THE ADVANTAGES OF VIRTUAL ADVISORY BOARDS: WHY WE WILL WANT THEM EVEN POST PANDEMIC

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Strategic planning and staging of virtual advisory boards can generate a better ROI with greater engagement than live meetings.

We are all adjusting to the new reality, where digital solutions are the norm and live meetings have been suspended, at least temporarily. But life goes on, and we have embraced different skills that actually enhance our work. For example, strategic planning of virtual advisory boards can generate a better ROI with greater engagement than live meetings.

The advantages of virtual advisory boards include:

- **Full recruitment:** It's easier to recruit the participants we want, because they don't have to travel and are more likely able to fit an online meeting into their schedule

- **Optimized participation:** Using a format such as those outlined below increases participation by introverts as well as extroverts and promotes sharing of information unbiased by comments from others

- **Enriched feedback:** Flexible digital formats allow us to collect and act on information during the advisory board process to enhance engagement and feedback from experts

- **Lower event costs:** Virtual events eliminate travel, hotel, and food and beverage costs

- **Visual and audio recording:** The meeting platform records visual as well as audio discussions, and there is no need for onsite recording and transcription

We described our philosophy for advisory boards in the white paper *Advisory Boards: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*. That philosophy hasn't changed:

1. Clearly define and agree on the objective.

2. Recruit participants with experience that matches the objective.

3. Conduct pre-meeting interviews to support development of the agenda and uncover questions that may be asked at the meeting.

4. Include company updates and answers to questions in the agenda.

5. Prepare and rehearse every aspect of the advisory board before the event.

6. Conduct a post-meeting evaluation to obtain feedback on the format and content.

Pre-meeting 1-on-1 interviews are an extremely important part of our process. We conduct them on behalf of our clients to optimize the agenda and uncover any issues that could disrupt discussions so that our clients can decide how to handle them prior to the event.

THE STARTING POINT IS THE SAME FOR BOTH LIVE AND VIRTUAL ADVISORY BOARDS

THE STARTING POINT FOR ALL ADVISORY BOARDS >

1 Agree on objectives & target profile

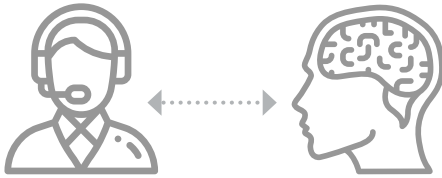**3** **Identify & recruit participants**
• Email invitations
• Telephone follow-up

2 **Execute CDAs**

4 **1-on-1 Telephone Interviews**
• Conducted by Medical Minds
• Multiple perspectives enrich agenda
• Uncover topics that could disrupt agenda

WHAT HAS CHANGED IS HOW WE STAGE THE MEETING

Conducting a virtual advisory board gives us more options to enhance engagement and obtain feedback. Typical live advisory boards are half- or full-day events; however, that doesn't work as well when you're asking an opinion leader to stay engaged while sitting in front of a computer. There are several potential solutions depending on the advisory board topics and objectives. Our strategies include:

• Segment the agenda into manageable, shorter meetings
• Create pre-meeting eLearning modules, with polls and surveys to collect specific data to present to the advisory board for discussion
• Minimize time spent online in meetings
• Add a fun element, for example, send a customized snack to enjoy during the meeting

EXAMPLE A: VIRTUAL CLINICAL STRATEGY ADVISORY BOARD
Virtual meetings on consecutive weeks build consensus over time

