

## **Virtual Key Opinion Leader Speaker Programs**

### *Successful Implementation & Measurement of a Virtual Speaker Program*

#### **Abstract**

During the past several years the pharmaceutical industry has experienced significant change regarding the development and implementation of medical education programs. Peer-to-peer or Key Opinion Leader (KOL) programs are intended to educate physicians about a brand's unique medical profile, its FDA-approved indication, provide clinical studies and answer relevant questions on topics such as dosing, titrations and adverse reactions. In response to changing pharmaceutical environments, a virtual KOL program fulfills the ongoing need for company directed medical education. Advances in technology allow virtual presentations to be made in a way that maximize all participants' time and involvement in a program while also presenting a brand in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

#### **Executive Summary**

*View from the C-Suite*

by Mike Sinapi

During the past several years the pharmaceutical industry has experienced significant change regarding the development and implementation of medical education programs. Most companies have redesigned processes, policies and business rules concerning the recruitment, training and compensation of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and the subsequent roll-out of medical education programs to ensure alignment and fulfillment of government regulations and Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (PhRMA) guidelines. Despite much ongoing change the good news is that there remains a role for both independent medical education and company directed medical education. For independent medical education programs, Continuing Medical Education (CME) provider companies continue to play an important role in providing learning opportunities to the medical community. Additionally, there is a sincere belief throughout the industry and medical community that company directed medical education programs remain a viable mechanism to communicate a brand's unique medical profile, labeling considerations and provide answers to relevant questions on topics such as dosing, titrations, adverse reactions and the latest clinical information. Beyond meeting regulations and guidelines, pharmaceutical companies and their agencies have tried to be innovative in the way they present and deliver promotional medical education. Benchworks is a marketing and creative services agency that has been on the leading edge helping its clients successfully bring company directed medical education to physicians through an innovative virtual KOL venue. The Benchworks Virtual KOL Program uses the advances in video camera computer technology to deliver KOL lead medical education to physicians where and when the audience chooses to participate.

The Benchworks KOL Virtual Speaker Program is both a compliant and an effective way to communicate with the medical community and strengthen field force access to their physicians. The Virtual KOL Speaker Program also meets today's business challenges heard from executives occupying the C-suite. Executives expect their organizations to innovate and deliver programs that can differentiate their company in an efficient, compliant and effective manner. The Virtual KOL program meets these requirements. The design of the program lowers costs versus traditional program delivery methods and the efficient reach results in improved ROI thereby stretching budgeted dollars. The approach is also innovative as surveys show the uniqueness of the program is well liked by speakers and participants. This approach to medical education is systematic by design and highly monitored ensuring compliance

and repeatability. Finally, the Virtual KOL Program incorporates the value of sales representative's involvement allowing increased access and customer relationship enhancement.

## **Technology Summary**

by Jeff Craig

By using the latest in peer-to-peer technology to deploy a virtual KOL program, there is an opportunity to elevate your brand's profile. Leveraging and manipulating current, advanced and sophisticated technology can maximize all participants' time and involvement in a program while also presenting a brand in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Coupled with other and complementary communications technologies, the virtual KOL program provides a persistent and reliable path for information exchange with the target physicians.

Proper execution of a virtual program requires that the KOL and rep computers are equipped with consistent wireless cards to ensure reliable connectivity at comparable speeds. With the direction of the virtual KOL service provider, institutional environments and large concentrations of participants can also be supported. A core advantage to virtual programs is that there is a wide range of technology available that can enhance overall efficiencies. In some settings, a rep or KOL may need to show live procedures, graphics, diagnostic information feeds and simultaneous video to multiple offices at the same which can be accomplished through split-screen or multi-screen technology. More importantly, the technology and individual presentations can be customized for the targeted pharmaceutical or medical field as well as the specific client being presented to so that the final presentation is relevant and effective for the different environments that may be encountered. An expanding library of approved presentations and presentation components can be indexed and referenced for the creation of tailored presentations to meet specific client needs and interests. The use of appropriate content management reduces duplicated efforts and the time required to create brand presentations.

