



# The 7 Essentials of Successful Health Economic Communication

# Why is good communication of health economics so important?

In an era of continued pressure on healthcare budgets, the role of health economic data has never been more important to advance your product. Yet the contribution these data make to rational decision-making can be undermined by incomprehension, skepticism and even hostility from outsiders—including colleagues, commentators and healthcare decision-makers. What steps can be taken to address this problem and ultimately help deliver successful products to patients?

## At Labcorp, we believe in the power of data to advance your product.

To support your efforts, we're sharing our experience with successfully communicating health economic data. We invite you to use these logical steps as a framework for all your communication activities—both internally and externally—to help your audiences better hear, understand and act upon the information you present to them.



### 1 DEFINE WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE

At the start of any communication activity, you need clear goals. What do you want your audience to think or do as a result of what you tell them? For example, do you want to:

- **optimize reimbursement and uptake** for a new technology?
- **increase your colleagues' understanding and appreciation** of health economic data?
- **secure additional funding** for your department?
- **demonstrate a novel approach** to an analysis to your peers?

Your objectives will provide a focus for your communication. By knowing your goals, you can direct your activities toward achieving them.

### 2 IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

Having defined what you want to achieve, you need to work out who you need to communicate with to reach your goals. Suppose you are trying to optimize reimbursement and uptake for your company's new technology. Who might be involved in decisions related to its market access? Within a single healthcare system, there may be hundreds, or even thousands, of stakeholders who make or

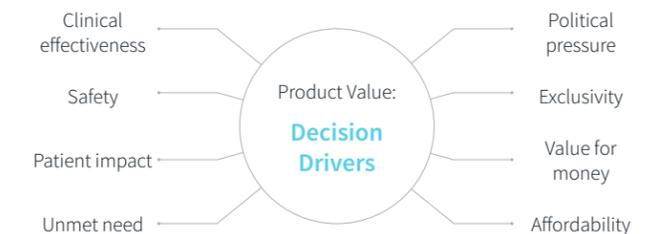


influence such decisions, such as clinicians, pharmacists, medical directors, budget holders, insurance plan managers and other third-party payers. Beyond these stakeholders, employers, politicians, patients and even the media can influence decision-making.

To add to this complexity, the identity of the audience can vary widely between countries, and even between regions within a single country. Accordingly, identifying the groups who need to be reached in order to achieve your goals can be challenging. Nevertheless, it is a key stage in planning communication activities.

### 3 KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Having identified your audiences, you need to understand them. What does your audience consider to be important when making decisions? If you are trying to optimize product usage, you will be communicating with audiences that make judgments about the relative clinical and economic value of the product. There are a number of product-related factors they may take into account when making this judgment, such as:



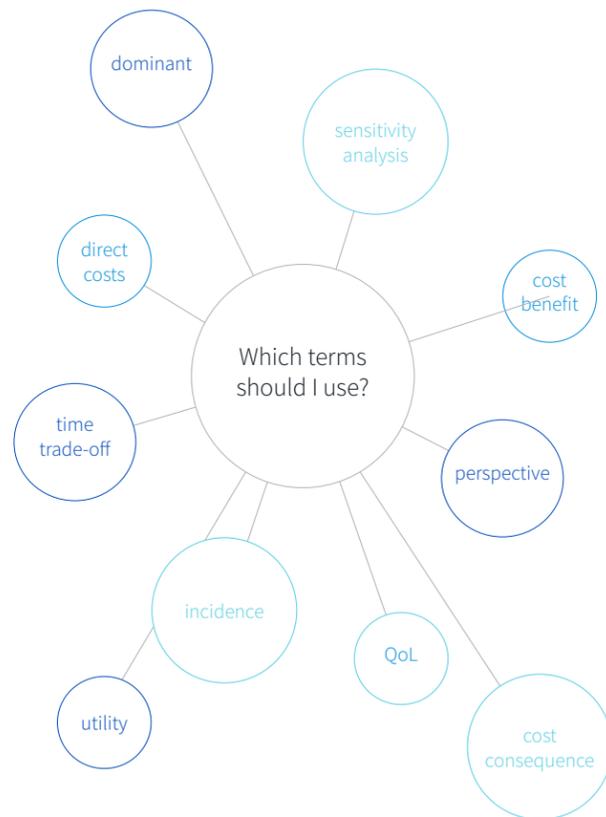
The relative importance of these decision drivers will vary between stakeholders. For example, a health technology assessment (HTA) agency with a remit to assess the cost-effectiveness of products may focus on value for money, while a pharmacist managing regional pharmacy budgets is likely to be more concerned about the affordability of the product. When communicating with multiple stakeholders, you need to be aware that they each have their own viewpoint and will consider different factors when making decisions.



#### 4 DECIDE WHAT TO SAY

Deciding what to say to your audience involves tailoring your communications based on their interests. For example, messages relating to cost-effectiveness may resonate with an HTA agency, but be irrelevant to a regional budget holder.

It's also important to know what you want your audience to take away from the communication—in other words, the message. By building communication around messages, you can help ensure that evidence is interpreted by your audience in the way you intend.



