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## Editorial

# Progress in times of change

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This editorial marks an important transition for the *Journal of Medical Marketing* as I take over the role of Editor from Len Lerer. As Editor for the past 5 years, Len has performed a sterling task in guiding the journal from adolescence to maturity. He has added many innovative ideas to its presentation and content and I thank him for that. As the founding Editor from 2000 to 2003, *JMM* as it is shorthanded in my mails has remained my 'baby' with whom I've kept a close emotional as well as practical involvement. So, on taking up the reins again, I have the challenge not of fixing something that is broken but of building on success. As Alfred North Whitehead, mathematician and philosopher, famously said, 'The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order'. In this editorial, I'd like to explain how I intend to progress our journal, making it still more valuable to its readers.

Foremost in my mind is the industry context in which we find ourselves. The journal exists to serve all those markets in which the customer is a clinician or related professional and the health-care systems in which they operate. Pharmaceuticals, medical devices, diagnostics and other medical technology are only the most obvious sectors within this diverse and complex area. At first sight, their differences appear more relevant than their similarities but, as I research and consult across all of these sectors, I find that this is an illusion. Fundamental issues create a common context for all of them. Externally, the

maturation of markets, globalisation and intensifying competition are reported in every sector. Internally, the war for talent, managing the explosion of scientific knowledge and changing cultures from product to market oriented are common challenges whether the product is a pill, a pipette or a programme. These fundamentals are the ultimate causes of the problems that medical marketers face every day. They express themselves as price-sensitive customers, cheap competitors and difficulty in making and implementing effective strategies, but the root causes are the fundamental changes facing the entire medical market. It is the need to understand and address those changes that the *Journal of Medical Marketing* seeks to address.

How we will do so is just as problematic as the challenges facing our readers. The journal exists to supply knowledge to medical marketers and our 'added value' is to find and filter that knowledge so that reading the journal is good 'value for time'. We are all familiar with the irritation of reading something that is either irrelevant, unoriginal, a disguised sales pitch or all three. An acid test for our journal is that we must never irritate in that way, but to remain relevant, original and objective in our fundamentally changing market won't be easy. As Editor, I think there are three strategic imperatives for us. Firstly, we need to recognise that valuable knowledge has multiple sources. Academics, consultants, executives and others all may have something to offer. The practical

implication for me is not only to find and filter from this diverse field but also to ensure it is presented in a manner appropriate to its origins. Secondly, we need to recognise the heterogeneity of our readership. Notwithstanding the strategic fundamentals, it is still true that our readers seek immediate help with problems that are specific to their sector. This means providing knowledge that spans our wide market and is germane to readers' pressing issues. Finally, it is imperative that we recognise the global nature of the medical market. In practice, it means that we must provide knowledge relevant not only to the old 'big three' regions of United States, EU and Japan, but also recognise the clear and present importance of all of the emerging markets. Together, these three challenges of multiple sources, multiple audiences and a global context make the task of improving the journal an interesting one, perhaps in the sense of the Chinese curse 'May you live in interesting times'.

As Editor, I will attempt to address these three strategic imperatives in the only way that seems sensible, through a

talented and diverse team. Although the content of this issue reflects the momentum built up by my predecessor, I am now taking steps to expand and broaden the editorial board. My intent is that the board reflects the diversity of the sources, audience and market we address. I also feel it is important to involve our current readership, which is exceptionally broad, experienced and knowledgeable, in the growth of the journal. If you have suggestions for how I develop the journal, then I would be delighted to hear from you. If you wish to contribute in any way, for example as an author or by supporting another author who needs expertise in your field, then please contact me directly. Similarly, if there are authoritative people you would like to see write for the journal, I would value your suggestions.

With that appeal for your contributions, I will close this first editorial of my new appointment. Thank you for your continued support and I look forward to corresponding with many of you in the future.

Brian D. Smith  
Editor