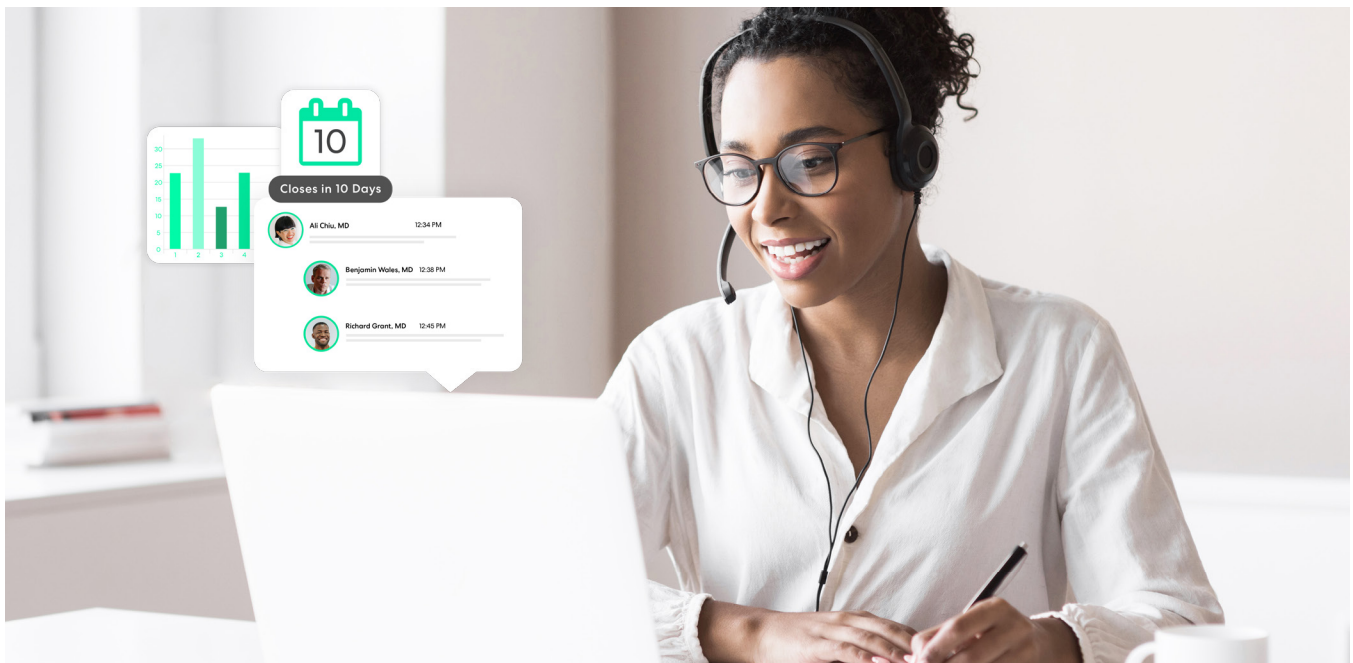


# Unlocking the Secrets of Virtual Work



How your peers are accomplishing more and having fewer meetings

## Unlocking the Secrets of Virtual Work



The way pharmaceutical and medical device teams work has changed [forever](#), prompting some experts to predict that everything from day-to-day interactions to how clinical trials are conducted will experience a transformation. Less [business travel](#), more flexibility in where and when we work, and interacting with colleagues around the world will present both opportunities and challenges to your team in the years ahead.

When life science teams were forced to pivot to an all-virtual way of working at the beginning of the pandemic, many simply chose to use what was readily available: video calls, and plenty of them. But as the months wore on, the effects of this one-size-fits-all approach became clear: scheduling conflicts, unpredictable attendance, multi-tasking, and simple fatigue. And while video calls work well for some types of meetings, they don't create a reliable, repeatable process for completing work more efficiently.

Pharmaceutical and medical device teams need a different way to approach working virtually – one that accommodates complexity, longer timelines, multiple stakeholders, and a need for the security and compliance demanded by the industry. The secret to achieving these benefits isn't adding more virtual calls, but unlocking the strategic power of virtual work.

## WHAT IS VIRTUAL WORK?

Virtual work has evolved beyond standalone virtual meetings, and incorporates several elements that can be combined to create end-to-end virtual engagement and collaboration opportunities. Virtual work shifts tasks that are ordinarily performed face-to-face to a virtual environment, where participants log in and work towards objectives at their convenience. This can involve real-time virtual interactions, such as video calls, but usually takes place during a set period of days or weeks, known as a session.

