



## Partnership with Payers: Communicating and Negotiating with Impact

Your product is barreling toward approval and you are on the cusp of bringing it to market and to the patients that need it most.

Your company has put enormous effort into developing your value proposition documents, slide decks, internal FAQs and objection handler booklets. This plethora of planning and information is disseminated to your Market Access and Medical Affairs teams across the globe. Then what?



As I mentioned in an **article on communications**, this flurry of activity is to no avail if your company does a poor job of interacting with payers. In addition to understanding the audience around the table and their goals, your company representatives must respond deftly to questions, clarify data, and communicate persuasively. Every interaction with decision-makers is an opportunity and certainly, when it's time to defend the value and negotiate pricing, excellence in communications is critical.

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### Know your audience and plan accordingly

With payers and HTAs (Health Technology Assessment) demanding increasingly compelling evidence that a new therapy or device improves standard of care and public health, companies need to create — and persuasively deliver — a convincing value proposition. What's the first step to delivering anything well? Know and respect your audience. Viewing the other party as an adversary will handicap you from the get-go, but aiming for a deep understanding of what patients, physicians, payers, and policymakers across the globe define as value is the initial stride that propels you toward success.

Once you have a clear understanding of your payer audience, it's important to plan carefully for your interactions. Depending on your company's experience with payer negotiations you may be able to do this in-house, but you may also find it useful to bring in consultants to support this process. Planning begins with a review of labeling, clinical & health economic data, and risk management plans, plotting an argument strategy, and composing a project plan for rollout and execution across markets. You've got your overall strategy in place? Great. How will you now convey and support your case for reimbursement?

Few people have the ability to fashion powerful arguments from complex scientific and economic data. The greatest barrier may be the curse of knowledge: You know too much! It's imperative that you bring in fresh eyes and subject matter experts to begin by analyzing your case for message flow and clarity, through the lenses of stakeholders and market environments. In the case of Europe, this encompasses a number of payer archetypes and expectations particular to countries and even domestic regions. You and your team may have a profound understanding of local market realities and standards. Partnering with independent experts will enable you to tailor your focus and storyline to your audience and make a persuasive case for reimbursement.

## Align your teams and prepare to win

In addition to having the case ready, you must ensure alignment across affiliates, enabling consistency in messages and story as your teams prepare for face-to-face meetings with decision makers. Presenting your core value proposition to payers and assessors is both challenging and stressful. In this final, vital step to reimbursement you need to bring together the affiliates and train your teams to deliver with confidence.

It's critical to invest in your people on the ground, to ensure value story consistency and that your Market Access teams deliver your value proposition with impact, engage persuasively and negotiate skillfully. Once the teams are aligned, they need to stand and deliver, which requires sophisticated communications techniques, training and practice in order to win with payers, physicians, policymakers and HTAs worldwide. Bringing in external scientific communications strategists and coaches should be a part of that plan to make sure that your teams are prepared to present that case with power and authority, and respond deftly to any and all questions.

How do you master any skill? Practice, practice, practice. Objection handling workshops, team coaching and training are all key elements of preparing to negotiate with confidence. It's wise not only to prepare and rehearse potential objections and responses, but also to test your messages and delivery in a realistic setting with payer representatives.

Bring in an objective, multidisciplinary expert panel to review your core documents prior and then employ them to test your argument in a mock negotiation rehearsal. There is nothing like live-fire discussion and Q&A to pressure test your strategy and core value arguments. Getting your team on their feet and in front of experts not only allows them crucial practice delivering a structured narrative and engaging with agility, but also provides candid and invaluable feedback. External experts will help you to identify remaining gaps and develop constructive solutions before the teams "go live" before payers.

As you move forward to bring your product to patients, make sure you empower your teams on the ground to represent your product and handle objections with sureness and flexibility. Begin by understanding your payer audience and considering your conversation with them the apex of an essential partnership. In order for your teams to communicate clearly and with great impact you must sharpen and align your messaging, strengthen your delivery, and engage positively. Then, together, you will clear the final hurdle to improved patient care and reimbursement.

## How we can help

NDA Group has successfully prepared hundreds of client teams for high-stakes interactions with regulatory bodies, payers and assessors. Our team — ex-regulators, communications strategists and coaches, regulatory and HTA experts, and presentation/technology specialists — bring critical experience, skills and expertise to help clients succeed. We combine a deep understanding of scientific and regulatory audiences and a mastery of communications tools and techniques to prepare clients for key interactions with the decision-making authorities worldwide.

We support every element of payer negotiation preparation – strategy, messaging, objection handler development, Q&A and presentation skills training. NDA Group's Advisory Board, composed of former payers and members of HTA, can give your team the extraordinary opportunity to pressure test your case in interactive mock sessions and provide actionable feedback to help teams strengthen materials and communication skills.

We excel at helping our clients deliver an argument with impact. We have a passion for helping scientists communicate clearly, confidently and persuasively to give the product the best possible chance for success.

NDA Group provides:

- Document review, strategy / messaging
- Interactive Workshops
- Team Alignment and coaching
- Q&A Preparation and Rehearsals
- Mock payer negotiations and Debrief
- Project Management

**Contact us to explore how we can help you prepare to win.**