

How to partner with established doctors

Aspivix



The Technology: A Substitute to a Pain and Bleeding-Inducing Treatment

Aspivix is a MedTech venture based in Switzerland. The company has developed an alternative to the traditional cervical tenaculum, a type of forceps which is used to grasp the cervix. This procedure is needed when, for instance, inserting intrauterine devices (IUD), commonly called contraceptive coils. As the current standard of care, roughly grasping the cervix with the metal tenaculum can lead to a excruciating pain and frequent bleeding. To alleviate the pain and the bleeding, Aspivix has developed a vacuum-based device that grasps the cervix with soft suction technology of the cervix tissue instead of the traditional rough clamping and pinching mechanism.

The Idea of the Project: Get Key Opinion Leaders on Board Before the Market Launch

Although the company had clinical evidence that the technology significantly reduced pain and bleeding, there were a number of crucial unanswered questions:

- Can the clinical evidence be translated into the gynaecologist's real-world practice?
- Is the device as easy to use in practice as the preliminary trials found?
- Will key opinion leaders (KOLs) endorse the device and promote it as the new standard of care?

To answer these questions for Germany, Aspivix partnered up with Peak Spirit to recruit two key opinion leaders (KOLs) as early users and ambassadors for their product. But how can a startup get there without a large existing network?

The Challenge: Getting in Touch and Convincing the Most Relevant Persons in the Field to Collaborate

Business development in the form of contacting normal prospects, getting them to have a conversation, and convincing them of what one does is already a challenge in itself. When it comes to doctors, this challenge becomes even more difficult.

Many doctors are overworked and mentally & physically strained. Everyday dozens of strangers, who are not patients, want to get in touch with them. It is normal for a health care professional (HCP) to receive between 150 and 300 emails a day, and in many cases most of them end up in the trash unread. Still after contact has been made, it is difficult to arrange phone calls and meetings, and even more difficult to convince them to spend a significant amount of their precious time on one's cause.

“We knew that the device was highly relevant for gynecologists and their patients. Therefore we had to refine the process of reaching out to and convincing KOLs to work with us in order to be successful, which is why we chose to collaborate with Peak Spirit who have a proven track record on similar projects” Mathieu Horras, CEO of Aspivix.

Step 1: Excellent Prospecting is Key

Peak Spirit and Aspivix decided to search for KOLs by screening through related medical publications and searching for German authors. In addition, keynote speakers at relevant congresses and leaders of relevant associations were reviewed and added to the reach out list. This desk research accounted for a considerable amount of the work but paid off in the long run.

Step 2: Reaching out with consistency

Reaching out to the prospects is the most logical step that follows the prospecting. During this process, most phones are not picked up and most e-mails go unanswered. In most cases, a medical assistant is a gatekeeper between the person seeking contact and the HCP, which makes direct contact with the doctor even more difficult.

Two things are key when it comes to outreach, and they're even more important with established physicians than with other prospects. First, it is important to address as many channels as possible - with a multi-channel approach. This can be done by email, phone, via the contact form on the website, at congresses or even post or fax. Second, consistency is key. This means response times of no more than 24 hours and that one always drives and manages the process oneself.

Step 3: A highly professional appearance when meeting the doctors

After the initial expressions of interest, a short phone call was arranged to answer important questions. After that, personal meetings were scheduled, and the conditions of a collaboration were discussed. It is decisive that at least one person with experience in communicating with doctors (e.g. a former pharma rep) attends the meeting, as it is very difficult to understand the procedures in a doctor's practice without prior experience. Here, good collaboration between Peak Spirit and Aspivix was essential to leverage complementary expertise.

The conclusion: Good planning and consistent reach out pay off

Together with Peak Spirit, Aspivix has succeeded in signing contracts with three gynecological KOLs that will help them to successfully launch their product in Germany and gain initial experience in a real-world setting. Mathieu Horas, CEO at Aspivix, is happy to share the following statement about their collaboration with Peak Spirit:

“Instead of the agreed two signed contracts, Peak Spirit has excelled in this business development project with three signed contracts. They saved us days of work by implementing their best practices and accelerating the project from the beginning. Thanks to Peak Spirit, this project was a significant success on the way to approach the German market.”

What's next?

Aspivix will keep innovating women's health around the globe. They are well on their way to becoming the alternative to the pain and bleeding-inducing conventional tenaculum. “Gynecology. Now modern.” Is the slogan they're turning into reality, step by step!

Interested in learning more about business development, reimbursement, sales & lead generation projects?

Reach out to us anytime!
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