

A scaled approach to advisory board meeting strategy and support – covering medical and marketing needs from a national to regional level

How one pharmaceutical client utilized a limited budget to bolster consistent messaging, mobilize regional MSLs, and source and analyze HCP expert opinions across the country.

PROGRAM

A series of regional and local advisory board meetings were conducted over the course of 3 months to build a comprehensive understanding for a pharmaceutical company of how healthcare providers (HCPs) approach the management of an important patient group.

LOCATION

A national advisory board meeting, to engage high-profile key opinion leaders (KOLs) was hosted in a capital city by a pharmaceutical company. This was followed by a series of smaller regional advisory board meetings, to involve select HCPs to discuss local clinical practice considerations and challenges.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Facing strong competitor data in a new disease area, the pharmaceutical company planned to launch a series of advisory board meetings to gain first-hand information from HCPs across the country about how to best manage and support a specific patient group.

THE CHALLENGE

The company needed a medical communications agency that would strategically lead and streamline internal communications amongst client stakeholders who were responsible for medical messaging and logistics at both a national and regional level to support the advisory board meeting series. It was necessary to transfer responsibility from the company's home office to a

medical communications agency to ensure consistent messaging while working with regional medical science liaisons (MSLs) and liaising with HCPs for the company entering a new disease area.

THE SOLUTION

Provided by Six Degrees Medical, the solution addressed this pharmaceutical company's challenge in two ways.

1. Building in a kick-off meeting for a cost-effective approach to the national and regional advisory board meetings planning. This involved dedicating some additional time and resources to collaborating with the company leading up to the national advisory board meeting to enable the following later in the meeting series:
 - A consistent approach to project and logistics management between Six Degrees Medical and the company, including HCP engagement for meeting invitation/RSVP process
 - The opportunity to identify key medical messaging with home office staff and national KOLs
 - A streamlined strategy for agenda and program design in addition to content development plans targeted for a scaled approach (ie, national to regional)
2. Identifying regional points of contact (MSLs) to build strong relationships to ensure a smooth and seamless transition between meetings. Creating an effective process that allowed for an efficient adaptation of national advisory board meeting content to reflect regional clinical practice considerations.

Kick-off meeting

Prior to planning of the advisory board meeting series, Six Degrees Medical and the company engaged in a kick-off meeting to align on learning outcomes, roles and responsibilities, as well as strategic insights regarding the new disease area the pharmaceutical company was entering. Six Degrees Medical made strategic recommendations to the program agenda, session flow and overall interactivity concept to maximize the experience for the advisors and the output for the client. Discussion questions were developed and utilized to provide natural breaks between the mix of science, marketing and patient support service content.

HCP liaison and logistics support

Working with preferred vendor partners is something in which Six Degrees Medical is well versed. For this program, the client had an established process whereby an internal client team member was responsible for all flight bookings. To aid that process, Six Degrees Medical prepared a tracking document that allowed the client's team to not only see applicable travel information, but in addition, a holistic view of invitation status and RSVPs at-a-glance. To keep the entire team informed, weekly tracker updates were shared, and proactive strategies were proposed to follow-up with high-profile KOLs on an as-needed basis. This included hand-delivered invites from the MSLs or escalation to personal phone calls from home office staff. Based on the communication and tracking document templates developed for the national meeting, further efficiencies were identified and applied to the follow-up regional advisory board meetings.

Acknowledging regional diversity

Mobilizing Six Degrees Medical and the company's MSLs to adapt existing national communication material for the regional advisory board meetings created a strong sense of collaboration leading up to the events. Despite the geographic differences, key learnings were shared with the home office planning team and disseminated amongst MSLs to be adjusted for each regional meeting. By preparing the physician chair and speakers in advance of the onsite rehearsal, there were significantly fewer slide updates and SDM ensured that there was a consistent look and feel to all communications at the advisory board meetings.

RESULTS

Armed with decades of experience with pharmaceutical clients, Six Degrees Medical collaborated with the company to develop an adaptable and efficient communication plan for the advisory board meeting series. With adult learning principles in mind, Six Degrees Medical developed an effective advisory board program in partnership with the pharmaceutical company that ensured advisor discussion was built into each session. Coaching was also provided to help guide the physician chair and speakers to effectively facilitate the discussion with advisors. Streamlining the liaison with advisors ensured that everyone had a positive experience as the pharmaceutical company embarked on cultivating new relationships with HCPs in the disease area.

- A total of 44 HCPs were engaged for the advisory board meeting series; including physician chairs and guest speakers
- 11 internal stakeholders from the pharmaceutical company were engaged, including 3 MSLs leading the charge for the regional advisory boards
- Advisors were given the opportunity to rank their experience, and the overall results were 4.9/5 across the advisory board meeting series

Overall, the client's home office team from the pharmaceutical company were very satisfied with their future in the new disease area based on the outcomes of the advisory board meeting series, particularly after reviewing first-hand comments from the physician chair, guest speakers and advisors including, "I suggest that you host another advisory board in 6-12 months once we have had the opportunity to use the drug in our clinics", "Great discussion with the MSL", and "Very well organized and presented meeting."

At Six Degrees Medical we understand that major changes are happening in the industry, and our knowledge base and solutions are evolving with them. We specialize in developing innovative, adaptable advisory board strategies and communication plans to help our clients gain the strategic advice and insights they need. From trial operations to patient engagement to internal training, leading pharmaceutical companies around the world rely on us for customized communications and programs tailored to meet their specific objectives.

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