Rather than planning a series of ongoing calls, virtual work takes into account the varied cadence that different projects require. For example, a medical affairs team may need to solicit feedback from a regional group of MSLs during a week-long asynchronous session that includes 10 multiple-choice questions. But the same team might also want to engage a global panel of KOLs to present patient case studies on a live webcast, release three sets of open-ended questions about the cases over the course of a month, and wrap up by inviting the KOLs to collaborate on a patient education document resulting from the answers to the questions. These projects have very different requirements, and neither is best handled during a weekly one-hour video call.

In the life science industry, work is an ongoing process with its own rhythm, one that's specific to what teams are trying to accomplish. Adding more video calls – hours-long ones, at that – to already busy schedules doesn't move work forward, and in fact, can slow it down. That's because to account for the increase in video calls that fill our days, we're essentially working a second shift, when we do all the work we couldn't get to during our meeting-filled day. In fact, a September 2020 [study](#)<sup>1</sup> revealed that in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the average person's workday increased by nearly 50 minutes. In the same time frame, workers also sent more emails, to more people – mostly after business hours.

By shifting structured discussions to a virtual work platform, not only do people get relief from endless meetings, they regain the ability to focus on a task when they are most ready and committed.

## HOW ARE VIRTUAL WORK AND VIRTUAL MEETINGS DIFFERENT?

As discussed, virtual meetings can play a role within virtual work. But there are distinct differences between the two – particularly when considered as a part of your overall business strategy. Here's a quick explainer of how virtual work and virtual meetings are different.

## VIRTUAL MEETINGS ARE...

### **Transactional**

Video calls are useful for weekly check-ins, team meetings, and other more administrative tasks. They can play a bigger role in virtual work, but as a standalone element, they're not very powerful.

### **Just a venue**

Virtual meeting platforms like Zoom, Webex, and GoToMeeting are easy to use, and probably already available to you. These factors are great for convenience when you need to quickly sync up with colleagues. However, these platforms and their features aren't meaningfully tied to your objectives – in other words, they don't "care" about what you're trying to accomplish.

### **Self-service**

Platforms designed to facilitate video calls don't offer much else in the way of support – not just in case something goes wrong, but to help things go right from the very beginning.

### **Not tailored to life science**

Ask yourself if you'll get the best results from a platform that's one-size-fits-all by design, rather than created specifically for the needs of pharmaceutical and medical device companies.

## VIRTUAL WORK IS...

### **Inclusive of the entire process**

Your projects take place on a continuum, and your virtual engagement strategy should consider that. Scheduling a meeting is just one part of a process – you also need to consider how people will interact, how you'll give everyone a chance to contribute, and anything else that will help you achieve your end goal.

### **Designed for focused discussion**

With asynchronous communication, people can participate in your virtual work sessions whenever it works for *them* – meaning they'll be in the right frame of mind to provide the most valuable insight to you.

### **Specific to life science**

Life science work processes are multi-faceted, can involve both internal and external stakeholders from around the world, and often involve a high degree of complexity. These factors make it difficult to rely on video calls alone.

### **Made for humans**

Digital fatigue is a serious issue, and it contributes to a lack of concentration and other factors that make video calls unproductive. Shifting meetings to asynchronous environments increases the likelihood of 100% participation and doesn't contribute to fatigue or overscheduling.

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR PHARMACEUTICAL AND MEDICAL DEVICE COMPANIES?

It's clear that applying virtual work to life science projects solves for problems like overscheduling, limited availability, and lack of focus. But what is the value for life science teams?

### **Asynchronous sessions provide more insights for better decision-making**

When stakeholders can choose when and where to contribute to over-time discussions, meeting participation is much higher. A Within3 client that held regular global [MSL meetings](#) struggled to get half the group to attend virtual calls – and of those that did attend, only 15% contributed to the conversation. When they shifted the MSL meetings to an over-time discussion, they doubled attendance and saw nearly 100% participation.

### **Adopting virtual work across multiple teams amplifies value**

When a top-20 pharmaceutical company implemented Within3 [enterprise-wide](#), they saved \$3 million and 5,000 work hours in just one year. Even more compelling, the company was able to attribute a \$10 million revenue lift to feedback from Within3 sessions that directly and immediately affected market performance.

