

CERTARA[®]

 **BASECASE**

The Effects of COVID-19 on Stakeholder Engagement & Value Communication: Preparing for the New Normal



INTRODUCTION

The global COVID-19 pandemic has affected the world in different ways, with many countries implementing lockdowns, border closures, and other movement and social restrictions. Within a very short space of time, the world went virtual. People began working from home, in-person business meetings were replaced by video calls, and businesses around the globe began their contingency planning.

In the life sciences industry, for example, we saw the postponement of many clinical trials, and when we turn our attentions to the stakeholder engagement and value communication space, many of our customers found themselves being refused entry into hospitals and doctors surgeries.

But, how are life sciences companies changing and adapting their stakeholder engagement strategies in response to COVID-19? Have the ways in which they communicate product value changed? How are field teams reaching customers and key stakeholders?

To get answers to these questions, we surveyed a variety of professionals that are involved in stakeholder engagement and value communication. Respondents included board members, C-Level executives, and VPs, all the way through to key account and territory managers. As well as also being from a variety of countries- such as the U.S., Germany, Canada, and the UK- throughout key regions, participants were from companies ranging from established tier 1 pharma and medical device conglomerates to emerging startups.

Once we'd accumulated the results, we then asked a few market access, stakeholder engagement and value communication experts to give their insight, and expand on some of the questions and key findings.



Post-COVID interactions with customers will have to move from information-based content to proposals with convincing value messages that truly add value and tackle the challenges faced by our stakeholders



– HEOR Manager

KEY FINDINGS

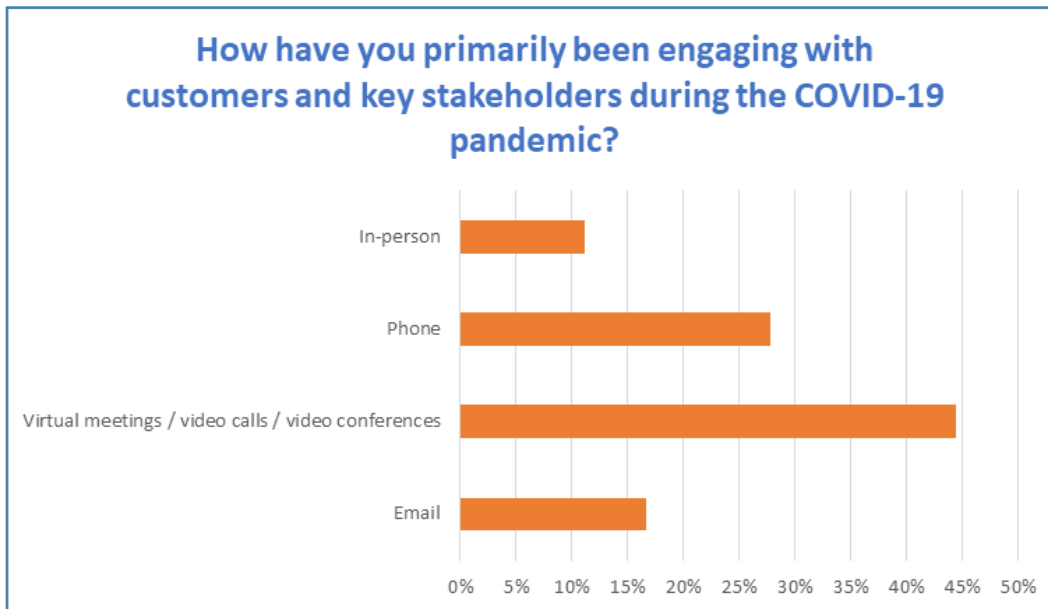
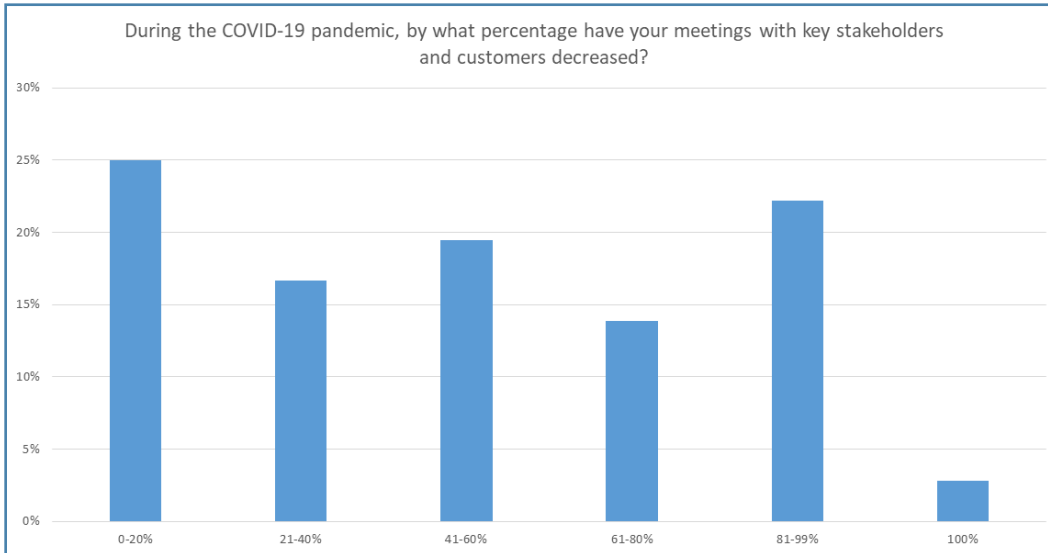
One of the first takeaways from the survey is, perhaps unsurprisingly, that most of the participants have been engaging with customers and key stakeholders using virtual meetings and video calls. This accounted for 44% of the total answers, increasing to 72% when adding those who indicated they were using phone calls as their most common form of engagement.

