

COURAGEOUS Leadership

To navigate through disruptive change, the industry's leaders need to be

open, strong, and have the willingness to try something new.

In its From Vision to Decision 2020 report, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) analysts say successful innovation requires strong leadership, commitment, and solid decision-making. They say it also requires an open mind and the courage to experiment — both traits that are harder to find in companies where most of the management comes from the same mold.

We asked leaders throughout the life-sciences industry to discuss what they believe it takes to encourage innovative thinking, measure innovation, and allocate resources to achieve internal entrepreneurialism and innovation.



PETER BENTON

Executive VP, President, eClinical Solutions
BioClinica

One of my favorite things said by a friend was, “When I talk about diversity, it’s not about male or female. It’s not about religion. It’s not about ethnic background. It’s diversity of thought.” We want to have diversity of thought across the different genders, ethnicities, backgrounds, and perspectives. It’s that diversity of ideas that allow us to bubble up new approaches, new innovations, and new ways of doing things. This is exciting and I think that motivates people to do what hasn’t been done before.



CAROLYN BUCK LUCE

Co-founder and Managing Partner
Imaginal Labs

Courageous leaders need to be able to not only ideate and take action around the rational questions and challenges, but also understand the emotional and political challenges and opportunities that are necessary for alignment and mobilization.

A precondition to an innovative culture is

having a learning culture and a learning culture in today’s connected network world has to be an outside-in learning culture. For pharmaceutical and biotech companies, their culture is an engineering culture that is very product focused. The mind set is a linear way of thinking and traditionally it has been relatively insular to the outside world.



DEBORAH DUNSIRE, M.D.

President and CEO
Millennium: The Takeda Oncology Company

It’s important to ask the tough questions. This is what drives scientists to understand what has to be done and what it takes to get there. Then creativity and innovation come to the fore to solve the puzzle.

Innovation also comes down to having the right people in the organization — people who are prepared to think beyond a path that they’ve seen before, who are prepared to articulate a new idea, who are prepared to take a risk and in some ways stick their neck out and say why don’t we try it this way?

Innovation also requires people who work well synergistically. I’ve observed that people who are not afraid to tackle challenges together spark new ways of thinking. Somebody who is a mathematician and somebody who is a chemist together might challenge one another or come up with different ideas because they’re talking to one another.

Diversity of thought is very critical to driving innovation within an organization.



SCOTT GIBBARD

Senior Manager
Kalypso

First, leaders must set specific innovation goals. Then they have to align incentives to deliver on these targets. I’ve encouraged executives I work with to look to other industries,

like consumer packaged goods and electronics, to learn how they manage innovation. Even though the time scale of product development and the regulatory environment are quite different in these industries compared with pharma, we still could learn a lot from companies that consistently reinvent their product pipeline with innovative new ideas.

Importantly, pharmaceutical executives must think about innovation beyond the molecule alone. Too often we equate innovation with novel mechanisms of action and nothing else. Look to build innovation into every step in the value chain, from discovery and preclinical work all the way through to development, commercialization, manufacturing, and sales and marketing. An innovation in clinical development that reduces cycle time that leads to a first-to-market advantage might be just as valuable, or more, as a novel molecule.

This is not to say tracking innovation in the pipeline is not important, but companies should not limit themselves to measuring first-in-class mechanisms alone. Best-in-class medicines; medicines targeting rare orphan diseases or diseases for which there have been no recently approved therapies; medicines that apply innovative scientific strategies (e.g. innovative biomarkers, gene therapy); programs that incorporate personalized medicine principles — these are all worthy indicators of innovation in the pipeline.

Finally, companies should look to emerging markets for innovative ideas and commercial models. While the U.S. market is still the biggest source of revenue for most large, multinational pharmaceutical companies, innovative healthcare models overseas present opportunities and risks that we need to stay on top of.



OSAGIE IMASOGIE

Chairman, Iroko, and Senior Managing Partner, Phoenix IP Ventures

There are three crucial things that are im-

portant for chief executives and senior management to foster innovation. First, they cannot afford to hire people that just reflect back to them what they look like and how they think, because that leads to significant group thinking.

At Iroko, the senior management team comes from a scientific background, commercial background, legal background and from multiple companies — all of that has played a fundamental part in our structure and ensures a diversity of thinking. To me, that is crucial. It is the same concept as in biology — the strongest, most viable biological agents tend to be the ones that have a mix of different traits.

