

October 6, 2021

Welcome to WoW, the Woman of the Week podcast from PharmaVOICE. This episode is made possible by a generous sponsorship from SCORR Marketing. For more information, visit scorrmkt.com.

In this episode, Taren Grom, Co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of PharmaVOICE meets with Lisa Rose, Senior VP and Chief Marketing Officer, LifeScan.

Taren: Lisa, welcome to the WoW podcast program.

Lisa: Thank you. Thank you for having me. Pleasure to be here.

Taren: Lisa, your career journey has been expansive and diverse. Can you lead us through some of the highlights from consumer P&G to your current role as CMO at LifeScan?

Lisa: So actually I started my career in sales and I carried a bag actually in the Chicago area and then got my MBA and joined P&G after that. When I joined P&G, I was expecting to get the traditional brand management marketing degree that everybody used to go to P&G for. Instead, I started with the company in an upstream innovation think tank called Corporate New Ventures. That role actually exposed me to corporate entrepreneurship, kind of an innovation hotbed focus and it was super exciting. Frankly, I've had innovation as part of my whole career as a result and I love that space.

Taren: Innovation, that is a fascinating space, right? It allows you to spread your wings in so many different areas and really to think expansively. I'm always intrigued by innovators and obviously, you are an innovator since you've worked in that space for so long. Do you think innovation can be taught or is it really part of somebody's DNA?

Lisa: I think you do learn. Innovation is a discipline where you do learn different frameworks and techniques and how to think innovatively, how to approach problems in a very creative way. So yeah, I do think it can be taught. I mean, I think there's an innate piece that's probably a little more about risk tolerance; are you willing to push boundaries, challenge the status quo? Are you comfortable with ambiguity? Those are probably the sort of more innate characteristics that go alongside of being successful in innovation, but in general innovation is a discipline. So that is something that you can learn and should actually study and learn from history and in case examples and push yourself to learn more through experimentation and piloting, for sure.

Taren: Fantastic. I love to hear that we can potentially teach somebody to be innovative. As Chief Marketing Officer, you are responsible for leading the global marketing organization, obviously, for LifeScan. Tell me about the scope of this role.

Lisa: I lead the marketing organization, country level, area, region, global. My role is really to help shape the strategy for LifeScan with the executive leadership team, to help support and

drive innovation, new programs, new projects around the globe and then support talent development as a marketing organization, build the leaders of tomorrow, today.

Taren: That's amazing. How many people report in to you, or how many people are you responsible for?

Lisa: The organization is about 120 large, which is a decent size. I've actually had larger organizations when I was with Abbott. In some ways, I'm enjoying having an organization where I can get to know people at all levels across the globe more intimately.

Taren: Oh what a nice... yes, what a nice luxury to have, I guess if you can call it a...

Lisa: It is actually. It's kind of nice.

Taren: You know, in shaping the brand strategy and changing the way people talk about managing their conditions, moving from a focus on blood glucose to one of a more personalized or holistic wellness perspective, how does the recent collaboration with Fitbit fit into the company's overall strategy? That's fascinating.

Lisa: Yeah, thank you for that. I'm super excited about our partnership with Fitbit and actually we just signed on a partnership with Noom and Cecelia Health and a smaller company called Welldoc. It's all part of our bigger strategy to be more meaningful and relevant and supportive of our consumers – people with diabetes.

One of the things that I've come to learn in this space is that diabetes is really a multifactorial condition. It's influenced by your sleep, your activity, what you eat, what you drink, all these different elements really go into understanding how well you are managing your glucose levels. Yet historically, our organization and I think most of the companies in this space have been really just focused on well let's monitor and measure the glucose level but not all the other things that actually impact the glucose levels.

What we're trying to do with Fitbit and these other partnerships is really build an integrated ecosystem of data and insights that we can bring back to our consumers to share with them how they're doing and not just what is the number but what is the number mean and how are they doing in managing their numbers.

