BEST PRACTICES for MEDICAL AFFAIRS TEAMS:
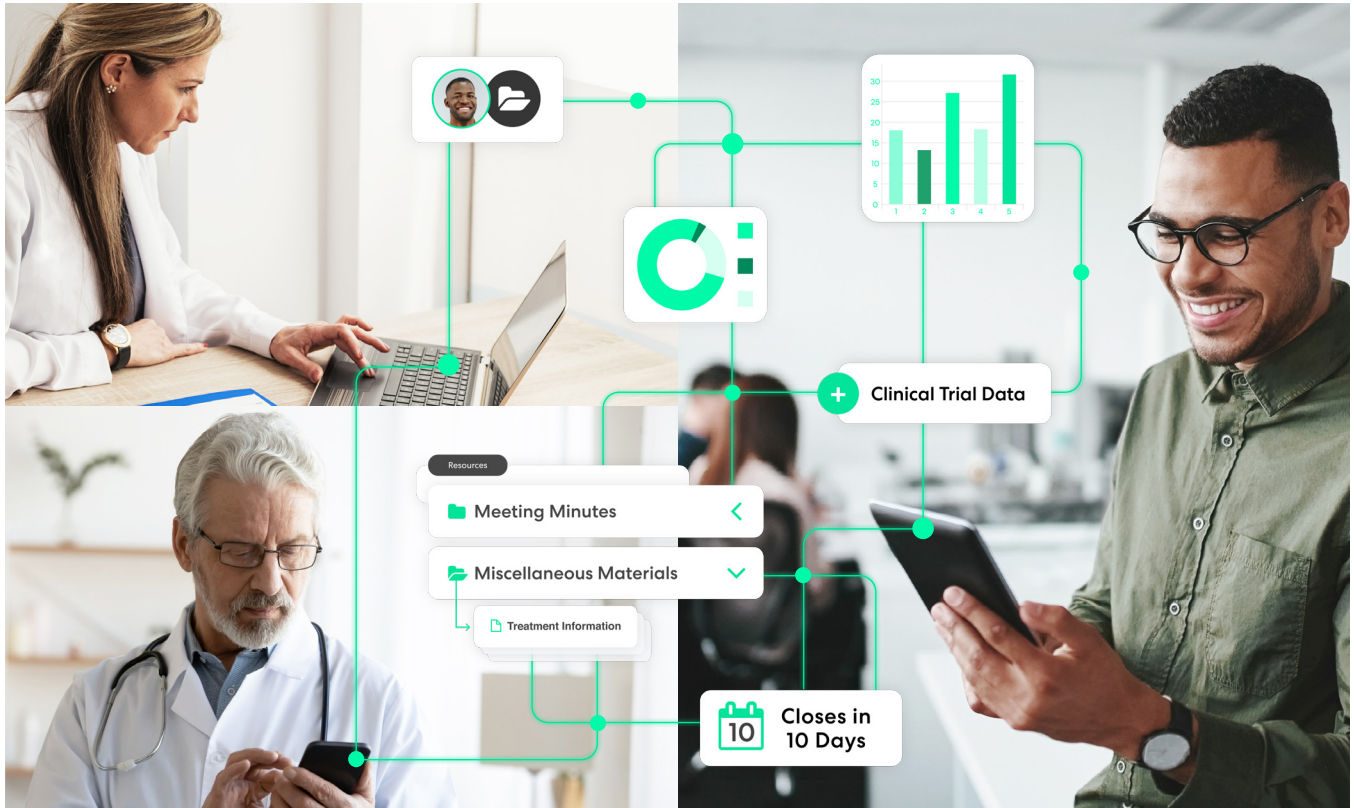
A Guide to Transforming Insights into Business Value

Clinical Trial Data

Resources

Meeting Minutes

Miscellaneous Materials

Treatment Information

10 Closes in 10 Days

How to bring insights management into your organization

BEST PRACTICES for MEDICAL AFFAIRS TEAMS:

A Guide to Transforming Insights into Business Value

INTRODUCTION

Life science organizations are facing a new world and unprecedented challenges. A global pandemic revealed vulnerabilities in processes from supply chain management to clinical trial recruitment and execution. As the global crisis progressed, medical affairs teams pivoted to virtual tools for much of their communication and collaboration.

