

# The Evolution of Biopharmaceutical Speaker Training

*Identifying the Best Training Options for Your Speaker's Bureau*

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# The Evolution of Biopharmaceutical Speaker Training

## Identifying the Best Training Options for Your Speaker's Bureau

The debate continues within the healthcare communications industry regarding speaker training. What is the best method and frequency for training speakers? How have the last several years changed the dynamic, and in what direction will the industry progress? In this day and age of biopharma cost-cutting, government regulations, emerging technology, and industry oversight into each program presented by contracted speakers, thorough speaker training is a must. No one seems to debate the need for speaker training. How it's administered, and how often, are the key questions. Choosing the right combination of training options for your program and speaker's bureau will ensure that your speakers are informed, active, and supported throughout the lifecycle of your product.

Today, despite the logistical challenges that remain due to the lingering global pandemic, many companies are still trying to decide which format is best for their speaker's bureaus—live training, in-person training, or on-demand training. A Vision2Voice internal analysis has shown that biopharma companies offering multiple forms of training have significantly more satisfied speakers than companies that offer a single training option. Satisfied speakers are more engaged, which results in presenters that are more knowledgeable, better prepared, and who make a stronger impact. This white paper will review the advantages and disadvantages of the various speaker training offerings that may aid in the development of contracted speakers.

The purpose of speaker training is to get the most out of your contracted speakers so they can deliver speaker programs with impact. Effective speaker programs should provide a forum for local clinicians to learn enough about a product to determine which of their patients are most appropriate for any given therapy. Remember that biopharma products are designed for the patient, and clinicians will use this information to make the right choices

for their patients. Providing the best possible forum with concise communication, clear messaging, and patient-focused discussions with influential speakers traditionally has a much greater effect than forums lacking those key elements. Taking advantage of those elements by training speakers using methods that employ adult learning principles and offer enough flexibility is an approach that has been proven to be the most effective. The speaker training landscape has evolved significantly in recent years with new developments in technology and compliance resulting in many biopharma companies reevaluating their speaker-training strategies. Finding the right strategy or combination of strategies for your training program will improve retention and strengthen your speaker's bureau for years to come.

### Live, In-Person Speaker Training

Let's begin with live, in-person speaker training. This type of speaker training within the biopharma and medical device industries is a requirement because so much can be accomplished toward staying compliant and building on your brand objectives. The opportunity to meet with your contracted speakers, at least once a year, to review slides and product messages, preview upcoming studies or indications, discuss compliance requirements, and practice speaker skills are all paramount to the success of your speaker programs. Live speaker training events also provide brand managers with a chance to seek out rising stars, determine the strength of individual speaking skills, assess speaker's scientific and clinical insights, determine who are the brand champions, and even hand-pick speakers for national initiatives.

Live settings provide more opportunities for networking, inclusive group conversations, and brainstorming sessions which can lead to greater engagement and retention of information. It's easier to keep someone's full attention when you are able to interact



face-to-face. There's a sense of connectivity and camaraderie that is difficult to replicate in a virtual environment.

While the advantages of live speaker training abound, there are drawbacks to live training as well. Due to the costs of air travel, hotel, consulting fees, and many other expenses, this option is typically the most pricey. The events are not only costly, they require more planning and lead time for the pharmaceutical company. It often takes several weeks, or even months, to draft the agenda, plan the full curriculum, create slides, select speakers, and support their presentation development—and, in many cases, gain internal legal or regulatory approval for content. Live training takes more time for the speaker, too, who may have to travel a significant distance and spend time away from their work and personal life. Oftentimes, these conflicts preclude their ability to attend set meeting dates.