It's one of the things that consumers have told us repeatedly that it's just very frustrating, right, diabetes is a tough condition. You live with it for a very long time, and it's tough to manage because it's unpredictable. What happens with your insulin levels is just very unpredictable and yet, if they understood how they personally, right, are reacting to let's say a banana, right, or running up downstairs, or getting 8 hours of sleep, if they understood that for themselves, help them get to know themselves better – that's our mission. Being a positive partner in change, they could actually do a better job day-to-day and feel more confident in their daily activities.

We're putting out a lot of different partners together. We're creating an integrated ecosystem. Our ambition is to really bring back these insights on a very personal level to patients to help them with their positive changes in how they enhance their lifestyle.

It's exciting. It's very exciting. This is just the beginning of a master plan, but we're committed to it and it's great to see companies like Fitbit as excited as we are about the potential opportunity here to help patients in new ways.

Taren: That's awesome. I love that loop that you're creating, right, and that's what's been missing in the past. It was just a readout.

Lisa: That's right.

Taren: Patients had no idea what that meant or how it impacted them, or what they could do differently in their own lifestyles. That's fantastic. As you continue to build out this master plan, which I love that term too. It makes you feel like we've got all this stuff in the world. How does it fit into in terms of DTC component of it? Is that even a term anymore? Direct-to-consumer?

Lisa: Absolutely.

Taren: It feels consumer like oriented?

Lisa: Yeah, it is very consumer-oriented. It's something that – it's been interesting. I started my first, I mentioned in P&G, I started in sales and then innovation. I actually spent 13 years with Procter, really honing my consumer skill set in bringing new products to consumers across a variety of categories like coffee and cosmetics and laundry. I mean, you can ask me anything you want about stain removal and I think I probably have something in the bag for you. But it was when I got into the medical field, right, into healthcare that I started to realize all of the sort of more clinical approaches to healthcare.

It's fascinating because we think about health – as a consumer, you think about it as how do I feel, right? A doctor says I don't really care how you feel, what I care about is your stats, what your body is saying and what's your condition and what's your current numbers and all that good stuff – blood pressure and hemoglobin and whatever. And so it's very clinical, and so consumers live a different way of thinking about health than the clinical world.

A lot of times it's held very separate. And as consumers become much more focused on wanting to understand themselves – the whole internet boom, and WebMD and really unlocked opportunities for consumers to spend more time really knowing themselves in a deeper way, but yet so much of healthcare hasn't really embraced that sort of consumer revolution, even though we do hear a lot of physicians talking about how that used to be the doc had to know everything. But now, consumers come in and they ask questions.

At first, maybe they were a bit resistant about it. But now, they're quite open to it and they will say things like, I'm actually glad when my consumer comes in and is more informed, and is spending time learning about their own body and what's happening, and they can ask more educated questions. It makes for a richer dialogue and relationship with my patient.

One of the things that that we're kind of focused on is in diabetes. You see a lot of these apps, these digital apps, and they'll say things like here's your number, have some juice or they'll say things like here, I noticed you didn't log your lunch, you should log your lunch now, right.

These are all algorithms and they're built into the app and they're very generic. They're helpful, right. Nothing wrong with it. Actually, they serve a really good purpose but they're fairly generic. They're not personalized. That's I think the new frontier for a lot of us in healthcare and it's our mission and our goal to push the boundaries now is how do we help our consumers have a more personalized understanding of the underlying factors for their condition and help them with actionable insights that are specific to them.

I didn't realize this. I don't have a personal connection to diabetes but some of the folks on my team do and they've been sharing with me things like hey, you know, one day I can eat a banana and be totally fine. The next day, I eat a banana and my insulin spikes. Why? What happened? How do I know what from one day to the next, what's going to happen? Or my friend can eat a whole bag of M&M's and have no issue at all. But if they eat a marshmallow, it's a big problem.

