



THE LANDSCAPE OF STRATEGIC MEETINGS IN THE HEALTHCARE EVENTS INDUSTRY

A JiffleNow & HCEA Whitepaper



In this whitepaper, we explore the different kinds of strategic meetings; their importance in a healthcare, medical device, or pharmaceutical company's Strategic Meetings Management Program (SMMP); and the best practices involved in planning, organizing, and analyzing these interactions.

For corporate event planners, medical meetings and congresses involve marketing activities that are oriented towards generating awareness and educating attendees. These events are important avenues for facilitating strategic interactions between company representatives and external stakeholders such as:

- Health Care Professionals (HCPs)
- Influencers or extenders (pharmacists, community health workers (CHWs), and patient navigators)
- Buyers (clinical and administrative decision makers)

These smaller conversations either within the larger context of congresses or in more focused ad-board meetings help drive company topline directly and indirectly. As a result, the ability to link the management of these strategic interactions with business outcomes offers unexplored potential for corporate event planners.

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INTRODUCTION

Healthcare events are a cornerstone of the industry. Over the years, the healthcare industry has thrived due to the organized dissemination and sharing of information. Events have facilitated this exchange by bringing together the many different faces of the healthcare industry HCPs, pharmaceutical companies, and buyers.

For healthcare businesses, strategic meetings at these events open multiple doors, in terms of partnerships, new revenue streams, and improved brand awareness.

But the healthcare events landscape is as complex as the industry itself. The nature of healthcare events, meetings, and the regulations associated with them make them unique within the experiential industry. This white paper explains the different types of strategic interactions and identifies best practices associated with each type.

TYPES OF POTENTIAL MEETINGS BY HEALTHCARE SUB-DOMAINS



Healthcare events vary widely in their nature according to the domain and business objectives. Let's take a look at the different kinds of event formats that are applicable across the sub-domains in Healthcare.

Key sub domains in the healthcare industry:

Sub-domain	Sample Companies
Pharmaceutical	Bayer, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, Novartis, Abbott Laboratories, Merck, Wyeth, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Eli Lilly
Biotech/Biopharmaceutical	Amgen, Schering-Plough, Boston Scientific, Biogen, Gilead Sciences, Genentech, Celgene
Medical Device	McKesson, Medtronic, Baxter, Stryker, Becton, Dickinson and Company, Luxottica Group, S.p.A, Edwards Lifesciences, Intuitive Surgical
Healthcare Facilities	Fresenius Medical Care, Quest Diagnostics, Laboratory Corporation of America Holdings, DaVita, Lincare Holdings

Types of strategic meetings relevant for each sub-domain:

Sub-domain	HCP Meetings	Sales Meetings	Influencer Meetings	VIP Interactions	Tracks & Sessions
Pharmaceutical					
Biotech/Bio Pharma					
Medical Device					
Healthcare Facilities					



For most corporate event planners, the SMMP comprises multiple kinds of meetings, e.g., pharmaceutical brands will engage HCPs in multiple kinds of interactions across the year.

HCP INTERACTIONS

HCPs are crucial to healthcare businesses because they dictate the pace of progress in the industry. Companies engage HCPs to educate them about new research, products, or upcoming drugs. These meetings can involve researchers, sales, compliance and regulatory executives, and CXOs from the company side.

Advisory Board (In-person, Virtual)

An advisory board meeting constitutes a meeting between members of the advisory board panel. They usually discuss and provide advice on topics like long-range strategy, new research programs, investigator competitions, and grants programs as well as other other areas of important conversation.



Investigator Meetings

Investigator meetings are attended by the people conducting clinical trials and investigators who have agreed to be a part of multi-center clinical trials. Companies use these meetings to inform investigators about clinical trials and seek advice related to protocol, regulatory issues, enrollment criteria, procedures, and safety issues.

Scientific/Education Meetings

Scientific or educational meetings are primarily conducted by experts, in an attempt to educate HCPs about advances in the field, new methods of treating patients, or debunk old myths.

Stand-Alone Meetings

Stand-Alone meetings are organized by a single corporation to engage HCPs from a specialty area to present the most recent results and interpretation of the latest clinical data and promote in-depth discussion on these results.

Expert Broadcasts

An expert broadcast could be likened to a radio or a TV show (or podcasts, these days) where a renowned expert in a certain medical field would take questions, give explanations, or even promote a product or service.

Medical Trainings

Medical training sessions have experts teaching HCPs and others about a specific medical module. These sessions can be in-person or virtual and the communication is unidirectional (similar to a webinar). These trainings can also be organized in the form of tracks and sessions if they happen in the larger context of a medical meeting or congress.

Congresses

Corporations also use congresses as an opportunity to meet HCPs and educate them about their latest and greatest research and products. Since many physicians are now moving from private practices to hospitals and have planned their show floor itinerary prior to entering the show hall, it is important that companies pre-plan and schedule meetings with key HCPs if they're visiting a congress.





