

## **Case History: European patient group capacity building – strategic planning workshop.**

### **Lupus**

#### **Challenge**

As part of a long-term strategy, a company with a strong patient centric culture and an experimental treatment in late phase II needed to reach out and establish a sustainable partnership with the European patient group. The company had no previous involvement in the therapeutic area. The patient group had little experience of working with pharma since there were no new drugs in the area for over 50 years. Treatment was not covered in the patient group's manifesto nor was there a long term strategic plan guiding the group. The company needed patient insight to help guide phase III and to start building the partnership as soon as possible.

#### **Solution**

Following a long-term advocacy strategy discussion with the client, and mindful of the potential compliance challenges, Commutateur proposed a strategic planning workshop with an innovative twist. A workshop structure and format were agreed with the patient group to identify shared aims and common challenges. The two-day workshop would be facilitated by an external agency who only worked with NGOs and with a co-facilitator from a European MS group who had previous experience of the challenges the European lupus group faced. Extensive pre-workshop briefing was undertaken with the different delegates.

The client presented at the start of the workshop and then left the group. This created a very safe “space” conducive to the creation of a long term strategic plan addressing key patient challenges. Results of the two-day workshop along with areas of common aims and partnering opportunities were presented back to the client at the end of the workshop.

#### **Results**

The workshop format and outcome vastly accelerated the time normally taken to build a trust-based, transparent relationship with a patient group. This created a true sustainable partnership which allowed additional advocacy projects addressing burden of disease and psycho-social type challenges faced by patients to be undertaken.

*“Turning the patients’ voice into messages supporting the overall strategy is easier said than done. With the company Commutateur we performed an in-depth GAP analysis and defined the patient advocacy strategy with a patient centric approach, leading to better understanding of the patients’ needs on Global, European and local country level, defining and executing of projects serving PRO, regulatory and market access strategy, but most importantly simply listen to the patient. Working with Nick Hicks is an eye-opener and it feels like he is part of your team!”*

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