It's just things like that and a lot of it has to do with all the other stuff that's going on in their life. Did they get 8 hours of sleep? Did they drink 8 glasses of water? What else did they eat with it? There's so many factors. These generic statements while helpful, they really don't go the full mile, right? They don't really go to the patient to help them understand themselves.

We'd like to get to that more personalized view and really make a deeper connection with each one of our patients and our consumers.

Taren: That's fantastic. Yes, and making that personalized connection because patients are becoming their own physicians in some ways. They know their bodies better than anybody.

Lisa: Exactly.

Taren: Really light years ahead of where we were even having conversations 5 years ago.

Lisa: Right. That's the DTC piece, right? That's why you need to take a more consumer centered view because if you take it from a clinical view only – and I'm not saying clinical is bad...

Taren: Of course not.

Lisa: ...by no means. We need to make sure we're clinically relevant and we're doing the right things medically, which is why we have a doctor who is on our team. We have quite a few folks

that have that – there are medical professionals that we consult with to make sure we’re being very thoughtful on the medical side, but you need to take a different approach with consumers.

That’s centered on insights for them and their lives and speaking to them, even in their voice and using language that resonates with them. If I may, I’ll digress with just a nanosecond, if you allow, but we did some research recently where we heard – we have a coaching subscription program in one of our products and we’re doing some research on it and we found that actually consumers really did not like that word coach.

Yet, I tell you, you Google diabetes apps and you’ll see that word coach all over the place and it was fascinating. Why don’t they like the word coach? What’s wrong with that? Of course, a lot of them went to what coaches are like for soccer, in sports and they reminded them of people yelling at you, telling you what you’re doing wrong. It has very negative connotations, right? Voice and tone and language matters significantly in some of these products and how we approach our consumers.

Yes, we’re going really deep, trying to make sure we’re super consistent with how our consumers want to be talked to and what’s going to resonate with them.

Taren: That’s so interesting. I would never have thought coach in that kind of way because I think of coach as being supportive or somebody who’s encouraging and somebody who really guide you along the way. Interesting feedback.

Lisa: Fascinating.

Taren: Absolutely. What should we be watching for the next 18 months in terms of some trends like what you all are doing?

Lisa: Sure. Yeah. So look, I – in its broadest terms, to answer the question is you continue to see growth and innovation in glucose monitoring. We’re obviously looking at a lot of different technologies and opportunities to bring new products, new technologies in the glucose monitoring space specifically.

But also we’re looking at how to drive – I mean, COVID opened our eyes to telehealth. Of course, it was always present but it really became significant. Telehealth becomes and connectivity and connectivity broadly throughout the ecosystem becomes a key focus in strategy and continues to be how we support our physicians and support them with their patients.

Then, of course, digital health, continuing to support consumers directly through reimbursement schemes, through physicians, but bringing new tools, new support approaches and obviously, with all of that, more partners and a broader ecosystem to boot, right?

Taren: Excellent.

Lisa: A lot of exciting stuff in the horizon.

Taren: A lot of exciting stuff. I'm looking forward to seeing how this all unfolds. Obviously, diabetes is such a hot market right now. We're seeing all kinds of commercials on television. Does that general awareness, it must lift the boats for the market, for consumers, and education around all of that, all of this is very positive, I would think.

Lisa: Absolutely.

Taren: Even with your company or just that overall general education around diabetes has got to be just a game changer.

Lisa: It is. I think it really is. I think it's a good thing. It helps. I think for a while there might be – people feel like there's a bit of a stigma approach with it, right. I was in a consumer group actually just this week and this one lady was talking about how she feels the world is just not built for people like her. It was just heartbreaking.

It's because she was talking about how at work that she has to go and dose insulin or check her glucose levels, she just didn't feel it was much compassion to working in a retail environment and is very challenging for her to say to her boss, I have to take a break, I have to go check my glucose, I have to go eat something or whatever. She just feels the world is not compassionate to people like her.

