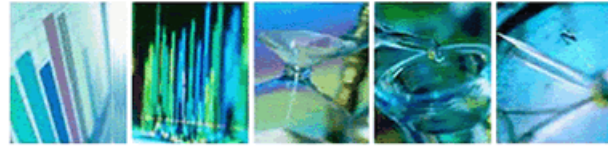




The
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Group



Strategic Solutions for Managed Markets

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How Do You Get More Out of Your Advisory Boards?

By *Nicole Dautel, Director of Tactical Offerings*

Typically, advisory boards can provide qualitative insights into managed care dynamics. But there is more that can be accomplished in bringing managed care customers together for a live meeting. By setting different and more ambitious expectations, marketers can gain tremendous strategic benefits, not only in terms of learning, but also in setting the groundwork for legitimately influencing major market forces.

It's about the focus – ask for more

Design the program content not only to generate insights, but to help develop programs and strategies, and even to determine how important market dynamics can be altered.

It's about the people – diversify

Include not only payers, but also some or all of the following: clinicians, PBMs or SPPs, employer representatives, patient advocacy groups, health economists or actuaries, academic experts, guidelines developers, and other key voices. The problem with an all payer group – or any homogeneous group – is that it tends to overstate its influence.

It's about the methods – keep participants engaged

In addition to the standard focus group format, programs should employ electronic polling, interactive exercises, case studies, ad hoc working groups, mock debates, written questionnaires, on-line surveys, and other techniques useful to meeting its objectives.

It's about the timing and frequency – build on past learnings

Rome wasn't built in a day and policy won't change that quickly either. Rather than meeting once and disbanding, design a true steering committee that provides input several times annually in a combination of on-site events, webcasts, teleconferences, internet surveys, and other ways.

TZG has developed and refined this approach over time into the National Steering Committee (NSC) model. Here is one recent example of how the NSC brings actionable results:

The client's product addressed an under-managed condition, but experts believe that better management could yield not only improved health outcomes, but overall cost savings. A regulatory change in the offering threatened to raise costs for commercial payers for the disease, the complications of which could be extremely expensive. TZG designed the NSC to include the national disease foundation and a specialty provider network as well as various major payers. At the first meeting there was no discussion whatsoever of the product; the entire focus was on the disease, its' (under) management, potential cost savings, and the probable impact of looming regulatory changes. At the dinner after the first day, representatives from the national foundation, the specialty provider network, and one of the country's largest health plans sat down with the client and sketched out a major demonstration project. The purpose of the project was to demonstrate conclusively that better and earlier management of the disease can improve outcomes and lower costs. Such evidence would greatly benefit the client's product, which as

market leader would be used heavily in early treatment for the disease. Planning for that project currently is under way.

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