Perhaps surprisingly, however, 64% of respondents indicated that their experiences with virtual meetings compared to regular face-to-face engagements have been largely positive. With many indicating these types of meetings have been very efficient and, in some cases, easier to schedule than in-person meetings. On the other hand, those who indicated that they'd had more negative experiences mainly cited the impersonal nature of virtual meetings as their reasoning.

With the move to virtual engagements, there also seemed to be a focus on putting content online and making it more accessible and/or tailored as 78% of respondents stated they have been providing customers and key stakeholders with online resources to access on their own time, and 58% of participants said that the resulting restrictions of COVID-19 has led their company to investigate ways in which stakeholder engagement

content can become more tailored and/or accessible. A further 25% also stated that their company was looking to move from print-based engagement material to mobile-based presentations.

RESULTS



“It has been very regionalized, some states are wide open and the reps are just as busy as before. Some are in complete lock down and only essential activity is allowed. In addition, due to the pandemic, elective procedures have markedly decreased. 1/2 of our products are focused on elective procedures so this has severely hampered our growth and retention”

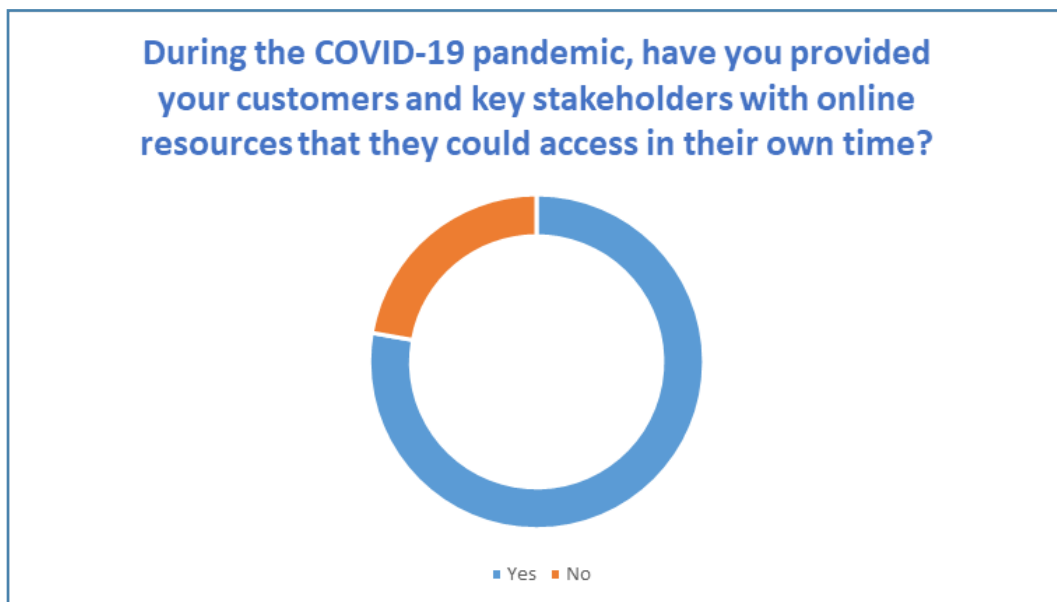
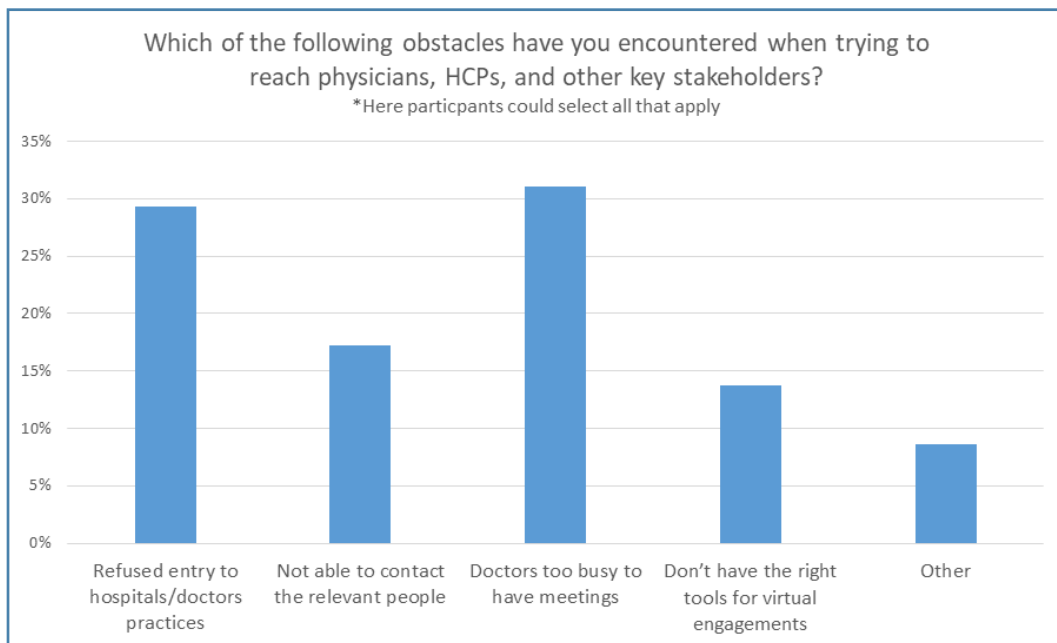
– Global Performance and Productivity Manager

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Our team provided intensive training sessions online which were very well received