I think awareness and opening people's eyes to what people with diabetes have to deal with is super important. Yeah, we should do more of that, much as we can, really.

Taren: Fantastic. Let's go to some of your key leadership skills. You obviously have had one of the greatest proven grounds in consumer and working at P&G. What a playground to getting into the consumer mindset, and you have a significant experience in building high-performing customer focus delivery teams. What are some of your keys to success?

Lisa: Look, I think that the first key is really having great talent and building strong teams below you, with you and across. I think at the end of the day, it's recognizing that we're all here to deliver against the purpose. That purpose can be a lot of different things. But we all come to work wanting to do the right thing, do good things, and make good things happen. Being able to work with great talent and build talent and help people grow, I think it's super important to having a high performing team.

I think everybody knowing what the goal is, right. What's the hill we're going to take? Being able to envision the potential and the possibilities for folks so folks can see it and go wow, yeah, I see that hill and I want to be part of it. Everybody is joined at the hip in seeing that goal and being energized to go grab it.

I think diversity is a super important component here because so many times teams can have group think or be myopic or if everybody comes from the same background or same walk of life,

they may really miss important connectors for how you might do something differently or problem solve an issue in a different way, and so leveraging diverse thinking and having the team feel open and comfortable to debate and then have a desire to build on each other makes for a strong team.

Then, last but not least, it's incumbent on us as leaders to make sure folks feel accountable, feel empowered to deliver and there's a sense of urgency to get things done in a dependable kind of confident way. You know when you're on a good team; it's fun and everybody's going in the same direction, and you as a team believe in what you're doing, that it has purpose.

Taren: Absolutely. It's all about the mission-based and having that common vision, being collaborative. I love the piece about diversity because I think that is super important today, especially as we're looking at diverse patient populations and how diseases affect these different patient populations.

Lisa: Yup, absolutely.

Taren: You have to have people on the team who represent the people you're serving.

Lisa: Yup, absolutely. Exactly. I mean, it's like what I was mentioning earlier, this example of coaching. We all come from a differently and what coach means to one person may mean something different to another and being able to recognize that there's going to be that kind of a different reaction. It's important to understand what the meaning really is to the majority of folks.

I mean that right there is a great example. It could easily not see that but having diverse folks on the team sort of recognized hey, should we think better or look at this differently.

Taren: Fantastic. You obviously may have reached a significant level in your career. What advice can you share with other women who may want to reach that C-suite or executive level? What steps should they take to give them that best advantage of doing so? We're still working in a very male-dominated industry and sometimes it's a little bit harder for women to get up that next wrung.

Lisa: Yeah. I read a long time ago a book and I'm trying to remember the author's name, but it was called *Hardball for Women*. It was great. It was a great book because it actually talked about a lot of things that I didn't understand about – I say male culture because I don't mean to be off-putting but it's about male culture, and one of the things that comes with it and how to think about team and is it Linda Sanborn – she wrote the book *Lean In*.

Taren: Sheryl.

Lisa: If the conference table is full and there's a chair in the back, don't go sit down in the back. Pull the chair up to the table. You belong there. That confidence is important. I mean on *Hardball* one of the things – I never realized the whole handshake, when guys come into a room

and there's that sort of camaraderie kind of aspect. It's just a business meeting, it is all part of how women need to lean in and engage, maybe in a way that isn't comfortable right out of the gate, but take some risk, push yourself, you belong there and know that.

I think the other thing is grow your skill. Don't stand still. Don't be complacent. Push yourself to learn new things, to get into uncomfortable environment so that you grow. Take on new challenges. I remember a long time ago it was mentioned to me once about how women don't want to take a role unless there's certain they're going to do a good job; whereas, oftentimes guys will lean in and just say sure, I'll do it even though they have no idea what they can do with the job.

