

How to Engage Thought Leaders to Accelerate Healthcare Insights

Presence, activity, and audience: the anatomy of today's KOL

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As all marketers know, every customer counts. And as all good marketers know, not all customers are alike.

Some have big budgets, others are working with modest means. Some are early adopters, others are inclined to hold back with little wish to be at the leading edge of market adoption. Some are loyal, others less so.

One of the most effective ways to navigate this multiplicity of behaviors and characteristics is through trusted third parties — key opinion leaders (KOL) that are known, respected, and trusted within the healthcare market.

At IQVIA OneKey, we talk about accelerating industry insights with thought leaders, and it was a theme I wanted to explore when we hosted a [LinkedIn Live session](#) earlier this year. Bringing together healthcare professionals and those looking to reach them, my colleague Chris Lundgren and I fielded a range of questions on the topic of thought leadership in a lively 35-minute session.

I pointed out how the practice of identifying appropriate KOLs to contribute insights that support specific discussions has changed over time. Evaluating the right voices has evolved from purely focusing on scientific criteria — articles authored, conference appearances, clinical trials, patents, grants, and so on. Today, that critically important criterion is matched by a digital presence. It's not enough to do the work alone; online resonance matters, too.

As such, IQVIA OneKey monitors 500,000 websites, 10 million online articles, 19 million tweets, and 5.5 million videos globally. Clinical and medical expertise remains absolutely crucial, but today, it needs to be combined with digital and social media reach. To that end, we are interested in three things when it comes to identifying a modern-day opinion leader: presence, activity, and audience.

Thanks to the increased impact of digital and social media, new and emerging experts are proving increasingly influential, some of whom customers might not have previously considered as a thought leader.

The points I made in the [LinkedIn Live discussion](#) are dealt with in more detail in IQVIA OneKey's recently published eBook, '[Extend, Connect, Understand: A Practical Guide to Getting the Most Out of Healthcare Data](#)'. In it, we explore the rationale behind using national, regional, and local thought leaders. We boil it down to five foundational truths:

1. Thought leaders communicate complex scientific messages effectively.
2. Thought leaders are trusted advisors and translate science into practice.
3. Network insights are critical for product launch adoption and excellence.
4. Thought leaders are critical to engagement across commercial and medical teams.

The importance of online peer-to-peer interactions has increased as digital communication has become a preference and necessity.

When you leverage a KOL, it energizes your brand, helping you increase engagement with every potential customer, regardless of their behaviors and characteristics.

[To learn more, download 'Extend, Connect, Understand: A Practical Guide to Getting the Most Out of Healthcare Data' now.](#)

To watch the IQVIA OneKey 'Healthcare Data Strategies for Today's World' LinkedIn Live session on demand, [click here.](#)

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