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– HEMA Manager

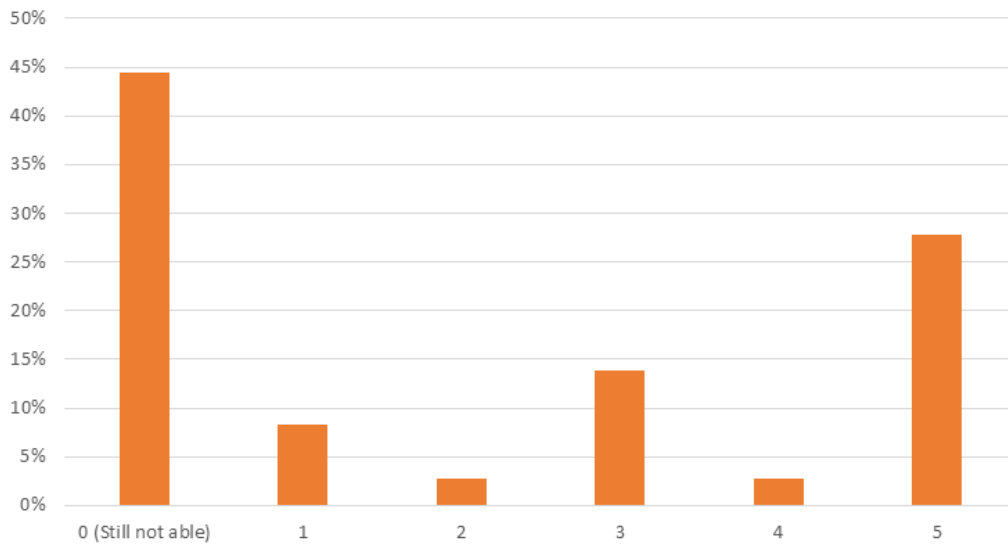


In what ways has the approach to customer engagement and value communication changed in your company during the pandemic?

- No change
- Moving from print-based material to mobile-based presentations
- Exploring more innovative pricing strategies
- Investigating ways to make content more tailored and/or accessible
- Other



As the world recovers from the pandemic, how many days per week are you able to go “into the field” to meet clients?



N=36



Eduardo Urbina, Director of Consulting

Eduardo Urbina joined Certara in 2015 and works directly with clients to help them develop value communication and stakeholder engagement tools. With vast experience in the health economics and market access fields, he has been involved in numerous projects for new drugs and medical devices in EU5 countries.

Some people indicated that in response to COVID-19, their company is looking into more innovative/value-based pricing strategies. Can you briefly describe some key components of a good strategy?

Before COVID-19, all across the globe healthcare costs were already rising. The pandemic simply accelerated this problem as already scarce resources were stretched even further.

Innovative and value-based pricing strategies were introduced in an effort to optimize resource spending, and so each one is different as it is based on a wide variety of factors. This means that the key components of a good strategy vary. However, what should be consistent is that the patient is at the center of the treatment. Other factors that can make for good strategies are broad access to care, a good IT infrastructure, and contracting models that reward quality improvement over volume.

Many respondents indicated they've been using virtual meetings to engage with key stakeholders. In your opinion, what is needed for a good virtual meeting?

It's no secret that COVID-19 has pushed a big portion of tech companies, if not all, into remote working. So this was always going to make life difficult for KAMs/ reps that need to schedule meetings with payers and hospital managers.

But there are numerous ways that companies can help their field-based teams have successful, engaging meetings. This is especially important as there are some elements of face-to-face meetings that simply can't be replicated in a virtual environment. And so, having the necessary mobile tools and content to keep audiences engaged is vital to maintaining attention and having a good virtual meeting.

It's been noted that such virtual meetings can actually last a lot longer than face-to-face meetings. Do you think this puts extra pressure on field teams to deliver clear evidence-based value messages? And why?

This definitely puts extra pressure on field teams. Especially as there are some elements, such as technical reliability, that are really out of their control. And touching back on the previous question, it's also easier for audiences to be distracted in a virtual meeting.

What's important is to have engaging mobile tools with good usability and clear take-away messages. Visualizations and interactivity can also go a long way to keeping audiences engaged, and involved in the discussion.

How do you think COVID-19 will impact the future of stakeholder engagement & value communication in life sciences industry?

For the time being and in the short-term, the vast majority of stakeholder engagement and value communication will be remote. Though this will, of course, depend on local regulations.

This will bring about many challenges as teams continue to adjust from a physical medium to a remote one. KAMs/ reps will need interactive, seamless, and "watertight" – from an evidence/

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– Eduardo Urbina

data perspective – tools that allow them to tackle these challenges and maintain smooth stakeholder engagements. And, for me, these new ways will remain just as relevant in the post-COVID world where even further innovation will be achieved in the ways we communicate value to stakeholders.