Women need to do more of that. They need to take some risk and recognize you belong there. You're going to do a great job and push yourself. I think that makes a big difference. Then, last but not least, I would say find mentors. It's a common refrain. We hear it often. I know it's nothing new. But if you can find mentors and people you can communicate and talk to about, hey, I observed this kind of behavior or this approach or people tackling something XYZ, can you help me read the tea leaves? What's happening here? Getting some advice that way from someone who's not in your direct chain of command is a good thing.

Then, last but not the least, I think this is something I've always focused on is just know what the big stuff is that matters. Then, work on those and help your team make an impact and you do that and good things happen.

Taren: I think those are four excellent points. Yeah, absolutely, be willing to take those risks. Take the job even if you haven't checked all the boxes.

Lisa: Yep.

Taren: Understand that you may be perfect for it, but it's okay. Get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Mentoring, you say it's a common refrain but it's a common refrain because it's not happening often enough. We have to keep our mind, find those mentors and maybe they're not in your organization, maybe they are outside of your organization and no matter where you are in your career journey, you could always use a mentor, right? Because you need mentoring along different points of your career path.

Lisa: Right. It's not a sign of weakness to say hey, I'm not following why this happened or can you help me think about how I might have handled this situation differently. I realized after the fact it didn't go the way I thought it would go or whatever, right? It's not a sign of weakness. It's a sign of growth and having a growth mindset because you're basically saying hey, I have things I want to work on and I want to improve and I want to get better and we should be doing that all the time. It doesn't matter what level you're at or where you're at. There's always something more that you can improve upon or do better at and get better at. If you have that as a growth focus. Again, I think good things will happen.

Taren: You hit it on the growth mindset and curiosity. Being always curious is one of those signs of a good leader because nobody knows everything and that's part of the learning process is to continually being curious. Awesome.

Lisa: Absolutely.

Taren: I have to ask you this question – is there anything you know now that you wish you knew 10 years ago as you were making your moves?

Lisa: That's a good question. I think it's actually what you just said, I'll echo it. Which is it's okay to not know everything. In fact, it's often times better to jump in and just say, hey, be vulnerable. I don't know XYZ and have your people lead your thinking, have them be the ones that are driving to solution and you can sit back. It's okay. You don't have to always be in front. It's actually okay as a leader to be really just supporting your people, right?

The concepts a long time ago, there are lots of books written on servant leadership and I have to admit back then I wasn't really clear on what that meant. It's like, what does that mean? You're a leader, you're supposed to be out front. You're supposed to be driving the agenda. You have all the answers. Well, no, absolutely not. Everybody around you is supporting them and making them successful in leveraging. They have great ideas and helping them make it happen. That makes a big difference.

Taren: It's also exactly that servant leadership and I think that allows – that means having to be vulnerable too and that's not comfortable, right?

Lisa: It's not easy. Yeah.

Taren: It's not easy. That's where it goes back. You have to learn to get comfortable with being uncomfortable and that's okay. I think that's a hard lesson for men and women to learn. I think if more men were more vulnerable, we'd probably in a better place but I digress.

Lisa: Yeah, that's another whole topic, isn't it?

Taren: Exactly. Lisa, tell me about an accomplishment or a Wow moment that either shaped your career or change the trajectory of your career.

Lisa: Okay. This is a long, long time ago, but I was working on a brand at P&G and it has shaped my career and my thinking as a leader kind of moment because at that time, I was leading a team to bring a new product to market in record time. The team had worked super hard and we were super excited to get our product into a test market. We had like one of those ridiculous like get it done in 6 months kind of like challenges, right.

It was a cross functional team, product development, marketing, sales, et cetera. We got it done and we're super excited. Were high-fiving and not only did we get it done but actually the test results were phenomenal, right? About a year. It took a year but about a year in, the

product proved itself. It was going to be a great idea, et cetera. At that time, I thought well, okay, it's a given that the company is going to invest and we're going to expand and the purpose, we really made a difference.

