Advisory boards: the medical writer’s perspective

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www.MedCommsNetworking.com
Advisory board: composition

- Experts in a field of medicine/medical science:
  - Practising physicians, surgeons, nurses, GPs…
  - Radiologists, microbiologists, epidemiologists…
- Active clinical researchers
- Well known/leaders in their field
- Regularly speak at congresses

Advisory board: purpose

- An opportunity for companies to acquire ‘advice on subjects relevant to their products.’
- ‘… to answer legitimate business questions to which the company does not already know the answer.’

The meeting: who attends?

- Advisory board experts
- Pharma company representative(s)
- Medcomms agency representative
- Medical writer

Of these, one will be the chair/facilitator
Scope of subject matter

- Product lifecycle: from trial design to postmarketing
- Addressing challenging publications, adverse events
- Education, communication, publication
- Informing company strategy
- Consensus development
- Regional challenges

Compliance with a code of practice

- Purpose
- Venue
- Scope of activities
- Reimbursement

**United Kingdom**
- PMCPA Advice on Advisory Boards
- ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry

**United States**
- Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA)

**European Union**
- European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA)

Role(s) of the medical writer

Either working for an agency or independently:

- ‘Just’ write up a report
- Select and invite experts
- Prepare meeting resources
- Help decide on the outputs
- Facilitate or co-chair the meeting
- Draft and submit a publication

and communicate effectively with everyone!

Singh, N. & Sharma, R. 2016. Covering a medical advisory board meeting and creating the report or publication: The role of the professional medical writer. Medical Writing, 25, 37-41.
Preparation
Clarify objectives and output(s)

- Clarify meeting objectives
- Set and/or review agenda
- Establish output(s):
  - Transcript
  - Report
  - Manuscript
  - Publication strategy
- Establish deadlines:
  - Interim minutes/summary?
  - Full draft report
Clarify attendees and roles

- Experts: speciality, specific interest/research
- Pharma company representatives
- Chairperson and/or facilitator
- Personal role

Who’s who?
Access resources

- Key papers
- Slide decks
- Previous reports
Get up to speed

- Read the resources
- Literature search – find a good review
- Acronyms, abbreviations, jargon
- Wikipedia!
Personal stuff

- Confirm dress code
- Agree your fee if working as a freelancer
- Plan your schedule to deliver outputs
Equipment, etc.

- Audio
- Timer
- Slide handout
- Photo gallery
- Adaptors
- Extension lead
Logistics

- Arrange travel to ensure timely arrival
- Visit meeting room in advance, and...
- Address meeting room issues:
  - seating
  - name plates
  - audio provision/location

*Be sure you sit in an appropriate place*
The meeting
Chair
Writer Chair

Speaker
The meeting

- Note unexpected participants: names and job titles
- Be sure your audio is working
- Use time stamps

- **Write or listen?**

- Clarify jargon, acronyms and difficult discussion
- Confirm what your client wants, and when
After the meeting
After the meeting

Armed with a good idea of what your client wants:

- Prepare
- Share
- Revise
- Proof
Audio recording and transcription

- ZOOM H2N Recorder
- NCH Express Scribe Pro Transcription Software
- Infinity USB Foot Pedal
Meeting report: principles

- Centre on the objectives of the meeting
- Highlight unmet need/knowledge gaps
- Bring together and summarise key insights
- Provide future direction

*and be a readable and well-structured document*

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Meeting report: what to avoid

‘a transcript the size and weight of a concrete slab full of rambling conversations’

Leask *et al.*, 2016

Meeting report: need good planning

‘Let your meeting plan write your report. If you've done your planning well, the transcript should flow beautifully from one item to the next.’

Leask et al., 2016

Challenges

- Working with medical experts
- Meeting room layout and audio quality
- Understanding language of non-native contributors
- Understanding technical discussion
- Writing vs listening and transcribing
- Identifying who said what
- Multitasking during the meeting
- Clarifying the report format
Advisory boards: the cons

- Challenges that you don’t manage to confront!
- Being fully prepared can be difficult if ‘last minute’ or completely new subject matter
- Time required to generate outputs, particularly if transcribing audio

*A demanding and time-consuming challenge that requires careful preparation*
Advisory boards: the pros

- Working at the forefront of biomedical science
- Meeting and working with medical experts
- Travelling outside your own country… and…
- Even better when you know the experts and become familiar with the subject matter

An exciting and enjoyable challenge from which you can learn a lot
Bibliography


Singh, N. & Sharma, R. 2016. Covering a medical advisory board meeting and creating the report or publication: The role of the professional medical writer. Medical Writing, 25, 37-41.


Thank you

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