There is a saying that we have two ears and one mouth, which means we should listen twice as much as we talk. What that means, culturally, is we really need to have the capacity to hear what people, partners, the industry, and customers are saying — what their needs are. If you have the most diverse management team but you're not listening, the value proposition that they bring to the table is significantly muted. Particularly, CEOs and the most senior people need to hear what people are saying. Like a conductor in an orchestra, you have to have the capacity to hear everyone's music, but at the same time, hear the flute and the drums individually and all playing at the same time. Many CEOs only hear the drums and they don't hear the flute, and that is a problem. Not everyone speaks in the same format, not everyone has the same approach. If you don't develop the capacity to hear everyone, you lose the value of a diverse team.

The third crucial area is of empowerment. There is absolutely no point in hiring the best and the brightest with a diverse background if you don't enable them to get out and do their work. Either you have complete confidence in the people you hire, or you don't. What I see often in CEOs is that they hire really bright folks and then they hobble them and don't let them do their work. The job of the CEO is to give clear, unambiguous direction. Where are we going? When do we want to get there? You should let the senior executives figure out the rest. They should get us there and how they get us there and what route they take to get there is not the issue; it's not the CEO's job. The CEO's job is to figure out where we're going and when we want to get there.



ABIGAIL JENKINS
VP, Business Development
Intellogics

By 2018, seven of the top 10 drugs will be complex specialty products that have significant logistical components on top of sophisticated clinical profiles. The landscape for prescribing these complex products will be impacted by ACA than any changes that have come previously. When it comes to this new world, knowledge is power. I've learned that in an unprecedented situation like this, history and experience aren't good predictors of the future. To be an innovative thinker in a changing healthcare environment, you have to seek the truth for yourself. Ask key questions yourself, directly, and analyze the data for yourself, not just review what has been packaged back to you. Often, this means seeking counsel from outside the company to get an unvarnished view, and with more depth across products/companies before interpreting and creating a path forward



LYNN O'CONNOR VOS
President
ghg group

Our organization and certainly my DNA is about forward-thinking. We do a lot of training. We have a program called GHG Forward and we bring in all different types of outside companies and people who are doing disruptive things in healthcare so we can learn from them. We want to bring that information to our clients and get them to start thinking about how they might pilot new ideas and then ultimately look at a new model.

Clients are looking for a partner. They're looking for us to bring the best talent that we can and also the most innovative thinkers. It's also very challenging from the agency standpoint because we have to reach out to bring a whole host of experts from the family in.

Training is one way of making sure more people in the organization know what's going on and have an opportunity to learn and rub elbows with people who are entrepreneurial and making big changes with digital and health IT, for example.

In addition to the training, though, I think it's about hiring, and C-suite executives have

to run a learning organization. They need to hire people who are curious. They have to have scientific curiosity and they have to be curious about healthcare and healthcare delivery as well as be hungry for information and always on the look out for trends. But how does one interview for these traits? Someone gave me a tip a couple of years ago, which I thought was smart: ask your next candidate what new hobby they have picked up and learned in the last two years. If someone gives you blank stare, they're really not necessarily looking to grow. To thrive in a disruptive atmosphere like today's healthcare marketplace, people have to be hungry to learn.

The second piece of advice is to look for horizontal thinkers. These are people who can take a lot of information in and then synthesize it into an idea. It's important to think horizontally and not get stuck thinking in a linear fashion.



MELONIE WARFEL
Business Line Leader, Life Sciences
Pegasystems

First and foremost, innovative leaders have to have an open mind and a willingness to learn from other industries and then, of course, they have to be willing to take the risk to actually do this. It's not always about reaping the benefits immediately; executives who decide to go down a path of innovation understand that they may not see immediate results, it may take some time.



DAVID ZARITSKY
President
Roska Healthcare

Fostering innovation requires having gigantic ears. As a leader I have to listen to everybody around me. An innovative environment requires empowerment and accountability. Everybody at every level, I don't care who they are, needs to feel empowered to share ideas, to share moments, to share their experiences so we can really come to experiential and disruptive behavioral moments. And as a good leader, one can't have pride of ownership. There has to be collaboration in an organized fashion. Finally, leaders need a lot of confidence. They have really stick to their guns if they feel strongly about an idea. **PV**