### **Streamlining complex projects accelerates speed to market**

Holding discussions on a single platform establishes a single point of truth – projects won't get off track due to missed meetings or confusing email chains, milestones are visible to all stakeholders, and transcripts are automatically generated when the session is complete.

## IN THE REAL WORLD: HOW YOUR PEERS ARE GETTING AHEAD WITH VIRTUAL WORK

Other pharmaceutical and medical device teams have already unlocked virtual work to complete their projects more quickly, with better results and more actionable insights. Here's a look at how teams are applying the concept to their most important work.

A top-20 pharmaceutical company implemented Within3 enterprise-wide and saved **\$3 million and 5,000 work hours** in just one year.

## USE CASE: MEDICAL DEVICE, COMMERCIAL TEAM

### **Virtual work elements: Live kickoff webcast, three-week asynchronous session, pre-recorded video**

A commercial team wanted to get feedback from KOLs about a new medical device concept, with the following objectives:

- 1 Understand the KOLs' impressions of the device
- 2 Identify the important healthcare system stakeholders who would participate in and influence buying decisions for the device
- 3 Understand any benefits of or concerns about the device

The team decided to launch a virtual work session on the Within3 platform. First, the team invited nine US-based KOLs to attend a live 30-minute kickoff webcast. Following the webcast, the KOLs logged into the online synchronous platform whenever it was convenient for them during the three-week session. They answered 30 questions in five different focus areas, including open-ended and ranking questions, which help to maintain engagement and vary the content throughout the session. The team also used the platform's capability to include pre-recorded video within the session to create a stronger connection with the participating KOLs.

### **Key result**

Prior to the virtual session, the team was planning to conduct follow-up meetings to dive deeper into topics introduced in the asynchronous meeting. But due to the quality and quantity of feedback, the team was able to achieve more – shortening their timeline by several weeks.

## USE CASE: PHARMACEUTICAL, MEDICAL AFFAIRS

### **Virtual work elements: Asynchronous session with phased roll-out and document annotation**

A medical affairs team wanted to obtain new insight from physicians to better understand the effect of gender on a neurological condition and to identify educational needs and gaps related to gender differences. The team planned to use this insight to identify opportunities for further differentiation and distinction of their product in the market. The team's objectives included:

- 1 Gather insights on how gender differences may impact disease state
- 2 Identify differences that may impact patient experience
- 3 Obtain guidance on the lifetime impact of the condition in different genders
- 4 Identify and understand educational gaps and needs

The team chose to hold its first-ever virtual advisory board meeting on the Within3 platform, inviting nine KOLs to participate in the week-long session. The KOLs answered about 30 questions – fewer than in an in-person setting, but with both qualitative and quantitative inquiries to obtain holistic feedback. They also used the platform's document annotation tool to gain direct feedback on existing patient education resources. Questions were released over a period of several days to encourage the advisors to continue logging in and to avoid fatigue.

### **Key result**

The team received results from the over-time meeting that were comparable to or an improvement over a traditional in-person meeting, including up to 40% new information as opposed to around 10% in a face-to-face advisory board.

## USE CASE: PHARMACEUTICAL, CLINICAL DEVELOPMENT

### Virtual work elements: Asynchronous blinded patient session, two investigator sessions

A pharmaceutical company wanted to engage patients and investigators online to optimized a phase II clinical trial protocol, with three primary objectives:

- 1 Review and discuss protocol design
- 2 Assess logistical considerations for the conduct of the trial
- 3 Confirm the primary and secondary endpoints of the trial

The team used the Within3 platform to make it easy for both patients and investigators to provide feedback on the proposed study design using any connected device whenever it fit into their schedule. First, patients answered 30 questions during a blinded session in which their identities were private. Following the patient session, the team convened 10 investigators for two seven-day sessions.

### Key result

All of these interactions took place during the course of about one month, and investigators were able to consider their input within the context of the patient experience.

[Harvard Business School Working Knowledge](#), September 2020

## ABOUT WITHIN 3

**Within3** Within3 invented a better way for life sciences companies to have conversations with the people who matter most—from doctors to patients to payers, and more. Our virtual engagement platform gives stakeholders the freedom to collaborate anytime, anywhere, on any device. With practical tools to foster meaningful discussions, co-create and edit documentation, and enable faster and more accurate decision-making, all Within3 projects include a dedicated client success team and most achieve 100% stakeholder participation. To learn more and request a needs assessment and demo, visit [www.within3.com](http://www.within3.com).