However, these tools didn't always improve things: video calls caused fatigue and failed to move work along a continuum. Participation varied or dropped off, and teams found themselves without the means to collate, interpret, and share insights gathered through cobbled-together virtual systems. These breakdowns threaten operations, and life science companies are eager to adopt technology that ensures business continuity.

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Having learned under duress what worked and what didn't, medical affairs teams are now in a position to be more strategic about how they implement technology, and what tools they will need to future-proof against disruptions or uncertainty in the years to come.

> In early 2021, the World Economic Forum reported that the business landscape will face greater uncertainty going forward, with many organizations focused not just on survival but on building resilience to navigate future challenges.

When it comes to gathering insights throughout the product development process, what types of technology are most useful to pharmaceutical and medical device organizations, and how can medical affairs teams evolve insight gathering without disrupting their ongoing work?

WHAT IS INSIGHTS MANAGEMENT?

Insights management is the concept of considering all aspects of the insight-gathering process – from expert selection through engagement and decision-making – as a single process with a single solution. By viewing these seemingly separate activities as one, medical affairs teams immediately begin to change the amount of value they can get from the insights they gather.

Traditionally, life science insights were information gathered from key opinion leaders by medical science liaisons. Today, insight-gathering is a larger process that follows the path of a product or device, building a scientific narrative that evolves over the product lifecycle. And insights don't only come from a select group of key experts – they're also obtained from rising stars, payers, patients, internal stakeholders.

Insights management technology enables medical affairs teams to consolidate insight-gathering activities from participant selection through engagement and finally to decision-making. By eliminating the use of different systems siloed among different parts of an organization, managing insights becomes a strategic business process rather than a disjointed series of tasks and tactics.

WHAT'S DRIVING THE NEED FOR INSIGHTS MANAGEMENT?

Widespread uncertainty

All industries were challenged by COVID-19, but the pharmaceutical and medical device industries found themselves doubly pressured: from one side, they faced the same issues from business disruption, lockdown measures, and travel restrictions as any business. From the other side, companies were under pressure to develop an effective vaccine, life-saving COVID-19 treatments, and desperately needed medical equipment and devices.

As the effects of the pandemic continue, the life science industry is busy making up lost time from disrupted trials and other interruptions and is looking for ways to make the product development process more efficient and effective. Medical affairs teams don't want to be knocked off track by another crisis and need a way to build agility and resilience into their business.

Accelerating digital transformation

The life science industry was already increasingly embracing digital transformation prior to the pandemic. When suddenly pressed to work around restrictions and closures, companies figured out ways to have global stakeholders continue to meet and share insights. Medical affairs teams figured out how to have 1:1 meetings between medical science liaisons and key experts, and between doctors and patients. Organizations upgraded systems to expand work-from-home capabilities and reduce the need for travel, while also increasing the diversity of participants in both clinical trials and expert meetings.

COVID-19 fast-forwarded digital transformation of the pharma industry by more than five years.

After navigating the initial crisis, medical affairs teams took stock of lessons learned. In-person interaction was curtailed, but digital tools enabled more global engagement, invited new perspectives, and prioritized physician and patient schedules and availability. Now, there is an even greater appetite for technology that automates and streamlines manual processes and improves the ability to make more informed strategic decisions.

Health and economic factors

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, life science companies already faced an onslaught of coming challenges: longer lifespans mean a greater incidence of conditions like cancer and dementia, and changing lifestyle behaviors are contributing to increasing rates of diabetes and heart disease.

COVID-19 has added to the burden. Beyond vaccines and other treatments, researchers are unsure how the long-term effects of the disease might impact healthcare and what treatments may need to be developed to address them.

> Five years ago, the Deloitte Centre for Health Solutions warned of a "tidal wave" of diseases set to hit the pharmaceutical industry, with improvements in life expectancy contributing to significantly higher rates of cancer and dementia in every region of the world by 2030.

Despite the pandemic-fueled economic slowdown and uneven recovery, drugmakers and device manufacturers are being pressured to develop new treatments more quickly and more cheaply than ever before. Companies can get closer to this goal by fine-tuning insight-gathering processes throughout product development.

