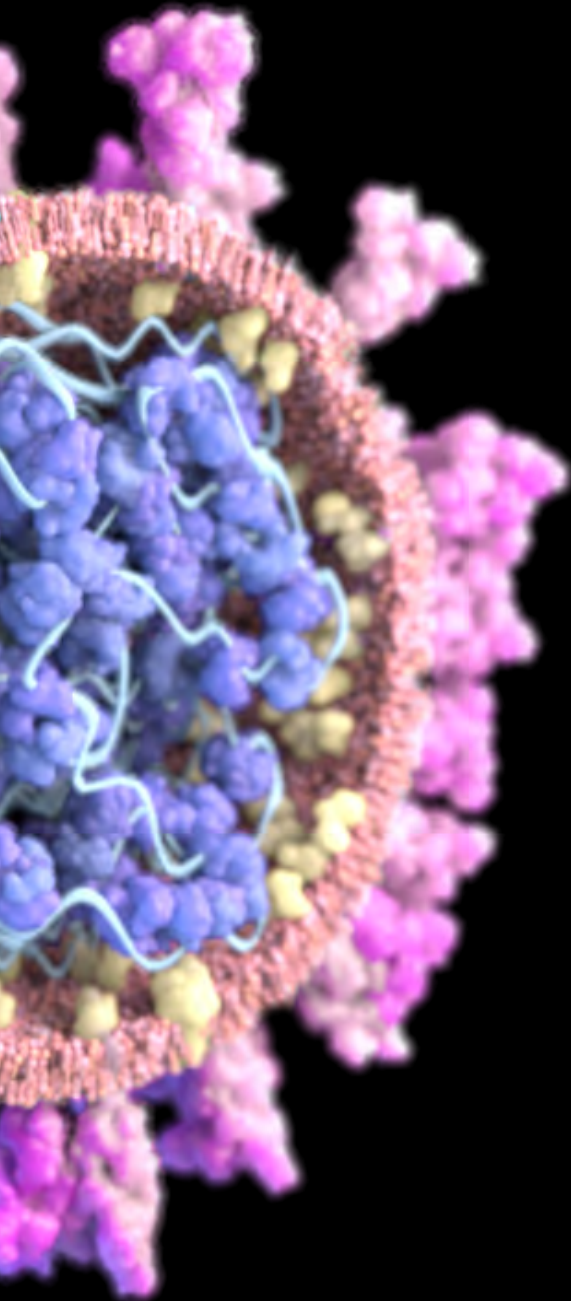




Four Ways to Engage External Stakeholders in the Post-Pandemic World

A Call to Action: Moving Toward An Integrated Strategic Stakeholder Engagement Plan

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The piece you're about to read is from Klick Health's Life (Sciences) After COVID-19 series, a collection of expert perspectives designed to inform and inspire the life sciences community for the coming changes and opportunities we anticipate as a result of this global health crisis.

We invite you to engage with a multitude of these viewpoints by seeking out other pieces from this series, including *Safe Today, Sick Tomorrow?* and *A Digital Canary in the Coal Mine for New COVID Variant* at **covid19.klick.com**.

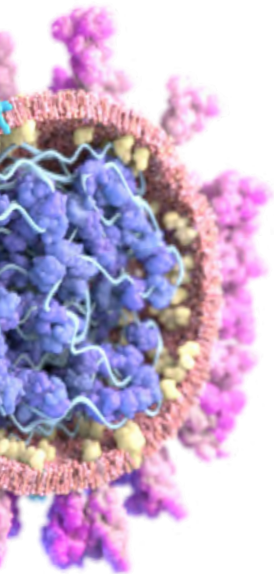
According to 2020 data from Medical Affairs and Professional Society, 40% of interactions will remain virtual, post-pandemic.

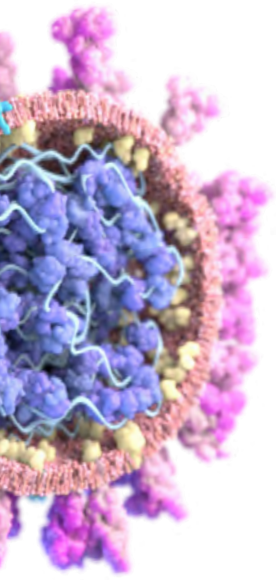
It's been over a year since the start of the global pandemic and we all went into lockdown. For pharma and biotech healthcare marketers, we have been working from home and living on Zoom to support our daily professional lives and in some cases, our personal lives too. We don't need a research study to know that virtual engagements have become the norm with conferences and conventions. But according to 2020 data from [Medical Affairs Professional Society](#), a projected 40% of interactions will remain virtual following the pandemic.