## Virtual Live Speaker Training

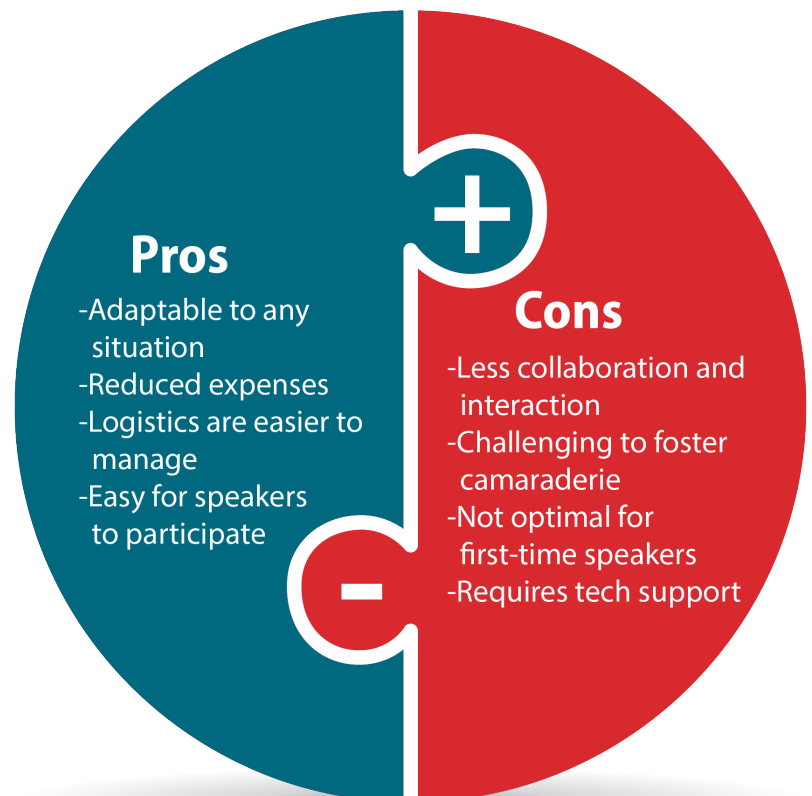
While there are many advantages of live speaker training, there are enough disadvantages that justify the need to offer other options, either alone, or in tandem with live speaker training. The single biggest benefit of virtual live training is its ability to adapt to almost any situation. Virtual live training allows for a training to take place despite unpredictable events such as severe weather, changing schedules, and, yes, even a pandemic.

Virtual live events offer the most flexible and convenient speaker training option, even allowing for training to take place over multiple sessions, if needed. The logistics of virtual training overall are much easier to manage. There are no space limitations to restrict the number of speakers in attendance and, with no travel involved, it takes less time to plan and execute. Additionally, speakers no longer have to worry about fitting training into their schedule as they can simply log in from the comfort of their own home or office. Simply put, virtual live speaker training is much easier to conduct and can come together much quicker.

Most virtual platforms offer interactive program options that drive engagement. While interactive activities are possible at an in-person event through smartphones, virtual activities like

polling, Q&A, knowledge checks, and attestations are typically built into the platform and allow easy access for attendees.

Conducting speaker training on a virtual platform comes with several logistical details that don't need to be considered in a live setting. Identifying the optimal platform for your training is the best way to guarantee a successful program. That's where having a trusted partner with experience conducting virtual training programs is highly recommended. The platform you choose should accommodate your requirements for the participant's experience from custom branding, granular audio/video permissions, and messaging, to custom layouts, polling, diverse content-sharing options, and even breakout rooms for collaboration. Additionally, it must also include all the necessary tools for tracking, compliance, and reporting.

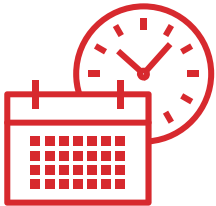


In addition to convenience, cost is another major factor that makes virtual live speaker training very attractive. Aside from eliminating travel, lodging, meals, and several other expenses that come with live, in-person training, many other costs are reduced. For example, virtual training takes up considerably less of a speaker's time, resulting in lower speaker honoraria fees.

The biggest disadvantage of virtual live training is the absence of the personal, face-to-face interaction and networking that is possible in live, in-person training. Worth noting is that most virtual platforms are aggressively making improvements to address this issue and are getting better and better at supporting greater interaction and collaboration among attendees. Another disadvantage is that technology issues will also inevitably arise from time to time which might require additional support staff for a virtual training.

