

VIRTUAL ADVISORY BOARDS: A VIABLE, COST-EFFECTIVE OPTION FOR PMR PLANNING IN APAC



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Advisory boards are essential for pharmaceutical companies, as they provide objective and experienced perspectives at key moments in the product life cycle.

Often, perspectives of the advisory board help refine product positioning and guide value messaging. However, as a result of the pandemic's travel restrictions, cross-regional advisory boards can no longer convene as traditional in-person meetings; yet the need remains for their input and thought leadership.

Manufacturers must continue to adapt. While manufacturers might feel limited to multiple one-on-one discussions with board members, a more efficient option does exist to meet manufacturer needs in a hybrid world.

Challenges in a Virtual Meeting

As board meetings transition to a virtual platform, engaging the board virtually and cultivating interactions is proving to be a challenge for manufacturers. A few key elements that can be missed in virtual meetings include:

- ✓ **The flow of real-time conversations.** In virtual discussions, only one voice can be heard at a time; talking over each other muddles the soundtrack, so no one is understood, hurting the conversation. A productive board must be able to hear and respond to members' opinions.
- ✓ **Hands-on tools, such as illustrating concepts on whiteboards.** This medium is still not effective in a virtual environment.
- ✓ **Fueling creative energy, which often comes from building on each other's ideas.** The natural evolution of new ideas tends to be messy and may not emerge from a strictly ordered agenda in which speaker slots are consecutive and there is little ability for give and take.
- ✓ **Remaining attentive and engaged, which can be difficult in the virtual environment where there are distractions and where meetings are intrinsically less engaging than being in the same physical space.**

The EVERSANA APAC team is working with several clients to move advisory board interactions to a virtual model and overcome challenges that result from not meeting in person.

Helping Manufacturers Connect With Advisory Boards Globally

EVERSANA APAC has constructed and moderated multiple virtual advisory boards that are successfully addressing these challenges and enabling generation of key insights in a cross-country learning environment for clients.

Responding to virtual board meeting challenges starts with **recruiting the right board members**. Members must have personalities and backgrounds that can work effectively within a moderated process to advance the discussion while not compromising quality. Manufacturers must pay close attention to the group dynamics to develop a productive board experience. Creating a **detailed moderation plan and agenda** and ensuring commitment at the beginning of the discussion also supports board productivity.

Once the meetings begin, members must engage rapidly during creative moments when ideas are being developed and support participation and contribution from all members, including the quieter ones. While fostering creative moments is critical, manufacturers also cannot be afraid to use the mute button if things get out of hand.

ACHIEVING RESULTS

These advisory boards have achieved some significant, specific results and will most likely continue to gain momentum and have a sustainable future post-pandemic.

In one case, the client obtained important perspectives about the positioning of an oncology asset that led to changes in the marketing plan and communication materials. Our clients have found that virtual advisory boards can be utilized as a cost-effective platform to conduct heuristic market research about their in-line assets, test value messages and align on product positioning.

As boards work well virtually, which greatly reduces the cost, they can be used as a substitute for one-on-one primary market research interviews and bring the advantage of global learning to the product life cycle.



Schedule a meeting with one of our experts in the Asia Pacific region today!



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