THE CURRENT STATE OF INSIGHTS MANAGEMENT

Fragmented
The insights management process is typically viewed as several distinct processes, from expert selection and contracting through meeting planning and finally sharing and interpreting the results. This means that different systems generate and store data, with access often not shared across organizations or geographies.

Information can even be in different languages and therefore of limited use to large parts of the world.

Slow
These disparate processes incur a great deal of manual work, from simply finding the information to transcription and translation. In-person meetings are planned months or years in advance, and even virtual meetings are subject to last-minute cancellations, no-shows, or non-participation. This means time-consuming follow-up conducted via phone calls, email chains, or other methods that are scattered and siloed.

Not tied to strategy
Because these processes are so distinct, they are often not tied to specific, discrete goals. This makes the resulting data open to wide interpretation, which can lengthen timelines and lead organizations to make decisions based on outdated or irrelevant data.

THE GOALS OF INSIGHTS MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY

One process, one solution
When the insight gathering process is connected on one platform accessible to all stakeholders, there is less manual processing and fewer opportunities for gaps or assumptions. Timelines are inherently shortened and strategies are more sound because everyone is on the same page.

A clear view of disease communities and patient populations
Medical affairs teams can be more specific about who they are talking to and who those people are influencing. Proper insights management technology includes a data analytics component that provides medical affairs teams with the knowledge to choose the most influential experts and understand where influencers are sharing and exchanging information.

More productive, higher quality conversations

While in-person and live virtual interactions will always be appropriate for some engagements, asynchronous discussions elicit a higher volume and better quality of dialogue. In an over-time environment, follow-up and consensus building can take place in the moment, rather than weeks or months after a meeting is concluded. The minimal lift in terms of time and scheduling means that KOLs and patients can be engaged more frequently and on shorter notice, for a more timely process.

Ability to make faster decisions with better information

Following asynchronous and hybrid virtual engagements, technology can speed or even automate the process of surfacing key takeaways. When actionable next steps are efficiently packaged for life science teams to share and disseminate, strategic discussions follow more quickly.

HOW CAN MEDICAL AFFAIRS TEAMS GET STARTED WITH INSIGHTS MANAGEMENT?

If you're interested in exploring how a more holistic approach to insights management can benefit your organization, it's not necessary to do everything at once.

Check your expert list

Using technology to help you find the right experts for a specific project doesn't mean overlooking established relationships. See how a new list bolstered by data analytics compares to your current list. Are your current key opinion leaders on the list? Could you glean new insight by adding new individuals from different fields of expertise? What about digital opinion leaders – can you leverage experts who are highly influential among patient communities or other healthcare provider?

Hold a hybrid or asynchronous engagement with involved moderators

You don't have to go 100% asynchronous right away. Consider a hybrid format where pre- or post-work takes place on an anytime platform and a peer-to-peer discussion or presentation occurs via webcast. Or kick off with an introductory webcast for that all-important personal interaction and elicit more in-depth feedback during a virtual advisory session.

Enable quick outcome-based actions

Quick generation of key highlights is an essential part of most engagements – with an executive summary in hand within a few weeks, your team is freed from manually chasing down information and pushing projects across the finish line. Instead, insights management technology pulls you closer to your goal.

CONCLUSION

There's no need to be reluctant to adopt new technology that improves the insights management process – in fact, it's imperative given today's business environment and the unique challenges pharmaceutical and medical device organizations are facing. To see how a medical affairs team used analytics and social listening to target the right experts to inform their strategy, read a case study.

> Digital and analytics can be a powerful tool [for biopharma]. It can drive the next wave of business optimization by transforming operational performance, shortening time to market, improving quality and yield, reducing supply chain volatility, and accelerating technology transfers.

ABOUT WITHIN3

Within3 invented a better way for life science companies to get deeper insights and make faster decisions across the product development lifecycle. With the power to identify the right experts, effectively engage them, and quickly obtain actionable information, life science teams can close the insight gap and drive projects forward with confidence. Our insights management platform gives stakeholders the freedom to collaborate anytime, anywhere, on any device, plus practical tools to foster meaningful discussions, co-create and edit documentation, and rely on the power of AI to achieve faster and more accurate decision-making. With a dedicated client success team on every implementation, most Within3 projects achieve 100% stakeholder participation. To learn more and request a needs assessment and demo, visit www.within3.com.