As summer quickly approaches for healthcare marketers, so does our engagement strategy and planning for 2022. Pharma and biotech depend on a wide range of stakeholders across commercial, medical and research-development. The successful engagement of these stakeholders requires an effective plan to maximize the impact of these relationships. An integrated approach with stakeholders, such as Key Opinion Leaders, Digital Opinion Leaders, Professional Medical Societies, Patient Advocacy Group and C-Suite Executives, can help unlock new opportunities and positively impact goals and objectives. So, what is the future of stakeholder engagement post-pandemic?



With the confluence of organizational and brand goals as well as the virtual engagement environment, now is the optimal time to come together with an integrated approach. The need for a strategic Stakeholder Engagement Plan to achieve mutually beneficial partnerships is critical. What was once all too often considered a nice-to-have component of our overall strategy has become essential to building the basis of a plan.





Foundational to the development of an effective strategic Stakeholder Engagement Plan to help take the industry into the “next normal” is the following four-point framework:

1. Connections:

Know your stakeholders

Continually refine your identification of traditional key external experts, digital opinion leaders and social media influencers in your stakeholder community. Conducting periodic and timely assessment of your 360-degree stakeholder ecosystem and analysis of your evolving network will be integral to your strategic engagements. Supporting the key imperatives of your stakeholder engagement plan will ensure mutually beneficial partnerships.

2. Contemporary Insights:

Know what your stakeholders think

Using data analytics, artificial intelligence, and geospatial mapping to move beyond traditional methodologies of stakeholder identification and intelligence gathering. Mining this data through innovative technologies and tools will result in faster data collection processes and greater efficiencies in analyses.



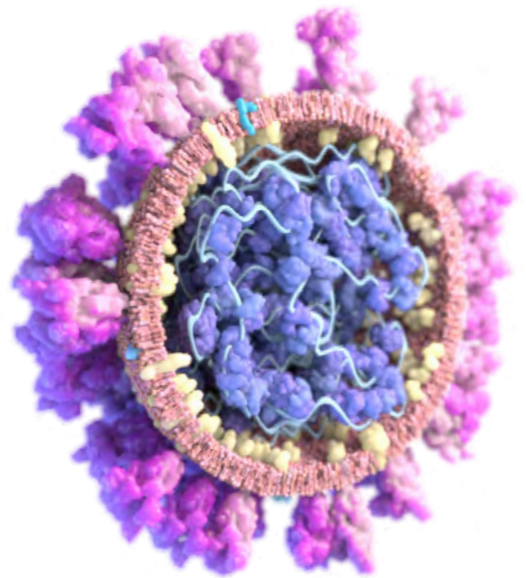
**3. Coordinated Collaboration:
Plan who needs to say what
to your stakeholders**

Implementing a new wave of organization effectiveness and transparently communicating stakeholder engagements are critical as more remote scheduled meetings impact your previously unplanned interactions. The informal stakeholder encounters of the past provided a venue for continuing conversations and building collaborations. You now need to be much more strategic with a planned intent to build these new and existing connections. Upskilling internal teams on new communication tools and software will be a critical investment for your future engagements.

**4. Crisis Preparedness:
Be ready for the unexpected**

Consistently communicating trust and transparency are essential to both internal and external stakeholder relationships. Clear, concise, and timely communications are the cornerstone of the stability of these relationships. Including crisis strategy and tactics within your stakeholder engagement plan is essential to your organization's reputation and its on-going relationship with its most important stakeholders.

Implementation of this framework is a call to action, which will require healthcare marketers to continue to move to a more integrated and transparent model. This framework can help address the current challenges in working remotely and ensure alignment of your most important internal and external stakeholders. The continued infusion of adaptability and resilience are critical to engaging with your key partners in the next normal.





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A global stakeholder relations strategist with over 25 years of industry experience,

Randi is part of Klick's expanding Policy & Advocacy practice. She has extensive expertise in conceiving, developing, and executing strategic frameworks that enable key external experts, patient advocacy, professional medical societies, payers, and C-Suite executives to deliver impactful outcomes that foster long-term, successful partnerships.



While change can create challenges, it also opens the door to new opportunities. Join us as we explore the many imaginable paths to post-pandemic growth. We welcome you to start a dialogue with the author of this piece:

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