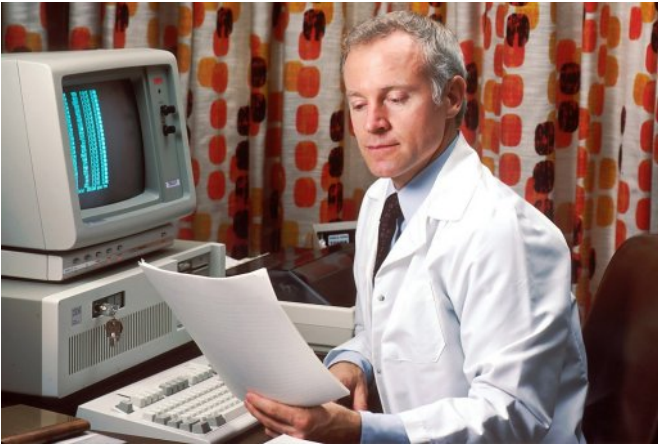


How to Effectively Engage KOLs in a Virtual Format

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The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in exponential transformations in both the medical and pharmaceutical industries. Over the past few years, the industry has gradually started to incline towards a more digitized ecosystem for online training and education.

The global pandemic played an instrumental role in expediting these trends, effectively making in-person conferences, seminars, and conventions,

, redundant. This transition is more than probable to become permanent in certain parts of the world because of the swath of unique advantages that digital tools bring to the table.

That's also one of the primary reasons why we're seeing KOLs (key opinion leaders) gradually transitioning away from physically attending conferences and seminars. They've grown used to enjoying the high degree of flexibility, comfort, and accessibility that virtual meetings offer.

Virtual tools and platforms allow KOLs to seamlessly organize and customize meetings to suit their busy schedule. This is why medical and pharma companies must keep up with modern digital trends or risk damaging their strategic relationships with their advisory teams.

In addition, it is also painfully apparent how important it is for pharma companies to invest in KOL insight. After all, the global pandemic has taught us that we are yet to face a plethora of medical and scientific hurdles in the 21st century, including policy shifts, emerging mindsets, changing priorities, etc.

Powerful Ways You Can Easily Yet Effectively Engage Your KOLs in a Digital Format

Sadly, engaging with KOLs in a meaningful way can be quite the feat. Why? Well, simply put, before the pandemic many companies used to organize conferences and conventions. However, today, because these very same conventions have migrated to a virtual environment, things like pamphlets, booths, halls, etc. are becoming redundant.

KOLs are growing more prudent and un wasteful in how they manage their time and carry out daily priorities, and in-person meetings are far from their list of things to do. So, it's safe to say that a lot of outreach programs are conducted online. This is why

modern pharma and medical companies need tailor-made and responsive digital strategies to organize a relevant virtual event.

When it comes to engaging with KOLs via a virtual platform, your primary strategy should always be to offer a high degree of value to your KOLs. You see, key opinion leaders are never going to divert from their busy schedules just to attend a boring and inconsequential lecture. They're often too busy tied up in tedious schedules while simultaneously juggling an exponential amount of work stress.

This is why it is pivotal that you offer your KOLs unique benefits or reciprocal advantages that will further help generate conducive and mutually beneficial relationships. In light of this, here are some powerful tips and strategies you should implement when developing a virtual KOL engagement program.

Be Clear With Your Goals and Objectives

The very common mistake that many companies make while trying to engage KOLs is that they are not clear in what they need from opinion leaders. So, when engaging with a KOL, you should be clear with goals, objectives and timelines. KOLs are more likely to provide quality feedback when tasks they need to complete are clear.

The best way to do this is to make sure your entire engagement activity ranging from making visits to evaluating medical programs are propelled by clear scientific or commercial objectives. These objectives must be transparent on both sides. A meticulously managed and objective-fuelled approach to engaging KOLs can help provide you with a great competitive advantage.

Moreover, different types of key opinion leaders have to specifically be engaged in view of the goals you have outlined. In order to be clear with your goals, it is ideal to conduct KOL profiling to generate a viable and value-adding strategy.

Select a Virtual Platform in Line with the KOL's Schedule

It's typical for KOLs to be on a very busy schedule, and this means that attending meetings can be a bit cumbersome. This is why it is essential to use a flexible and user-friendly virtual platform that enables KOLs to join the meeting as soon as they can.

It is paramount that you create easy-to-use tools. Understand that KOLs are on pretty tight schedules and don't necessarily have a lot of time. This is why you need to engage on a platform that is highly intuitive, has a zero learning curve, and is accessible. Otherwise, you'd just be wasting the KOL's time and incur a negative reaction.

Intuitive virtual platforms typically come with a slew of tools and features to keep the discussion relevant and on schedule. Such features also allow KOLs to highlight their expertise using multimedia files and presentations. So, always go for a platform that is as close to a live meeting as possible.

Be Smart with the Type of KOLs You Invite

You need to invite thought leaders that match your list of priorities. It's easy to incline toward inviting popular or big-name KOLs that have well-established resumes. However, it is equally important to select a panel that is beneficial to your outreach strategy.

Engagement merely for the sake of prestige or chasing clout is going to be a waste

for both parties involved. So, develop an extensive list of relevant KOLs that can actually help your company reach its goals.

For example, look into experts that are well-established in your specific niche. Or shortlist key opinion leaders that have performed successful clinical trials or have published extensive medical research in prominent science and medical journals.

Offer KOLs World Wide Collaboration

If your virtual conference takes off with flying colours, the KOLs will typically look forward to further solidifying their connection with you. It is not uncommon for recognized KOLs to look for opportunities to propel their research by performing clinical trials, engaging in long-form scientific studies, or joining advisory boards. Similarly, they will also be looking for ways they can acquire sponsorship deals or be called into appearing in special events. So, it is important to evaluate what you can offer.

Bottom Line

It is important to understand that a KOL engagement strategy will only be as successful as the type of methodologies you use to execute it. You must arm yourself with an innovative virtual platform, outline clearly defined goals, and be smart with the type of KOLs you wish to engage with. Having a streamlined engagement strategy will help you save time searching for reports and allow you to focus on the most important aspect of KOL engagement – forging long-lasting relationships.