

# Business as unusual

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Anything striking about the title? Did you read it as 'Business as *usual*?' If you did then don't worry, at least half of readers probably did so too. It is all about *perspective*. Let's try another one. How many letter 'F's' are there in the sentence below? Don't take too long to try and figure it out....the answer is in the bottom of the page.<sup>1</sup>

FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT  
OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY  
COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE  
OF MANY YEARS OF EXPERTS

Some probably counter 3, 5, 7 or even 9! It is all about *perspective*. The Workshop on 'New Paradigms in Life Sciences Marketing' illustrated exactly the same. Life science marketing is all about *perspective*. In a world where knowledge about healthcare networks is key to optimising sales efforts, knowing the *perspective* of the customer is essential to reach a common understanding of the benefits and prospects of using a specific life science technology over another. While it sounds simple, it is not; even internally it is difficult, just try to take a closer look at a life science company — it might be yours.

Why do medical and marketing departments often have difficulties in understanding each other? Even within life science companies it is all about *perspective*, the medical department does not understand the sales process; the marketing department does not understand science! And to some extent this was illustrated during the Workshop. I presented the paper 'Drugs — from product to service' published in 2006 in this Journal.<sup>2</sup> In this paper and at the Workshop I proposed services, like compliance and monitoring programmes, as an 'add on' to the product itself, and hereby producing a new product.

After my presentation and later during dinner, the marketing people stated that this is old news or 'business as usual'. The medical people on the other hand stated that this was 'business as unusual'. Of course services like the one mentioned above have been setup and used as marketing tools for some time, that is this is not a new *perspective* to the marketing people. But 'services' combined with a product have never been tested against the product on its own in a controlled scientific trial, and as such could create a scientifically proven innovative product. And this was actually the point I was trying to make. Owing to the scientific *perspective*, this was adapted by the medical people.

In my mind there is no doubt that the future of sustainable and responsible medical marketing is combining sales and marketing theories *with* medical science, not only by translating science into a few headings and a nice picture, but by creating marketing schemes that support the product by giving 'added value' to the customer through controlled trials. In other words, medical marketing is all about *perspective*.

## Note and Reference

- <sup>1</sup> The answer is 7.
- <sup>2</sup> Møldrup, C. & Kruse, P. R. (2006). Drugs — Product or service. *Journal of Medical Marketing* 6(4), 282–286.

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