Shawn Bates, VP US Sales & Business Development

Shawn Bates joined Certara in summer 2020 after gaining almost 20 years’ experience working in the life sciences industry. Having held a variety of senior positions, his expertise lies in stakeholder management in the market access and medical affairs spaces.

Understandably, we’ve seen a lot of respondents indicating they have used virtual meetings to engage with key stakeholders during the COVID-19 restrictions. From your experiences, have these virtual meetings been positive or negative? And why?

Stakeholder and public engagement has changed radically in the last few months, and will likely never return to exact pre-COVID practices. One could say that virtual meetings are neither positive nor negative, they’re just different. In-person meetings are difficult to replicate completely, and the connections gained from them are invaluable. However, virtual meetings do offer degrees of face-to-face interaction, while also requiring less time and costs. That being said, virtual communications require more focus and engagement for them to provide the same level of impact as face-to-face meetings.

This is where Certara’s BaseCase platform shines. The platform facilitates this degree of focus and engagement to fill the gap left by reduced face-to-face interactions. With the principle of supporting genuine stakeholder engagement, our clients have maintained or strengthened the credibility of high stakes interactions by continuing to connect with decision-makers through creative means, utilizing the BaseCase platform.

Being refused entry into hospitals and doctors’ surgeries adds a different dynamic on traditional hurdles to not being able to meet with relevant decision-makers. How would you recommend approaching hurdles such as these and the approach of virtual engagements in general?

COVID-19 has created unique circumstances and important considerations for stakeholder engagements, which can differ wildly from one client to the next. We ourselves are adjusting to the pandemic in a variety of ways. But, most importantly, it is vital to maintain focus on the well-being of your stakeholders, clients, and patients.

Consider that all of your clients will have different needs and preferred methods of communication, availability, and bandwidth. Adapt to each on an individual basis, and offer support to meet their explicit needs. We create a balance for maintaining communication without being a burden. For us, we have found that our partnerships necessitate the need to build capacity and comfort for effective engagements in a virtual environment. As a result, we harness state-of-the-art technology to enable seamless stakeholder communication for our clients.

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– Shawn Bates

Some respondents outlined the differences between the U.S. states, with some seeing business proceed largely as normal and others experiencing total lockdown, but what consistencies have there been, and how does this affect stakeholder engagement?

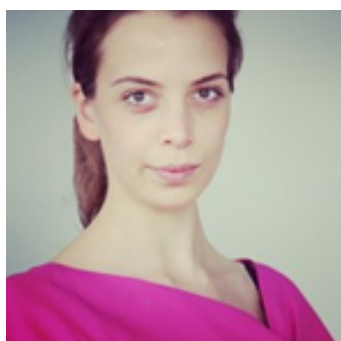
Each state across the country has different health and safety requirements based on the severity of COVID within their individual community. However, one premise is consistent. Now more than ever, remote engagements are the preferred method of communicating critical information in healthcare. Including, but not limited to, market access decisions, medical affairs communications, telehealth, critical decision-maker engagements, and medical education.

Combined with this, and in spite of continued restrictions, the treatment and support of patients within communities continues to be a priority. Thus, a need for much more focused, efficient, and engaging communication has grown exponentially. As part of the BaseCase team at Certara, we are striving to meet this need and support our clients as they continue to engage critical stakeholders and secure patient access to innovative therapies.

What are your expectations for how COVID-19 will affect the future of stakeholder engagement & value communication in the U.S.?

I am optimistic. It is the hope that we can all continue to challenge ourselves to “meet stakeholders where they are” during this challenging time. I’m a firm believer that with the intent of employing genuine value-based communication opportunities, we can achieve quality engagement. Certara’s BaseCase platform advances our clients capability to achieve this goal.

