

Keyword Pharma

Expert Reviews

Aligning Aspirations and Realising Ambitions:

*the challenges of the new era of
engagement between experts
and the pharmaceutical industry*

By Emma D'Arcy



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A KeywordPharma **Conference Insights** review

by **Eugene Pozniak**

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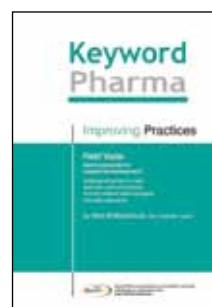
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*Aligning Aspirations and Realising Ambitions:
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Aligning Aspirations and Realising Ambitions:

the challenges of the new era of engagement between experts and the pharmaceutical industry

Emma D’Arcy

Executive summary

Interaction between the pharmaceutical industry and healthcare professionals has long been the subject of great scrutiny. Despite helping to produce significant advances in medical care, industry/physician collaboration still manages to evoke widespread criticism – from the media, right down to the grass roots of the medical profession; some journalists dismiss Key Opinion Leaders as being “drug representatives in disguise”, whereas many medical students regard the drug industry as a “necessary evil”. Recent calls for a “comprehensive ban on all industry funding of continuing medical education” show that a tipping point is fast approaching. So what does the pharmaceutical industry need to do to improve the perception of industry/physician interaction and deliver true value to its most important customer group: the patient?

Progress depends on addressing a series of key challenges. The contribution that physician–pharmaceutical industry interactions (PPII) make to medical science needs to be assessed objectively. The industry must move away from the ‘command and control’ mentality with which it has often approached collaboration and instead encourage transparent engagement with all stakeholders, to align aspirations towards a shared goal – the improvement of human health. The adoption of web and multimedia technologies will undoubtedly enhance the sector’s ability to interact with its customers, and promises significant cost savings. At the same time, efforts need to be made to provide medical students with formal education about the pharmaceutical industry, to ensure tomorrow’s doctors don’t have today’s doubts and yesterday’s knowledge.

This *Expert Review* describes how the physician and the pharmaceutical professional need to adopt, activate and align aspirations to create physician/pharmaceutical harmony (– ‘pharmony’). It concludes by recommending that it is time to stop condemning PPII and to start considering better ways to serve the real ‘opinion leaders’ in the debate – patients.

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About the author



Emma D'Arcy is a communication strategist for the pharmaceutical and healthcare industry. With a heritage in medical communications, Emma has worked with pharmaceutical companies, the medical profession, research organisations and patient groups for 15 years, completing every type of communication project across almost all disease areas.

As an advocate for the pharmaceutical industry and a passionate believer that aligning the aspirations and ambitions of all stakeholders in healthcare is key to improving outcomes for patients, Emma is frequently invited to comment on the positive aspects of working with the pharmaceutical industry and to author articles about the industry. This has included running workshops, focus groups, advisory boards and global initiatives on topics as far-reaching and politically sensitive as lowering drug prices in Africa, establishing promotional literacy through the medical community and even promoting the importance of encouraging women to take up a career in science. In 2008, Emma co-founded myphid.com – the only professional networking site for the pharmaceutical industry and the medical community to work openly and transparently in a new era of engagement.

Emma oversees the annual ACTIVATE conference on industry–physician interactions, and was recently published/has publications pending in the *BMJ*, *PM Europe*, *PharmaFocus*, *PLoS* and the *Journal of Medical Marketing* about the challenges surrounding the value of interactions.

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