## On-Demand Speaker Training

There's always going to be a percentage of speakers that can't make it to a live event, whether it be in-person or virtual. Having an on-demand training platform has become an invaluable tool that organizations are using more and more, which adds great value to your training program for several reasons:

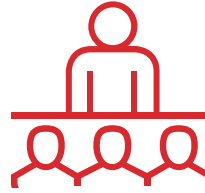


### Speakers Tend to Be Busy

Not all speakers can commit to a pre-arranged meeting date. They are busy people. Family activities and other social or professional commitments keep average attendance to live speaker training at less

than 100%. Your speakers are typically pulled in many directions from their clinical practice, to their university and/or hospital affiliations, not to mention their educational efforts with your company and others. Sending them away for 2 days, and sometimes more, can be a major burden. On-demand reduces their time burden from days to hours. It allows speakers to complete training at their convenience, instead of asking them to

adjust their schedule. Overall, this flexibility results in a higher percentage of speakers being trained on time.



### Speakers Can Be Added Mid-Training

In an ideal world, all speakers are contracted to work with your brand once per year and they are all added to your process during the same window. Unfortunately, it doesn't always work out that way, and sometimes it's necessary to add a speaker when live training isn't available. Offering an on-demand training option provides the opportunity for these individuals to learn about the medical, regulatory, and legally approved messages from your organization anytime of the year.



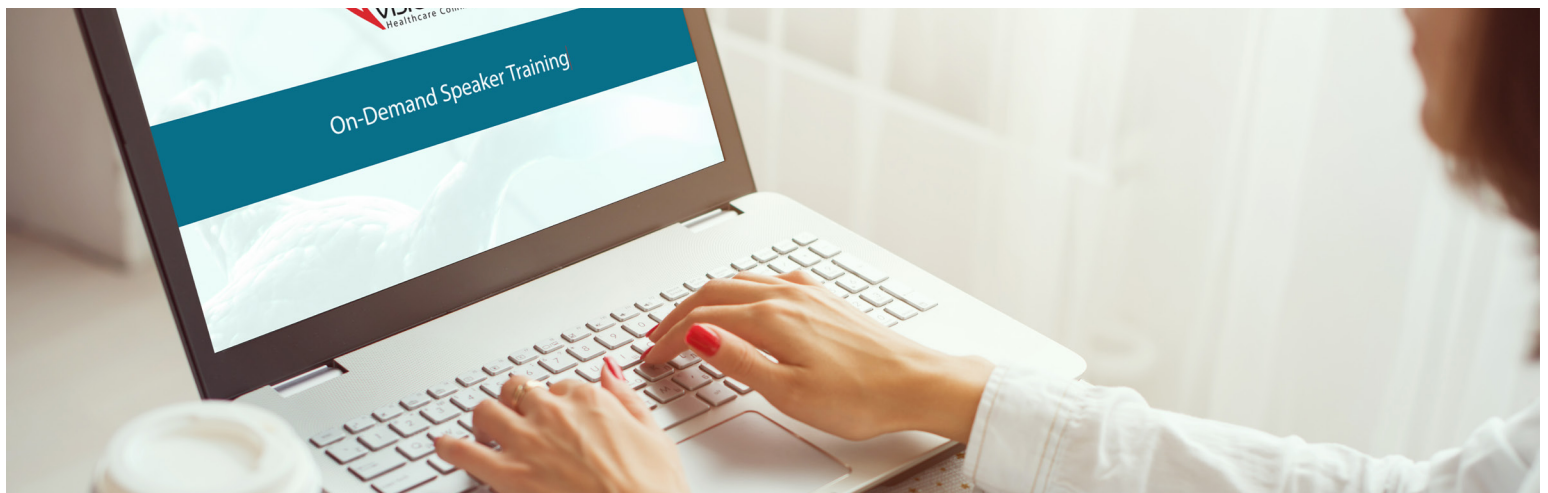
### Speakers Are Trained at a Lower Cost

According to Cutting Edge Information—a market research company that specializes in collecting and analyzing fair market value data—speaker honoraria are 60% to 85% lower for on-demand training/events. Not to mention you won't have to pay travel costs. You can get the information you need to your speakers effectively, and at a lower cost.



