

The **pharmaceutical industry** plays a crucial role in modern society. Everyone will be affected by medical science and health issues at one time or another. Aside from being one of the most important sectors for human development and general living, it's also one of the most lucrative areas of business. In many ways, it is a pioneer in areas of product research, testing and manufacturing. The year of 2018 is set to be another where huge developments are made in a variety of aspects.

Understanding the forecasts and trends can be useful from a variety of viewpoints. From patients and loved ones to the businesses within the sector, this info offers huge insight. Likewise, investors and those with financial interests will want to stay ahead of the curve too. Here are some of the main aspects to consider, along with what can be expected throughout 2018.

### **New drugs approvals from the FDA and European Medicines Agency**

Last year was a very significant one in terms of new approvals across the globe. The US market encountered a 21-year high in 2017 as 46 medicines were approved by the [FDA](#). This signaled more than a 100% increase from the 2016 figure while European figures increased from 81 to 92 too. With the Chinese market making major progress to, there's no doubt that the last 12 months were huge for the industry.



Many of those novel pharmaceuticals will make their way into the public conscious in 2018. Those new items are focused on rare conditions and individual types of cancer. Therefore, patients with those illnesses are the most likely to gain the benefits of those new additions. In truth, the numbers will be fairly low this year, particularly when you consider the money spent during research and production. Nonetheless, those drugs are a long-term reward that will impact the lives of millions overall.

The trend is likely to continue in 2018 and beyond. Changes to the FDA policies make the process of getting a green light on new drugs quicker than ever. The strict regulations remain. Still, there's no doubt that the improvements under Commissioner Scott Gottlieb have created a far smoother process. Manufacturers are set to grab those opportunities throughout the coming months and years.

Several new drug proposals are already under review and set to receive confirmation (or rejection) over the coming months. These range from [Epidiolex](#), which could be used to treat seizures, to [TLANDO](#) for testosterone replacement. Meanwhile, drugs like [OTIPRIO](#) have already been approved in other countries and seek release to the US market. Likewise, European authorities continue to review new pharmaceutical products each month.

In fact, some new drugs have already been accepted in the early parts of 2018. [XGEVA](#), for prevention of skeletal-related events in patients with myeloma, was approved in early January.

Progress has been particularly rapid over the past year or two, and that trend shows no sign of slowing down. Expect this year to be another big one on that front.

### Drugs that will be a big hit for revenue in 2018

The pharmaceuticals industry isn't only crucial for human health. It signals extremely big business. As such, the financial performance of products will hold a huge significance on the future of the sector. The stock markets and financial barometers can provide huge insights into what to expect for the future of several giants.

In 2017, [AbbVie](#) enjoyed its greatest ever annual profits. The company's stock increased by over 50%, and this is largely due to the success of its most important drugs. Those well known items will only gain further popularity over the next 12 months. Forecasts suggest that Humira will remain the world's best-selling drug. Sales are expected to top \$20bn while Imbruvica continues to perform well too. A new drug, Mavyret, has recently been added to the company's portfolio and is likely to be another big hit in 2018. With two more, for endometriosis and lung cancer respectively, up for FDA approval over the coming months, it could be a huge year ahead.



Revlimid is another drug expected to be a financial hit in 2018, with sales in excess of \$9bn being forecast. The drug's parent company, Celgene, endured a difficult 2017 but its big seller should

keep it on the right track. The anticipated FDA approval for ozanimod in the third quarter of the year could be another major factor that continues into 2019.

Bictegravir, which treats the HIV-1 infection, is expected to generate high revenue figures in 2018 too. Semaglutide will continue to perform better than ever as society battles back against type 2 diabetes and obesity. Epacadostat is a drug that has undergone heavy testing against several cancers, in use with Pembrolizumab. This makes it another one for investors and pharmaceutical followers to track throughout the coming year and beyond.



Pfizer, Novartis and Roche are expected to generate the greatest levels of global revenue this year. In fact, all three worldwide pharmaceutical giants should top the \$40bn mark. Those companies, among others, are benefiting greatly from lower corporate taxes. These have helped the whole industry in the fields of research and development. So, in addition to the big players, the whole sector could be set for a bug 2018.

#### **New packaging innovations**

Anybody working in the pharma field, or indeed anyone that has ever taken prescription drugs, knows that packaging plays a vital role. Inadequate packaging materials can compromise the efficiency of a particular drug as well as its lifespan. Furthermore, high packaging costs bump up manufacturing overheads, and that will be passed onto the consumer. As such, this seemingly unimportant aspect is vital, and the creators continue to make positive moves.



Honeywell is one of the leading manufacturers of film, placing heavy emphasis on its portfolio of Aclar films. The company has stated that its goals for 2018 are to reduce the costs and create an easier experience for users. This manifests itself in the form of a significant expansion. Aclar film

products can reduce packaging sizes by up to 55%, and more drugs companies are choosing those solutions. For design versatility, product reliability, and cost efficiency, the impacts are huge. Last year saw a big breakthrough. Kisqali Femara Co-Pack became the first combo packaging containing two types of #drug for breast cancer. This is something that is sure to encourage others to think about dual or maybe even tri-packaging. Apart from added convenience for a patient's prescription cycle, this is sure to cut the costs by considerable levels.