NON-HCP INTERACTIONS

Hospital Buyer Meetings

A group purchasing organization helps healthcare facilities cut costs by buying medical supplies in bulk which contributes to reducing the cost of care. In some cases, the buyers are also the heads of a specialty stream at a hospital, e.g., the head of surgery will play a key role in buying costly surgical equipment like autonomous instruments. These people control the budget and are the final approvers. These meetings, therefore, are clearly a critical step in the sales cycle for the supplier company.

Extender Meetings

Millennial patients spend more time with extenders like nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and pharmacists who in turn become influencers in the healthcare business. It is important for corporations to engage with these roles as much as they engage with HCPs.

Product Demo Meetings

These meetings can be organized one on one or in large groups, with one or more experts demonstrating the features and benefits of a product. These meetings can run along with event show times or even after hours in the form of an ancillary event.

Booth Tour

This interaction is where a company representative takes a prospect through the exhibit and utilizes the educational tools within the booth to foster disease awareness, discuss pipeline activity, explain current or upcoming products and offerings.

VIP Events (e.g. Dinners)

These are the meetings that happen parallel to the event itself. They are usually organized at a different venue, with dinner and drinks served in a private setting. This is where corporations invite some of their top HCPs, customers, and prospects to mingle with senior company executives. These are by invitation only and have limited seating.



CHALLENGES AND BEST PRACTICES IN SCHEDULING AND MANAGING STRATEGIC MEETINGS



Irrespective of the type of meeting, organizing it implies multiple people need to commit to spend time together. As a meeting planner knows, that may sound simple, but has so many complexities associated with it that event planning is now considered the fifth most stressful job in the world (after military, pilots, firefighters, and law enforcement). Here are some of the key challenges and best practices from the point of view of planning, organizing, and analyzing strategic meetings as part of your SMMP.

PLANNING & SCHEDULING:

Challenge:

Planning the meeting well in advance of the event so it's easier to grab the target's attention as well as confirm time with them.

Best Practices:

- Reach out to HCPs, customers, and prospects about 4 months in advance of the event and request time with them.
- Once you have an oral commitment to a meeting, block their calendar and the meeting space.

Challenge:

Ensuring meeting requests are error-free, executives are not double-booked, and planners do not spend hours on spreadsheets and in Outlook.

Best Practices:

- Provide Sales with direct visibility to meeting room availability and executive calendars.
- Integrate meeting booking with Salesforce to increase sales adoption.
- Schedule all meetings in the time zone of the event location.

GETTING CONFIRMED MEETINGS

Challenge:

Getting external parties (HCPs, customers, etc.) to accept the meeting invite.

Best Practices:

- Have a clearly defined meeting agenda so they know why the request to meet was made.
- Provide information regarding the company executives who will be in the meeting.
- Get senior executive or product expert participation in the meeting.
- Send timely reminders.

Challenge:

Getting a large enough number of meetings to justify the budget spend for the next year.

Best Practices:

- Actively promote internally (to Sales) as well as externally (to the target audience).
- Publish information on the company intranet; email blasts to sales force that encourage them to schedule meetings at the event .
- Invite event attendees to request meetings with your company executives.

EXECUTIVE CALENDARS

Challenge:

Ensuring that during events executive calendars are filled with important meetings and these meetings run smoothly.

Best Practices:

- Run internal contests to include executives in meetings with HCPs, customers.
- Send mobile notifications on meetings and also make HCP or customer profile data easily accessible.

Challenge:

Ensuring all planned meetings actually happen, all company executives are where they are meant to be, and HCPs/customers experience an exceptional brand interaction.

Best Practices:

- Focus on making the meeting check-in process smooth and fast. Eliminate any unnecessary data collection that happens at this point.
- Ensure all company attendees are active on their mobile phones and receive alerts on new or upcoming meetings.
- Plan to end meetings in a timely manner without ending a conversation abruptly.

STRATEGIC MEETING METRICS

Challenge:

Defining the value of meetings and measuring the relevant meeting metrics. Also, collecting the right kind of data to build reports on these metrics.

Best Practices:

- Establish goals for all meetings.
- Collect data during the meeting request process.
- Conduct pre- and post-meeting surveys and develop other data-gathering tools to understand goal attainment and determine if these goals were met.



Here are some of the things we'd like you to remember when planning the strategic meetings aspects of your SMMP.

- Your average attendee is changing. The HCP work environment is changing and this requires them to change the way they engage at events. Fewer doctors now work in solo businesses and patients research whatever a physician prescribes before putting trust in it. As a result, HCPs want to learn and benefit as much as they can from time spent at a conference. This automatically makes strategic interactions a critical part of your program.
- It is important to lug all of your CRM data on your back and carry it to events. For a very long time, returns from events have focused on leads and booth traffic. Now sales-oriented, strategic interactions and pre-scheduled influencer discussions with physicians will become as important. After an event, the key thing to report will be the depth of the engagement enabled.
- Events will be a key HCP touch point. HCP meetings will be treated with the same yardstick as digital marketing campaigns targeted at them. Events will have to capture much more data than is currently recorded, and also analyze this data to provide better customer or target insights. The immediate impact of this will be felt in the ease with which event teams will be able to establish ROI and ROO(Return On Objectives) from events and also optimize their future investments (e.g., larger booths versus more meeting rooms or speaking sessions).



THANK YOU

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