### You Can Focus on What's Really Vital

On-demand training allows you to highlight what's truly important. Live training offers terrific insights into the brand, methods of improved speaking, a means of getting to know your speakers personally, and a terrific forum for questions and answers. On-demand training can accomplish much of the same while focusing on what's truly critical—to ensure that those who just can't make your live training meeting will come away with the same valuable information.



With a much lower cost, less time required for program development, less time away for speakers, and more control over the content, some measure of on-demand training is a must-have for most speaker's bureaus. However, the quality of the content and virtual platform interactivity is often dependent on the partner agency selected. Some agencies are highly creative and can provide a broad array of interactive program options to support adult learning principles. In addition, on-demand training doesn't allow for the same interactivity between the brand team and the speakers that live training allows. As a result, agency selection plays a tremendous role in the outcome of the program for both virtual live and on-demand training.

Pharma brand leaders who have chosen to add on-demand speaker training to their speaker training mix have received great feedback from their speakers. It helps those very busy speakers to get what's required, it saves the pharma company honoraria and travel costs, it allows speakers to be added mid-cycle, and importantly, it can serve as a method to update speakers throughout the year who just happen to want a refresher before conducting a speaker talk.

## Which Type of Training Is Right for Your Bureau?


When determining the right mix of training for each product, you should look at the product, the complexity of the data being presented, the size of the bureau, budgets, and time constraints as a few of the key decision drivers. The old practice of having a single form of training seems to be a thing of the past. Your speaker's bureau will likely require a mix of different training formats to ensure that your speakers successfully complete the training process on time.

**Live, In-Person Speaker Training** is traditionally the best way to kick off your training for a new product or speaker's bureau. Bringing people together in a collaborative and collegial fashion especially for a launch or a new bureau, has always been an effective way to ensure engagement and encourage

face-to-face collaboration. In a smaller bureau, it's generally easier to coordinate frequent in-person trainings, but a large bureau is where virtual live and on-demand options are most likely going to become utilized as a supplemental resource due to logistics.

**Virtual Live Speaker Training** is a popular alternative to live, in-person programs. Online meetings have become commonplace and most healthcare professionals are accustomed to virtual interactions on a variety of streaming platforms. With content optimized for a virtual environment driving engagement combined with the many interactive tools available today, virtual live training has evolved into an extremely effective resource for speaker training. Also, from a budgetary and logistics perspective, virtual live training is a very attractive option for both biopharma companies and their speakers.

**On-Demand Speaker Training** is the most cost-effective training option available that can be used as a primary or supplemental tool to train speakers who cannot attend an in-person or virtual training. The schedule flexibility, easy tracking, knowledge checks, and attestation offered by an on-demand training platform makes it a natural choice for most brands to combine with in-person training, virtual training, or, in many cases, both. In the event that you have a few slide updates, on-demand is the most effective way to allow speakers to conveniently train and maintain an active status with very little disruption to their regular schedule. Additionally, having an on-demand training program provides speakers with a central location to access approved assets in a controlled environment, ensuring that they always have the most recent version of presentation materials.

In conclusion, there is no "one-size-fits-all" formula for conducting speaker training. Each brand is unique and has specific needs to be met in order to maximize effective training, and, ultimately, lead to more successful speaker programs and better patient care. With the shift to virtual programs—an outcome influenced by the pandemic—there is an opportunity to reset and refine speaker training initiatives now and in the future. 

*The goal of speaker training is to deliver unifying, accurate, and inspiring messages to HCPs. Vision2Voice can assist your brand in managing your speaker's bureau from the ground up. Our team of experienced healthcare communications experts will consult with you to create a customized training plan that incorporates the right mix of in-person, virtual, and on-demand training that meets your brand objectives while training your speakers on time and on budget.*

Want to learn more?

Call **773-993-0393**, email [info@vision2voice.com](mailto:info@vision2voice.com), or visit [www.Vision2Voice.com](http://www.Vision2Voice.com).