#### 5 SAY IT APPROPRIATELY

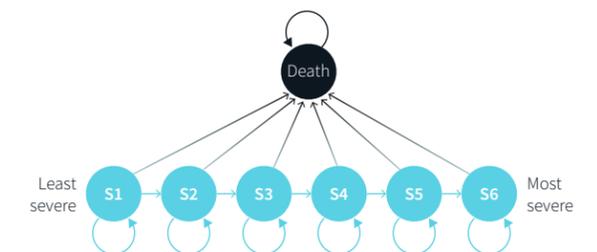
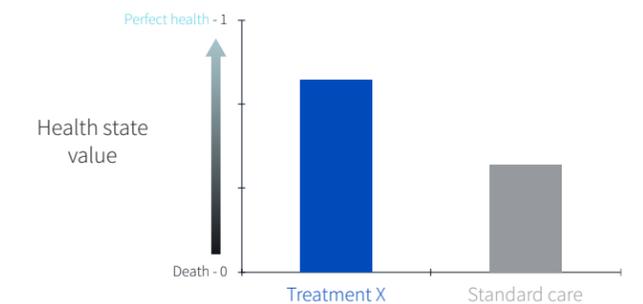
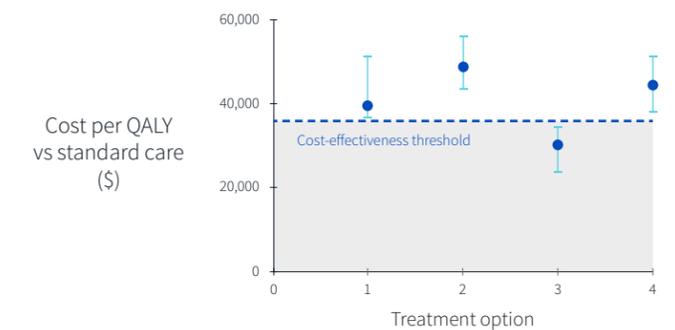
A key part of appropriate communication is to talk to audiences using terms they understand. Many of your stakeholders will have little, if any, health economic training. As a result, your audiences may be unfamiliar with, or will misinterpret, specialist health economic terms. This can make communication of health economic evidence challenging, but it doesn't mean you cannot communicate with your audiences. Rather, you need to consider the language you use and ensure your audience will be able to understand what you tell them. For example, without training in health economics, many stakeholders are unlikely to understand what is meant if they are told that "a new technology dominates the current standard of care." However, if they are told "the product achieves better clinical outcomes at a reduced cost compared to the current standard of care," this may improve the interpretation of your information.

Another aspect of appropriate communication relates to the choice of medium. Your audience can be reached through many channels, such as manuscripts, HTA submissions, field force activities, conferences, and websites. To effectively communicate with an audience, you need to understand what media they will be exposed to and may respond to. For example, there is little point in presenting your data on a website if your intended audience is unlikely to visit it.

#### 6 MAKE AN IMPACT

The most effective communication makes an impact and is clearly understood. Graphics, rather than text, can often be the best way to convey data and can support the communication of complex information, such as the design of a Markov model or the results of a cost-utility analysis. However, you need to ensure that graphics can be easily interpreted. This can often be achieved through simple signposting. For example, you could add an arrow to indicate the positive direction of change when using a patient-reported outcomes scale, or labeling the ends of an axis, to demonstrate a utility scale of "perfect health" and "death."

Another way of optimizing impact is to remove information that is not required. When developing any communication piece, you should ask yourself "what can I delete?" In some cases, a certain level of detail may be necessary, such as the content of a thorough and robust HTA submission. However, it is important to be able to distinguish between the information that is necessary to convey a message, and information that detracts from clear understanding of the message. As hard as it may be, you should consider that deleting extraneous information can add to the overall readability and accessibility of your communications.





## 7 TELL A STORY

Audiences naturally respond to a story, and health economic evidence is best communicated if structured as a narrative. This means that messages should be presented as a logical, progressive series of ideas.

We believe that all types of communication can tell an effective story. For example, the conventional structure of a manuscript forms a natural narrative. The introduction explains current knowledge of a topic and the need for new research, which is followed by the methods and the results. Finally, the results are discussed in the context of the introduction. Economic models can also be presented to tell a story. For example, inputs can be entered in a logical, step-by-step manner before clearly signposted results are presented. This approach makes models easier to understand, which can, in turn, lead to greater acceptance and understanding of the results by the audience.

By telling a story, you can engage with your audience. And if your audience is engaged, it is more likely to listen to, and respond to, the messages you are communicating. When your messages have been tailored to resonate with the audience, you are likely to achieve the objectives you initially identified as the goals of your communication.

Labcorp can offer deep experience delivering innovative solutions, designed to dynamically explore and unlock your compound's market potential—from discovery through commercialization and beyond. Our specialists are here to partner with you to help transform your data into actionable insights, revealing opportunities to better build value in your product and make a difference for patients.



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