

PharmaVOICE

THE FORUM FOR THE INDUSTRY EXECUTIVE

Volume 8 • Number 4

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Printed in the U.S.A.
Volume Eight, Number Four

PharmaVOICE (ISSN: 1932961X) is published monthly except August and December, by PharmaLinX LLC, P.O. Box 327, Titusville, NJ 08560. **Periodicals postage paid** at Titusville, NJ 08560 and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to PharmaVOICE, P.O. Box 292345, Kettering, OH 45429-0345.

PharmaVOICE Coverage and Distribution:

Domestic subscriptions are available at \$190 for one year (10 issues). Foreign subscriptions: 10 issues US\$360. Contact PharmaVOICE at P.O. Box 327, Titusville, NJ 08560. Call us at 609.730.0196 or FAX your order to 609.730.0197.

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Bogey and Bacall, Rogers and Hammerstein, Ben & Jerry, or closer to home John K. Smith, Thomas Beecham, and Mahlon Kline — great partners who made for great partnerships.

In developing this issue, an inadvertent theme developed, one centered around the concept of partnerships. What makes them work? What are the critical elements for success? What defines a good partnership? There are as many answers as there are questions. In this month's Forum — Creating Global Clinical Connections — top industry experts explore these concepts and provide their insights on what it takes to build business relationships for the long and global haul.

Each of our forum participants has a different take on what the most important elements are for success, such as truly understanding each partner's needs, trust, commitment, leadership, etc. As our Forum Editor Robin Robinson rightly points out these sound suspiciously like the same traits that make for a good marriage.

But like some marriages, not all partnerships are successful, unfortunately. The wheels can fall off when communications are unclear, roles and responsibilities are left undefined, and there is a lack of respect for the other party. Pretty much the stuff of divorce court.

But a solid CRO/sponsor connection is more vital than ever to provide the foundation for good drug development platforms. And these connections may spider-web out to include additional partners (no marriage analogy here please) who can add their particular expertise to the mix.

At the upcoming annual Partnerships with CROs conference in Las Vegas companies from all sides of the table will have a chance to discuss and share their thoughts on where the industry is headed and what the future might hold for their businesses. (One can get an education just by paying attention while walking down any aisle of the exhibit floor.)

Finding that right partnership balance is paramount whether you are involved in clinical development or creative executions. (I said there was a theme.) In a special feature, more than 20 agency executives provide their take on what it takes to



Taren Grom

See you in Las Vegas. Stop by Booth # 736 to say hello and learn what partnership opportunities PharmaVOICE has to offer.

make clients happy, or in other words, a good partnership.

As we all know from our daily lives, good client service is hard to find these days. What's led to the demise of plain old-fashioned business etiquette is a debate for another time. But what's not at question is the need for solid relationship management tools. Good client service is more important than ever. It's what can transcend time issues, budget issues, creative differences, etc.

Agency executives say their client service teams need to know how their own operations, processes, and functions work in addition to having a solid knowledge of what is impacting their clients' businesses.

While business partnerships are vital in today's highly pressurized market, the most important partner for any life-sciences company is that of the patient.

James King, M.D., president of the American Academy of Family Physicians, who is also a respected family doctor and patient advocate, talks about one of his major goals during his tenure, which is to improve patient satisfaction by making sure patients receive the right services by the right physicians in the right place at the right time.

To achieve this lofty objective, Dr. King is working with other physicians, the legislature, insurance companies, and the life-sciences industry to promote the goals of family medicine.

While some of our partnerships/relationships may never reach the business success of Ben & Jerry, it's better to shoot high lest we end up like Tom & Jerry.

Taren Grom
Editor

Partnering for success