## **KOL Virtual Program Concept**

Virtual speaker programs are one tactic in a comprehensive campaign of any given brand and should be executed with strategy and in a way that complements traditional venues of brand messaging and should support scheduled campaign tactics or milestones in product launch or marketing plans. Virtual programs can function as part of a comprehensive mix of education programs in response to different learning styles, as well as schedules, of the targeted audience. Because a virtual KOL presentation is in fact live there is an opportunity to engage with the audience before and after a presentation allowing for a more casual experience like one might encounter at an in-person event.

Peer-to-peer KOL programs are intended to educate physicians about a brand's unique medical profile, its FDA-approved indication, provide clinical studies and answer relevant questions on topics such as dosing, titrations and adverse reactions. The virtual KOL program offers a one-on-one interactive setting in which physicians receive practical information on their own time in the comfort of their private office without travel. Further, the KOL speaker benefits from an attentive audience, can cover a lot of material in a short period of time, and answer questions as they arise.

## **Benefits**

Core benefits of a virtual KOL program are the customized scheduling of presentations between the KOL, attending physician and brand representative; the one-on-one or small group setting interactions that a virtual program facilitates; enhanced education opportunities thanks to diverse and sophisticated technologies; and the ability to tailor a presentation to a highly targeted audience and their learning style. In addition to the presentation and relationship benefits, cost and time efficiencies will also be realized with a virtual KOL program.

### *Customized Scheduling*

- Because of the virtual nature of program, the opportunity to schedule off-hours presentations allows for a higher level of involvement from physicians
- Flexible scheduling opportunities influence a higher percentage of hard-to-reach physicians to participate
- “Just in time” and/or ad-hoc sessions can be established to adapt to KOL and physicians’ limited availability

### *One-on-One and Small Group Interactions*

- Opportunity to change the physician’s behavior with one-on-one interactions
- Ability to match physician specialties with the speaker to increase learning opportunities
- Q&A session is not stifled by group setting and allows for follow-up questions

### *Enhanced Education Opportunities*

- Virtual programs can integrate educational and online training tools
- Multiple-source KOL meetings can be launched and combine video and audio feeds from different locations for maximum value of a presentation (ie., KOL demonstration in an OR with narrative provided by KOL in different location)
- Multi-media technology provides KOLs and reps ability to present ‘hands-on’ demos in virtual setting

### *Targeted Audience and Learning Style Appeal*

- On average virtual meetings reached 50-65% of physicians who did not attend a live meeting
- Virtual programs are complementary to other sales force initiatives and can be actively marketed to a target audience
- In-office and customized scheduling allows virtual programs to reach new and valuable audiences such as Nurse Practitioners and Physicians’ Assistants

## **Challenges**

Challenges of the virtual KOL program rise primarily from unpredictable technology hurdles and the ever-changing, highly regulated pharmaceutical and medical environment in which companies are positioned. However, with proper planning and customization of a virtual program, these obstacles can be addressed and overcome. The concern regarding consistent technology and connectivity among diverse client office environments can often be overcome through wired Ethernet connections along with program computers and technology that use reliable audio connections; wireless cards can also be available as a back-up technology. It is recognized that one-to-one presentations are a concern due to the reality that companies have different policies and a majority are not allowed to attend or deliver one-to-one meetings. The virtual KOL program can easily accommodate multiple participants, even from

multiple locations, and at companies in which one-to-one presentations are not allowed, scheduling multiple attendees eliminates the original concern.

### **Monitoring and Influencing Compliance**

The execution of a virtual KOL program is a combined effort among the KOL, the attending physician (or other participant(s)), the brand representative, the human moderator and of course, the technology used to facilitate the program. In the highly regulated pharmaceutical environment it is critical that all components of a virtual program meet FDA requirements as well as company medical and legal requirements from the people involved to the presentation shown on screen. Strategic planning, design and medical legal review of a presentation ensure that all slides are reviewed and once approved slides may not be changed or altered. Extensive training of the KOL, brand rep and moderator ensures that a virtual program can be launched within regulations and in a way that monitors and influences compliance of all involved.