Topic A:
eLearning with polls and surveys

Summary report

Topic A:
1- to 2-hour virtual meeting

Topic B:
eLearning with polls and surveys

Summary report

Topic B:
1- to 2-hour virtual meeting

Topic C:
eLearning with polls and surveys

Summary report

Topic C:
1- to 2-hour virtual meeting

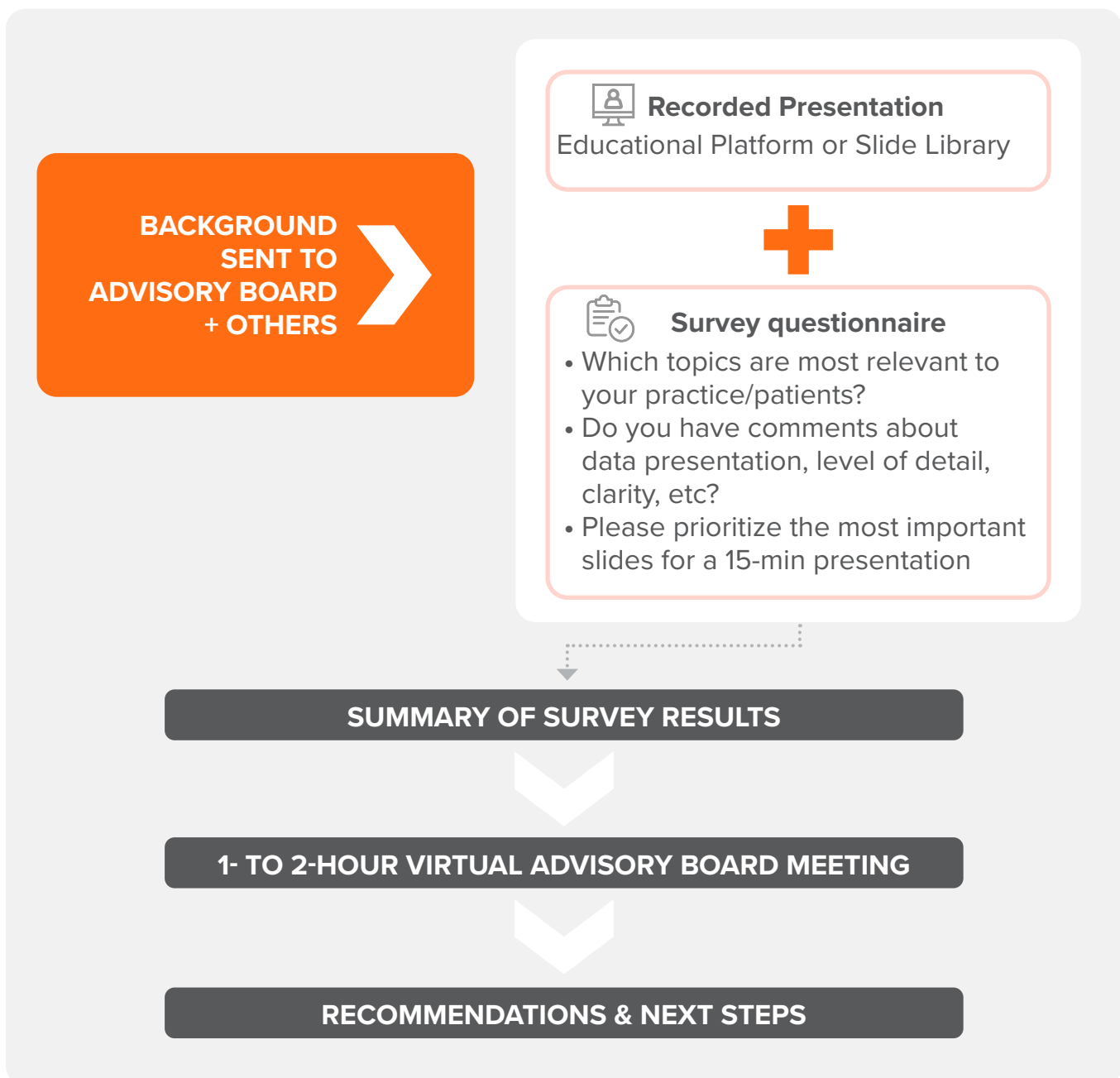**SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS SHARED WITH ALL PARTICIPANTS**

Typically, we provide a detailed backgrounder prior to a live advisory board. In this example of a virtual advisory board, we divide the background content into short eLearning modules with polls and surveys that participants are required to complete. Summary reports from each eLearning module serve as a foundation for advisory board discussions, which build through consecutive meetings. A summary of the discussion from each virtual advisory board meeting supports "group think" by giving participants the opportunity to think about complicated issues prior to the next meeting. If needed, complex issues can be clarified in 1-on-1 interviews between meetings.

Topics for a clinical advisory board depend on the stage. For first-in-human trials, for example, there might be 3 topics in this virtual model:

A. Target disease state(s): preclinical data, MOA, and potential disease states

B. Target patient profile: summary of topic A discussion plus options for patient profile

C. Clinical trial design: summary of topic B discussion plus options for trial design

EXAMPLE B: VIRTUAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ADVISORY BOARD

Unbiased opinions collected and summarized prior to discussion provide quantitative input for a short virtual meeting

BACKGROUND SENT TO ADVISORY BOARD + OTHERS 〉

Recorded Presentation
Educational Platform or Slide Library

+

Survey questionnaire
• Which topics are most relevant to your practice/patients?
• Do you have comments about data presentation, level of detail, clarity, etc?
• Please prioritize the most important slides for a 15-min presentation

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

1- TO 2-HOUR VIRTUAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

When we develop educational programs, we want to know what is most relevant to the target audience. Typically we start with national KOLs to get their input on foundational messages in an educational platform. Then we develop a slide library with input from the KOLs and test it with national and regional opinion leaders. At either stage, the above format can gather detailed feedback with minimal time spent online in a virtual advisory board meeting.

Recorded videos and PowerPoint presentations are presented by the clinical team and/or an investigator. The presentations are sent with survey questionnaires to advisory board participants and/or to a broader range of HCPs. The results from the surveys provide detailed quantitative input for presentation and discussion in a short virtual advisory board meeting where recommendations are made about next steps.

PRESENTER AND PARTICIPANT TRAINING IS CRITICAL

As in a live meeting, training and rehearsing is a critical element of a successful virtual advisory board. With the unique nuances of virtual platforms, it is especially important that everyone is prepared for their presentation role from a content and visual standpoint. A recorded training video is helpful for all participants, and rehearsals with the presenters ensure the most effective online presence. During the event, online technical support is a necessary and integral part of the virtual meeting.

TECHNICAL INSIGHT

Typically our advisory boards include up to 14 active participants—6 to 10 KOLs and 3 or 4 of our clients—plus observers. The technology platforms that we use allow:

- Online presence for up to 14 people
- The ability to feature individual speakers and their slide presentations
- Interactive discussion and poll questions
- A whiteboard to record and work on ideas
- A chat function
- An observation room for non-participants to view anonymously
- A moderator to keep the agenda on track and facilitate discussion
- A meeting producer to manage technical functions, including smooth running and recording of the meeting

A FINAL THOUGHT

In a successful advisory board—whether live or online—we achieve our objectives, validate our ideas, build relationships, and learn new information to support clinical and commercial success. When planned and executed well, virtual advisory boards have the potential to optimize engagement and feedback to deliver a better ROI than live meetings. So it's likely that we will keep them as an option in the future.

INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH US ON AN UPCOMING ADVISORY BOARD?