At that time, P&G was already decided. I didn't know this, right? But it had already decided that they were going to divest. They're focusing in the food business. Even though we had these stellar results, even though we killed ourselves to get it done, the management, at that time, said no, we're not going to expand. Thank you very much, appreciate your effort. But we're done. That wasn't the defining moment. It was actually – I reacted to that super negatively, right. I have to say from a business security standpoint, I'm not proud. Emotionally, very reactive. Okay, let's just put it that way.

I thought that was the biggest injustice ever and I felt like the team had been completely misserved and I was just super unhappy like I failed, right? I failed the team. Not a great place to be. I remembered that time my boss took me aside, after a couple of weeks my brewing and being a bit immature about the whole thing and said hey, you need to recognize you're having an impact on the entire organization.

As a leader, I need you to really understand how you're not serving the team acting this way. In fact, you need to serve the team by picking them back up and getting them refocus on what matters. Focus on the big stuff. I was not focused on the big stuff. I was focused on me and how I was feeling.

I was like, wait, what do you mean? What do I have to? She said listen, Lisa, the plant even knows how mad you are about this, like 20 miles away, right? I was like okay, right, I guess I better reassess here my behavior. What it taught me though was really the sort of sense of like hey, yeah, focus on the big stuff and focus on how you help the people around you and the people below you and across you and above.

As I mentioned earlier, it's not about winning or failing or whatever. It's about doing the right thing at the right moment with the information you have and you don't always have all the information, right? You don't always know what's happening at a corporate level in higher levels of strategy, what people are talking about. That's okay.

Once you get that kind of information and receive it, your first few thoughts should be on okay, what does this mean to the team? What do I need to do now? How do I lean in and help the team move forward irrespective of success or failure or whatever? How do we learn from it? I mentioned growth mindset earlier, but I think, for me, that was a defining moment to say, what is a growth mindset in this situation, right? How do I embrace that and look at things differently?

Throughout my career, you always have setbacks and things happen and things don't go according to plan, but rather than reacting to it, embrace it, absorb it and now what and so what about the organization? How do we advance and move forward from this? How do we grow? How do we learn from it? Take it in and do something more or better or different.

Taren: I want to thank you for being vulnerable and answering that question, that was really showing a tremendous amount of authenticity and I'm not sure that most people wouldn't have reacted the same way.

You had to remove loyalty to your team and you saw how hard they were working. You probably were mad for them than you were actually for yourself. While I can see where your boss might have said you need to chill out a little bit, but I bet he probably had some admiration to that you had your people's backs.

Lisa: Yeah. Everybody has them and it's what you do with that learning in that moment, that matters and how do you carry that forward and it stayed – it was a long time ago in my career but it stayed with me.

Taren: That's a great lesson. It's something that I will take forward as well because you do have oftentimes those emotional reactions and I think that's okay too because otherwise, we're just kind of robots, going through the day.

Lisa: Sure. We all bleed red, right?

Taren: Exactly. If there's no emotion, then why are we doing it? Because we feel passionately about what we're doing. We're committed to the mission. We're committed to the purpose.

Lisa: You bet.

Taren: Of course that's going to have some elevated emotion around it. But what you do with that emotion and how you direct it, that's the lesson. Thank you for that. Lisa, it was a pleasure to speak with you and I look forward to the Master plan and seeing what happens in the near and shorter-term and longer-term.

Thank you for all you're doing to make a difference for those who are living with diabetes. As you said, this is a disease that is chronic that hundreds of millions of people are living with and if we could just make it easier for them in some small ways...

Lisa: That's right.

Taren: ... what a difference you make in their world. Thank you so much.

Lisa: That's right. Thank you. Thank you for the time this morning. I appreciate it. It was great talking to you.

Thank you for listening to this episode of WoW, the Woman of the Week podcast. Thanks again to SCORR Marketing for sponsoring this episode. For more information, visit scorrmkt.com.



PharmaVOICE Podcast Series

Don't forget to check out our other WoW podcast episodes at pharmavoice/wow.