### *Role of the KOL*

KOLs are carefully selected through a collaborative effort of the brand rep and Benchworks and must successfully complete a 'casting call' to demonstrate they are not only a vetted KOL in their disease state but also a confident and comfortable on-camera presenter. It is highly encouraged that the KOL practice their presentation in a staged setting to develop a comfort level with on screen presenting, computer cameras and how their body language is conveyed to the audience. Though the KOL is in fact the presenter, they are ultimately a member of the virtual program team and can contribute to the preparation of the presentation thereby encouraging brand loyalty.

- KOLs are often expected to commit to a contract that address their understanding of compliance and off-label discussions
- Compensation of a KOL follows the fair market value established by the client company.
- KOLs can have a national or regional scope in order to attract interest from physicians

### *Role of the Moderator*

The overarching role of the moderator is to maintain the flow of the meeting, however, the moderator is integral to the success of the program both during and after the presentation. The moderator is expected to make notes on the KOL presentation, keep the meeting on track, take responsibility for keeping discussion on-label and issue the statement of compliance before and after the meeting. Part of the moderator training process includes the requirement that the moderator reiterate company guidelines regarding off-label statements and questions. The moderator can also be instrumental in adding value to the presentation by tagging the session with keywords for content management purposes and capturing key data points in the Q&A that can facilitate the creation of a FAQ repository. Following the presentation, objective moderators also report on the strengths and weaknesses of individual KOLs. Moderators are not only highly qualified in the recruiting process, they also gain a deep understanding of the client's requirements and operating environment over time as they moderate KOL sessions and interact with MLR staff. There are two typical types of moderators, live or silent, each with advantages:

- Live Moderator
  - o Insure compliance with industry rules and regulations
  - o Invaluable in creating more active, engaging discussions
- Silent Moderator
  - o Reviews pre-call script with KOL

- Provides KOL introduction

In either role, moderators are expected to monitor off-label discussions. They are trained in the appropriate regulations and are part of the presentation review process by the MLR team prior to the delivery of the presentation by the KOL. The moderator is also able to address off-label concerns by managing the technology used and controlling the amount of information that is or is not recorded during a session.

### **Budgets and ROI Opportunity**

New media average monthly spend in the pharmaceutical industry has steadily increased since 2006 to an average of \$26 million per month which includes budget allocations to digital programs such as e-meetings and internet detailing and indicates the value placed on virtual programs. From October 2009 to September 2010, e-meeting spending was \$48 million of the total \$327 million spent on new media representing 15% of the new media costs during that time. Once an investment is made in virtual programs, the key is to measure the ROI which can be done via the data collected via a virtual session as well as through follow-up communication data points such as emails, FAQ access and file requests.

Ultimately it is the use of technology that allows for cost-savings and an effective evaluation of ROI of a virtual program. Budget savings are realized through the use of technology in that the travel cost of the KOL is eliminated; the cost per target is less than in-person programs; and, the proposed honoraria for virtual KOLs is 50-75% less than what they would require for an in-person program. With regard to measuring ROI, the one-on-one or small group setting of a virtual program allows a brand rep to match professionals with a KOL based on their specialty increasing ROI purely from a targeted audience approach. In addition, the virtual program concludes with surveys of each of the participants—the KOL, the brand rep and the attendee(s)—to directly measure the success of the program and the expected ROI of any particular session. Further, the surveys must be Medical, Legal, and Regulatory approved thereby addressing any regulatory concerns with regard to follow-up communication. As one example of ROI measurement, surveys from virtual KOL programs executed by Benchworks concluded that over 80% of physicians indicated that they would incorporate something they learned from a virtual meeting into their practice.

### **Technology Requirements**

There are numerous service providers in this space, however, dependability, feature support and scale are critical factors in selecting the appropriate service. The most common virtual meeting platforms include: Webex, AdobeConnect and GotoMeeting. The total number of simultaneous user sessions supported ranges from 50 to 250.

