

Bridging the physical & virtual worlds

***HCP Education
Initiatives:
New Programs
For a New Era***





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of patients expect to use virtual appointments after the pandemic resolves.

OUR WORLD HAS CHANGED BUT CHANGE CAN BE GOOD

It's impossible to understate how profoundly life has changed in 2020. One of the many ways healthcare has adapted is the adoption of telehealth. Virtual experiences are the norm now and will be a part of everything we do moving forward. According to new research, **83% of patients** expect to use virtual appointments after the pandemic resolves. The same goes for meetings between physicians and medical sales reps.

Even as in-person appointments and meetings come back, online will remain a major channel. One important initiative that can benefit from this shift is Health Care Professional (HCP) education programs. If they're done well, virtual formats are not just a temporary fix. They can become an important complement to in-person, expanding reach, providing intelligence, and extending relationships.

THE FUTURE OF HCP ENGAGEMENT IS ONLINE

Physicians are onboard with virtual. The use of telemedicine has skyrocketed by necessity and looks to be a permanent fixture. A McKinsey report (whose title “Telehealth: A quarter-trillion-dollar post-COVID-19 reality?” suggests a profitable future) noted that physicians and other health professionals are now seeing 50 to 175 times the number of patients via telehealth than they did before the pandemic. There is a similar trajectory for meetings with medical sales reps.

Pre-pandemic, physicians were already heading away from in-person sales visits. In fact, a 2018 survey showed 73% of medical professionals preferred being contacted through email over alternatives such as office visits by a sales representative or exhibits at conferences. An Accenture study noted that HCPs want the human connection with sales reps in the future, but in different ways. - only 10% want to go back to pre-COVID norms for in-person meetings. Clearly the future of HCP engagement is online.

The **top three** engagement channels now considered most effective by doctors are virtual.

1

Virtual webinars with key opinion leaders (KOLs)

2

Virtual training on new therapies

3

Virtual speaker programs

Given this shift, healthcare companies are scrambling to accelerate their online programs. Because of that, physicians as consumers of media are expecting the higher level of quality they're seeing in their personal lives when they experience TV shows done remotely, online concerts, and virtual conferences. This isn't just about production values. It's about the pace and quality of content and delivery. The text-laden slides or lack luster presenting that once might have been acceptable in webinars just don't hold the same attention that they once did. There is an opportunity now to rethink how reps bring value to physicians, how information is communicated, and how to strengthen relationships within the HCP community.

HCP Education Programs are often gatherings at a local restaurant. It's time to pivot from a dinner to an online destination.

Developing a unique online destination to serve as an education hub brings tremendous opportunity for delivering valuable information when and where physicians want it, while also providing a platform for live presentations with Q&A, and peer conversations. It also enables extended engagement and personalization.