The past decade has seen huge upgrades in terms of safety and reduced risks of dispensing errors. Design suggestions focus on text, imagery, placement and readability. Meanwhile, it's worth noting that #technology now enables 2D printing of barcodes directly onto pills and capsules. This is one of several issues that can help fight the counterfeit problems, which cost the industry \$40bn per year. Serialised numerical identifiers are now needed at product and pallet level. Perhaps the biggest development comes from President Trump's \$500m project for the manufacturing of new glass vials.



This year's #CPhI Worldwide event takes place Madrid on April 09-11. While the program covers various business aspects related to the industry, packaging is a major focus. Companies will have a chance to connect to the new and innovative companies as well as those that have released improved products. In Europe, the annual [Pharmapack](#) event takes place in Paris across the two days of February 7 and 8. Shortly after this, the situation over new releases and innovations on the European continent should be far clearer.

### **Packaging/wearables and what is going to hit the market**

The year ahead is likely to see the labors of the Trump-backed campaign bring improved glass vials. However, there is an array of new packaging and wearables that could hit the market in 2018. While it may be a little while longer before the full rewards are known, those steps will be pivotal for the long-term future of the industry.

Bormioli Rocco, a glass and plastics giant throughout North America, will introduce new items. Delta moulded Type I glass vials are the chief example, but there are others. The injectable pharmaceutical packaging will always be an area of focus. Still, other elements may see changes and improvements in 2018.

The industry itself is moving towards a trend of smaller batches with shorter lead times. As such, this is sure to influence packaging too. [Origin Pharma Packaging](#) have delivered a model that will appease the upward trend of shorter lead time, thus encouraging faster speeds to market to support growth. Healthcare packaging in general is set to follow a calm and simple appearance, utilising pastel colors and vibrant gradients.

An increasing number of companies are turning to RFID tags to track packages. Knowing where packages are throughout the supply chain is a crucial factor. Similarly, NFC labels create a more advanced user experience in which its possible to see dosage guidance in real time. These ideas

are also very useful from a marketing perspective due to the insight that the patient interactions provide. Both of these ideas are likely to achieve a far wider appeal within the industry over the coming months.

Origin Pharma Packaging are embarking on a very exciting period within the remit of healthcare digital packaging. Smart-i is an arm of the packaging business which works within the #clinicaltrials and #OTC arenas. Using a range of digital technologies 'Smart-i' enables all this. Pack tracking, monitoring, analysis and patient communication, tailor made for your requirements. Whether for a clinical trial or integrated into your own packaging for use with Over The Counter products.

It also strengthens and improve the ever growing problem of #adherence and ensuring the trials are true and accurate and delivers real-time data, and gives the pharmaceutical organisations control and see up to the second live data.



And the Smart-i system is adaptable, allowing centralised changes: such as revoking or reinstating a batch, or communicating information to pharmacists or patients

Wearable tech has evolved at a rapid rate too. This has been seen in many areas of the health industries, with resources aimed at fitness and general well-being. However, it's now possible to wear items that actively help monitor things like blood sugar levels. In turn, they can alert patients to when they should be taken certain drugs or prescriptions.

### **Mergers & acquisitions on the horizon**

As medical science and technology evolves, more and more smaller companies are achieving great things. There has also been a huge increase in the number of acquisitions made by the global giants. They continue to add the independent drugs manufacturers and packaging companies to their portfolios. If 2017 is anything to go by, there should be plenty more mergers on the horizon.

The first quarter of 2017 alone saw 27 mergers worth \$34bn. [Johnson & Johnson's](#) \$30bn purchase of Swiss company [Actellion](#) was the most notable single acquisition. Over \$17bn worth of patents is due to expire between now and 2028. This is another reason why the global giants will continue to grow through buying out the smaller ventures.

Mergers within the health industry are already in full swing for 2018. In the Electronic Health Record arena, Allscripts has begun its acquisition of Practice Fusion for \$100 million. Within the realm of drugs companies, the reduced corporation taxes are likely to encourage a flurry of activity. Biotech

companies are likely to be snapped up. [Clovis](#) (oncology specialist) and [Puma Biotech](#) (breast cancer drugs) are clear candidates for the pharma giants.

It's difficult to make further predictions about buyouts. Independent companies that have seen stock drop over the past year are just as likely as ones that have seen stock rise. The tax implications relating to international purchases ensures that those are likely to see an increase too.

Research and development will continue. But many of the biggest companies have given indications that acquisitions will be the big trend of 2018. It's both exciting and uncertain for the whole industry.

### **The Final Word**

The year of 2018 is already shaping up to be another crucial period for the #pharmaceutical industry. Recent upgrades to the approvals process have allowed companies of all sizes to accelerate their progress. Meanwhile, the outcomes of reduced taxes have opened the door for businesses and their products to perform better than ever. Those rewards not only aid the financial authority of those drugs manufacturers, but they also aid the consumer's situation.

Improvements aren't restricted to the drugs themselves as packaging facilities get better too. Several potential mergers set to take place over the coming months. Therefore, the success of new arrivals and existing products could go through the roof. Better still, the fact that it's becoming more accessible for further testing to occur can only bring positive outcomes. This is certainly boosted by the continued progress to research technology.

From a financial perspective as well as a human outlook, the health of the #pharma sector has never looked better.