#### ***Basic requirements:***

- Online calendar and meeting scheduling
- User profile creation and capture
- Real-time screen / presentation sharing
- Desktop sharing, including transfer of control from participant to participant
- Text chat, public chat (all participants view), private chat (participant to participant only)
- Record and playback
- Shared whiteboard
- Live video

**Program Audio and Teleconferencing features:**

- Integrated Voice Over IP audio / teleconferencing capabilities
- Toll-free access
- Call in / Call back - Participants can come and go as they please and participate in the web-conferencing session.
- Full Duplex Support - This web conferencing service allows participants to communicate at the same time, not having to alternate which person speaks.

**Top Security / Privacy Requirements:**

- Unique / specific URL
- 128 bit encryption
- User authentication and logging

**Advanced Requirements**

- Polling with real-time results
- Desktop or application remote control sharing
- File transfer
- eLearning and learning management capabilities, including proctoring for examinations where appropriate
- Document sharing and translation of document types
- Content management and Authoring tools
- Live customer support

**FAQ**

Q: How do you record physician attendance?

A: Through the user authentication and moderator review, physician attendance and level of engagement can be accurately measured.

Q: How do you measure ROI?

A: Interactive tools and virtual environments provide for the collection of specific information related to the KOL session and correlation to end of session surveys. This data collection can be leveraged to measure the engagement level and other effectiveness factors of a specific KOL program.

Q: How do you capture and use actionable data gathered from a speaker program?

A: Backend data repositories can be established that meet the company's specific information capture, reporting and business intelligence needs. Many tools exist for the creation and mining of this data.

Q: Can we have a platform for on-demand programs that allow measurement and proof of ROI?

A: The indexing, searching and capture of information access can provide this measurement capability especially for on-demand programs. Specific meta data (supplemental information associated to the delivered content) can be captured.

Q: Is it possible to set up virtual programs in which attendees 'chat' or ask questions but only the moderator or KOL sees them?

A: Yes, private chat can support this feature as well as create private voice connections if needed.

Q: Can video and/or information from medical diagnostic equipment be integrated into a KOL session?

A: Yes, as long as the diagnostic equipment has a standard video or data output. In many cases, if the output is proprietary, it can be converted to standard video with the proper adapters/converters.

Q: How do we keep the interactivity of a live meeting when conducting a virtual meeting?

A: Today's virtual conferencing technology allows for a highly interactive environment, providing virtual presence for each participant to interact via video and audio, and also share files and desk-top images.

### **Conclusion**

The combination of advanced technology, a well-trained KOL, a qualified and trained moderator and an enthusiastic sales force can successfully deliver a quality virtual KOL program that will not only deliver a brand's unique profile to a targeted audience but do so in a way that is measureable, efficient and cost-effective.

### **About Benchworks**

Benchworks is a fully integrated marketing firm based on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. We handle marketing for clients including Sunrise Senior Living, Shire Pharmaceuticals, Noven and Coca-Cola/FUZE. Benchworks creates materials for and supports the sales teams of BoatU.S. agents, Shire Pharmaceuticals and Pfizer. We support the public relations for clients such as Kadey-Krogen Yachts, Marinalife, Ranger Tugs, Maryland Tourism Council and the Maryland Hotel & Lodging Association. We have developed and currently manage very successful, high volume online ordering systems including such well-known operations as University of Maryland University College, The Islands Of The Bahamas, CB Richard Ellis, Chesapeake Bay Foundation and popchips.

Benchworks operates from warehouse and office facilities totaling 45,000 square feet in Chestertown, Maryland. From this location we support our clients' inventory and distribution and fulfillment needs, as well as provide creative, strategic and tactical services that have made Benchworks a successful leader in product launches, customer support, online store creation and execution and high-end promotional activities.

Benchworks' reputation to execute what it promises, to create strong value and deliver exactly what the client demands, and to do so with responsiveness and professionalism, has been built upon years of service to long-term clients whose references we will gladly provide upon request.

[www.benchworks.com](http://www.benchworks.com)