**E-MAIL
INVITATION**

*Personal
connection
with the rep*

**LIVE KOL
PRESENTATION**

*Real-time
information*

**PEER
CONVERSATION**

*Personal
connection
through
networking*

**SELF GUIDED
EXPERIENCE**

*Targeted
content*

Q&A

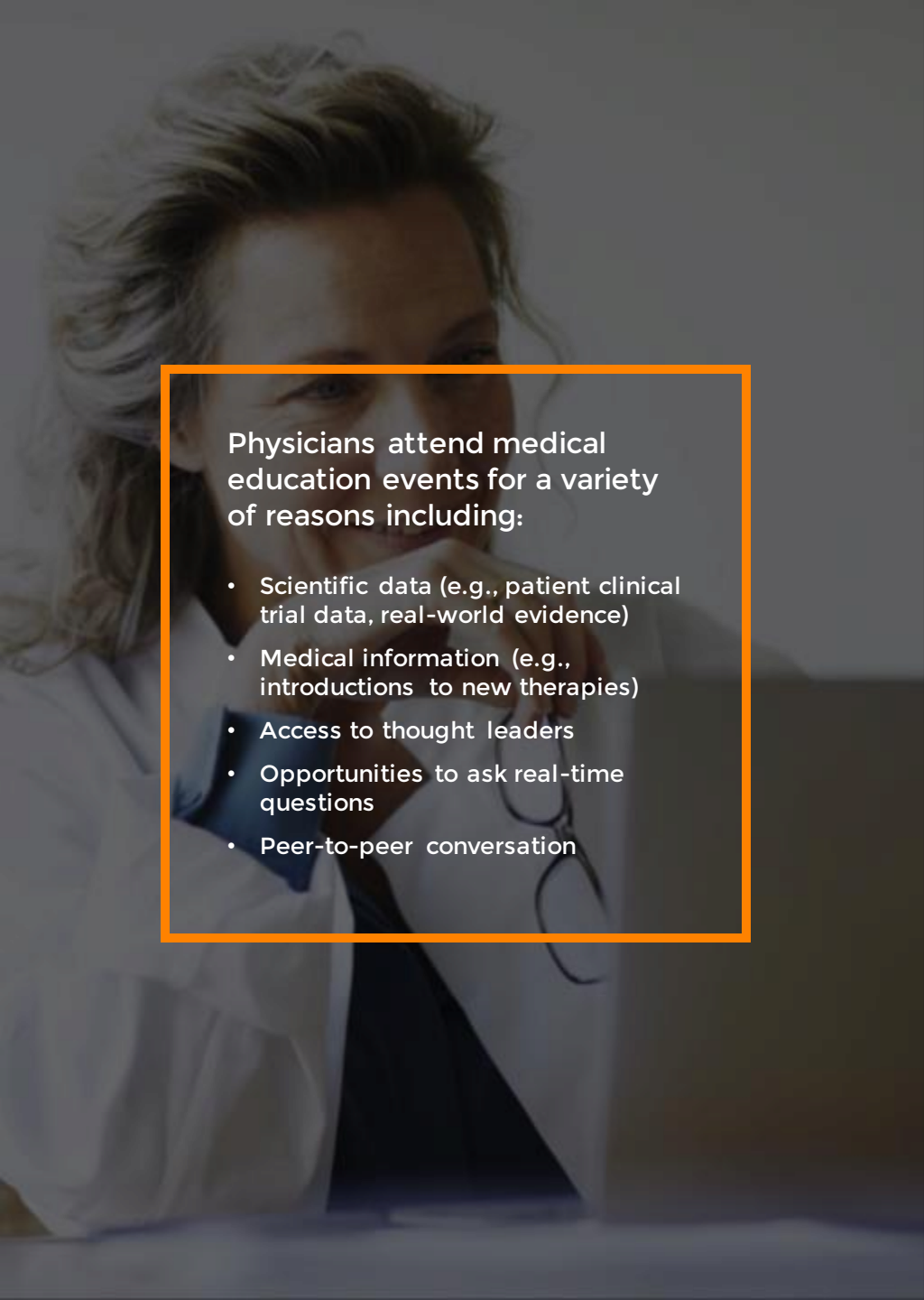
*Personal
connection
with
presenters*

**CONTENT
CONTINUUM**

*Rep can
personalize
curated
content*

**NEW
INDUSTRY
TOUCHPOINT**

*Thought
leadership*



Physicians attend medical education events for a variety of reasons including:

- Scientific data (e.g., patient clinical trial data, real-world evidence)
- Medical information (e.g., introductions to new therapies)
- Access to thought leaders
- Opportunities to ask real-time questions
- Peer-to-peer conversation

DELIVERING WHAT HCPS WANT FROM EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The key is relevance, whether in the content, the presenters, or the attendees. Often at dinner meetings, physicians have the chance to talk with local peers and hear from KOLs known to them. An online education hub provides the opportunity to localize AND capitalize on information valued regardless of geographic location.

THERE ARE *FOUR ESSENTIAL PILLARS* TO DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE AND FUTURE-PROOF PROGRAM:

TECHNOLOGY

The technology platform must serve the hub's needs securely, efficiently, and reliably. It also must work within IT guidelines and deliver the desired functionality like live video chat, on-demand content, and gatekeeping. It also must adapt to changing needs.

LEARNING DESIGN

Shifting from “What do we need to teach?” to “What is the best way for users to learn and understand this concept?” will influence formats (video, animation, infographics, etc.) that enhance content appeal.

MESSAGING

Effectively positioning the hub with HCPs, KOLs, and sales teams will be key to its success. This is not a case of “build it and they will come.” They will come if it is worth their time.

LOGISTICS

How HCPs are introduced to the hub, the sales team’s role, the practical user experience on the site, etc. are all factors that go into the overall concept and use journey.

As companies incorporate virtual approaches to physician engagement, there is a tendency to do it on a tactical level, like video calls. But a true virtual experience strategy involves looking at the entire online experience.

That requires a combination of planning, creative, and technology. When physicians visit an online education hub, their experience should be choreographed to introduce the content, presenters, and each other in a meaningful approach.

In many ways, it becomes a personal event. The rep can curate content to recommend in a “playlist” customized to an individual physician’s interests. There is also surprising intimacy that can happen when participants interact online. During Q&A, there is a literal face-to-face interaction with the KOL. During networking, participants can see everyone in the “room.” One unique aspect to this virtual engagement is the ability to bring in remote speakers from anywhere in the world. While face-to-face meetings are limited by geography, virtual opens new possibilities.

Personal also means a personal connection between the physician and the representative. While the two may not be in the same location, they can be in communication. Being able to direct the physician to relevant content and follow-up on questions goes a long way to deepening the value of the relationship.

A virtual HCP Education Program should not be thought of as simply an online version of the physical event. Whatever path a company chooses, deepening physician relationships becomes a more effective experience by embracing the possibilities within a virtual engagement. Going all-in with a great online experience doesn't exclude in-person. When that's possible (as we all hope it will be again), it's an enhancement. But with physicians rethinking all their in-person encounters, it's a good indication that virtual is here to stay in a very real way.



How can Cramer help?

We've been helping healthcare companies thrive online for decades, including virtual and hybrid events. We're well versed in the strengths and weakness of every possible technology, and can use that knowledge to help you pick the option that will best help you meet your objectives. But effective virtual engagement is about so much more than picking the right technology. You also need the right content, strategy, and production elements to make your message stand out from the crowd.

We have full creative, strategy, and production teams dedicated to every element of a great experience... and are ready to put them to work for you.

Let's reimagine your next event. Email **The Cramer Team** theteam@cramer.com or call **781-278-2300** to get the conversation started. And be sure to visit cramer.com for more insights.

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