. Find out more at <https://www.novartis.com>.

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