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In this day and age when individuals are granted almost instant cult status based on subjective, if not dubious, talent, the "star" label can sometimes lose its luster. And while we live in a cynical world, where the next American Idol is about to be crowned by millions of Americans, it's nice to be reminded that there are truly individuals who are worthy of being called a star.

This month, PharmaVOICE is pleased to celebrate the Healthcare Businesswomen's Association's Rising Stars. These 68 women have been identified by their organizations as possessing star qualities: leadership, charisma, passion, vision, compassion, determination, drive, and other traits that set them apart.

In discussing what she believes is the definition of a leader, Marie Yuvienco, general counsel for Medsite Inc., summed up leadership very aptly: it's the ability to persuade those around you.

"Whether the leader of a nation, the leader of a boardroom, or the leader of a football team, without this ability to persuade, one cannot effectively execute on the goals of the group," she says. "Persuasion, as some say, is an art in itself. The ability to persuade is not necessarily a quality one is born with, but one that can be nurtured and grown through experience."

The Rising Stars also cite some of the most important leadership lessons they have learned during their careers.

Debbie Griggs-Smith, sales director of cardio-metabolic specialty sales West at Solvay Pharmaceuticals Inc., says one of the most important lessons a leader can learn and embrace is that everyone is motivated differently.

"It is liberating to be able to tap into individual motivations and accept that the way one person is motivated is not better or worse than the way another is motivated," she says.

Noting that they couldn't have gotten where they are today without help, these women give credit to the individuals who have been important in their leadership development, either as mentors or role models. For the Rising Stars, their mentors and role models range from parents to



Rising to the Challenge

Taren Grom congratulates PharmaVOICE's HBA Rising Star, Elisabeth Pena Villarroel. Please turn to page 58 to meet the rest of this distinguished group.

grandparents to bosses — past and present — to entrepreneurs.

As HBA Rising Stars, and leaders within the healthcare industry, these individuals are fostering the best practices of an industry that is woefully maligned on a daily basis. Their stalwart ambassadorship for their companies provides lessons for all of us, and they embrace the challenges that are unique to a highly regulated industry.

Many of this year's Rising Stars noted, when asked if they believed being a leader within the healthcare arena is different from being a leader in another industry sector, that, yes there is a difference and that the biggest difference from other highly regulated industries is the patient.

Sonnie Kang, VP of account services at Quintiles Medical Communications, agrees that while it's important for leaders in every industry to have integrity, in the healthcare marketing field, because of the impact on the ultimate end customer — the patient — the ethical and moral bars are set even higher.

Finally, when we asked the Rising Stars to provide career advice to women just entering the life-sciences/healthcare arena the responses ranged from becoming involved in industry organizations, to taking advantage of every opportunity, to maintaining a life balance.

Please join me in saluting these women of character, integrity, and passion — the industry's present and future stars.

Taren Grom
 Editor

Leaders for today and tomorrow