Ultimately though, we miss people... we want to see them in-person again... but only when it is safe to do so. For Certara and our partner clients, when this time comes, we will be engaging stakeholders with a renewed appreciation for in-person interactions and a refined, improved approach, to how we communicate product value, securing patient access to innovative life-saving therapies.



Atlanta Kassatly, VP of Consulting

Atlanta Kassatly joined Certara in 2013 and has been a key component to the development of successful client relationships. In her current role as the Vice President of Consulting, Atlanta manages the consulting department as a whole and oversees the development of the value communication tools built for clients.

While the vast majority of respondents indicated that they are providing key stakeholders with online resources via portals, many still aren’t doing this. What benefits do online resources bring, and why has COVID-19 increased their importance?

Irrespective of COVID-19, online resource portals are great for stakeholder engagement and distributing product information. People really are much more responsive to content when it’s interactive, user-friendly, easily accessible, and most of all, tailored to their specific needs. And, online portals make this possible! Another key benefit is the ease of management, with it often taking just a few clicks to update or revoke access to content.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we’ve seen more and more innovative methods of stakeholder engagement, and resource portals have played a key role in this as they allow audiences to access the content they want to see – on their own schedule. The content also doesn’t have to be limited to value or evidence communication. For example, many clients

have come to us requesting dosage calculators, patient/treatment timelines, and even event posters to be distributed using BaseCase Portal.

As global Market Access & Reimbursement teams prepare their value communication strategies, what key considerations should be taken into account in response to COVID-19?

There are many considerations, but what is important to note is that many impacts on the market access and reimbursement environment are still unknown. This does mean, however, that it is important for strategies to be adaptable.

One key thing to keep in mind is that, even though financial pressures in healthcare are not new, COVID-19 has accelerated the issue. This means that it'll be even more important for value messages to be clear, concise, and tailored, and also be well presented! Failure to do this could result in products being very low on the list of priorities. Other things to take into account could be the impact on clinical trials, changes in patient populations, and if real-world data can be used to plug any data gaps.

Many respondents indicated that their company was looking into ways to make their stakeholder engagement content more tailored and/or accessible. How would you recommend they go about this?

I cannot stress enough how important this is! Especially as making tailored and accessible content is not as difficult as people think! For tailoring, a key piece of advice is to look for ways you can incorporate the stakeholder's own data. Especially things like population and cost data that enable accurate ROI calculations during meetings.

Linking this back to the first question for accessibility, resource portals are a great way to get any type of content in the hands of stakeholders. A robust content management system is a great way to quickly distribute and manage the content field teams are using to engage with customers and key stakeholders.

And finally, in what ways do you expect life science companies to adapt their stakeholder engagement and value communication strategies in the post-COVID landscape?

I think many things are still "up in the air" right now. After all, no one is quite sure how long this will last, and local regulations differ considerably. If it continues long enough, could we see a permanent switch to virtual engagements?

In the short-term at least, it's about training. Companies need to ensure their field teams have the right materials and skills to deliver good quality virtual presentations to payers and providers. Strategies will also depend on the type of treatment, as we saw the vast majority of elective therapies being cancelled or suspended. So here, conveying the impacts of delayed treatment will be key to resuming patient care. A couple of other influences could be if people who have lost their jobs due to COVID-19 still have access to healthcare, and how to ensure that content is still getting seen by the right people at virtual conferences and alike.

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– Atlanta Kassatly



Certara's Better Drug Development Process

The drug development process is long and expensive with more failures than successes.

At Certara, we support confident decision-making throughout the entire drug development process with our gold-standard software and technology-enabled services, helping our partners to reduce cycle times, lower costs, and improve outcomes for patients. In fact, eleven regulatory agencies worldwide have adopted our Phoenix™ PK/PD and/or Simcyp™ PBPK Simulator software platforms, including the US FDA and EMA.

Our results speak for themselves. 90% of companies that received new drug approvals by the FDA in the past 6 years use our software or services.

To learn more about Certara visit: www.Certara.com

To learn more about Basecase, visit: www.certara.com/evidence-access/basecase-value-communication-software/

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