

OPINIONS

Politics and Healthcare

Politics and healthcare are inextricably intertwined. What happens on the Hill inevitably impacts the medicine cabinet. But not all politics are good politics. We asked our readers to identify the politicians and lobbyists who understand the medical/pharmaceutical industry and cite examples of what they are doing to move the industry forward.

Undecided in the polls

I am not sure I can answer the question because the environment has changed so much in just four years. Many politicians today listen to the industry and do understand the challenges it faces. Some are favorable in their opinions and some are less favorable in their opinions. Some are very vocal while others are not but still carry a lot of clout. An interesting study might be to look into the congressional records on contributions from industry-based political action committees over the last five years.

Robert Nauman
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A split ticket

On the lobbyist side, medicine is represented primarily by medical associations, principally the American Medical Association (AMA). The AMA represents a very diverse discipline professionally and effectively. The pharmaceutical industry is represented primarily by the Pharmaceutical Research Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), which, in my opinion, is somewhat less effective but has succeeded in protecting the industry's intellectual property rights and pricing power.

On the political side, I think Republicans understand the pharmaceutical industry far better than Democrats, who tend to demagogue the prescription drug issue and have



done little in the way of improving the situation. Medicine has begun to shift into a more bipartisan approach in its lobbying. Democrats have been more inclined to side with physicians on managed-care issues than Republicans. But I think the Republican market-based approach to cost and access issues is superior to the Democrat's instinct toward centralized, if not nationalized, solutions.

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LETTERS

Collaborative Leadership in Challenging Times

Collaborative leadership builds upon critical factors we all crave: being appreciated, acknowledged, included, and fairly judged.

— *Julie Kampf*

Lessons in leadership

We are in an age of “enlightened leadership.” Yet despite decades devoted to refining leadership (and more than 37,000 titles with the keyword “leadership” between barnesandnoble.com and amazon.com), there still are too many mediocre or even poor leaders today. While today's workplace has almost no tolerance for controlling leaders, some people still believe that being passive aggressive in a tell-sell-yell environment works best for them. But in the end, it's all about relationships.

Clearly, collaborative leadership is critical within pharmaceutical and biotech companies. These organizations are experiencing, and will continue to experience, intra- and extra-mergers, acquisitions, and reorganizations as well as regulatory scrutiny and general marketplace issues. Leaders at all levels of the organization also wake up each day to find their PDAs filled with meetings, 360 reviews and turnover, budget analyses, supplier calls, and revised (again!)

presentations. And then there are nonwork-related items, such as food shopping, vacation planning, workouts at the gym, school plays, caring for elderly parents, and car inspections.

Collaborative leadership builds upon critical factors we all crave: being appreciated, acknowledged, included, and fairly judged. In fact, the vast majority of candidates interviewing with a new company cite the need to work with someone who will demonstrate the critical traits of collaborative leadership.

The good news is that collaborative leadership can actually simplify our lives in five ways: it takes the pressure off being right all the time and having all the right answers; it allows leaders at all levels to share the task of securing and sharing information critical to decision making; it provides an environment that is nourishing; it minimizes hot-headed decision making; and it allows for positive conflict with a focus on the enterprise and brand, not the boss, and ensures conflicts and confrontations are productive, interactive exchanges.

Simply put, collaborative leadership is just good for business. According to Joel Brocker (“Why It's So Hard to be Fair,” Harvard Business Review, March 2006), companies benefit when “employees believe they are being treated fairly, when they feel heard, when they understand how and why important decisions are made, and when they believe they are respected.”

Some of us reject the idea that we are leaders. But each of us does lead in some way; each of us has a circle of influence that can and does affect our work, team projects, and, subsequently, our company's business.

To paraphrase Maya Angelou, people don't remember what others say or do; they remember how others make us feel. Life can be so much easier and so much more rewarding for everyone in an environment built upon collaborative leadership.

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