

# BMS and Mayne Pharma “Crack” the Case

By Mark Gregory

These days, one of the toughest barriers to successful professional development in pharmaceutical marketing is finding the time to learn new skills, and to strengthen existing ones. Lately, however, a number of companies, like Mayne Pharma and Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS), have adopted an education program called the Pharmahorizons Case Study Challenge (PCSC). They seem to have discovered a formula that works.

The PCSC concept grew out of professional development needs identified by the industry, which called for training that is cost-effective, as well as relevant, fast, and stimulating for adult learners. Perhaps that is why the second annual event attracted over 30 pharmaceutical company teams, and why the competition and interest in the PCSC keeps growing.

The event pits teams of three to four individuals against other PCSC teams in a bid to come up with the best solutions to real life business scenarios. Each team competes in either a managerial or sales stream, and has to tackle up to eight cases. The event is Web-based, so team members collaborate in person, or by phone or e-mail. The goal is to get people to problem-solve by working together, listening well, learning from one another, and thinking “out of the box”.

Jeff MacLean, President of Lundbeck Canada, sums it up this way, “The annual Case Study Challenge has proven to be an effective and efficient way for busy man-



Left to right: Steve Gregory, President Pharmahorizons; Mayne Pharma team members: Pierre Beaulieu, National Sales Manager; Beryl Chan, Scientific Affairs; Pierre d'Amour, Manager of Marketing and Business; Marc Desmarais, Associate Marketing Manager; and Sophie Vadeboncoeur, Pharmahorizons Challenge Co-ordinator.



Left to right: Bristol-Myers Squibb team members: Irene Yi; Naida Hyndman; Salman Qaiser; and Diane Staples.

# Case Study Challenge

agers in the pharmaceutical industry to build their problem-solving skills, while at the same time, foster the development of stronger company teams and networks.”

MacLean has reason to know. One of the teams Lundbeck Canada fielded this year outperformed teams from across the country to place third in the management stream of the PCSC.

In the 2003 PCSC, the winning team in the management stream came from Mayne Pharma. It consisted of team members: Pierre Beaulieu, Pierre d'Amour, Beryl Chan, and Marc Desmarais. The winning team in the sales stream came from BMS, and included team-members: Irene Yi, Naida Hyndman, Salman Qaiser, and Diane Staples. Last year, another BMS team won top honours.

There are other company teams that deserve recognition for top scores and well thought-out submissions, which include teams from Abbott Labs and Berlex Canada.

Participants in the 2003 PCSC competed for cash, prizes, and industry recognition. The winning teams each received \$1,500, state-of-the-art Palm PDAs, and unique trophies. To their credit, both Mayne and BMS recently held special presentation ceremonies during company meetings to recognize the achievement of their top teams. Each February, Pharmahorizons hosts an annual award night gala dinner for the top teams. This year's event saw the winning teams each receive special PCSC mementoes.

The prizes that the PCSC offers are a nice incentive for participants. However, the real value of the PCSC to pharmaceutical marketers is neatly summarized by one of the industry's top educators, Mark Lalande, Manager, Sales Training and Development for Berlex Canada, who stated:

“A marketer's learning curve is never short enough, and some learning is gained at an expensive price, especially when a problem occurs and there is limited time to solve it. A characteristic of the adult learner is the capacity to learn from experience. The Case Study Challenge offers the opportunity to learn using an experiential approach with relevant cases and to enhance the participants' perspective by tapping into the diversified experience of their teammates,” says Lalande. “Last, but not least, the cost of this form of learning is very affordable, given that you do not need to leave your office. The time investment is no more expensive than another team meeting.”

## Case Study Challenge at a glance

- Annual professional development program for pharma managers and sales representatives
- 8 cases per stream
- Groups of 3 to 4 individuals compete against other teams
- Competition runs from July to November
- Competition is bilingual and Web-based; no travel required
- Teams only have to complete 3 out of 8 cases to win
- Challenge information available at the hotline, 1-888-514-5858 (ext. 240), or via the Web site at [www.pharmahorizons.com](http://www.pharmahorizons.com)

Prizes and recognition aside, one of the main reasons participants relish the PCSC is because the case studies are so realistic. Organizers achieve this by working with over two dozen senior industry veterans who volunteer to help develop, select, and judge the cases and team submissions. They choose topics and scenarios in business development, human resources (HR), sales, marketing and brand management, pricing and reimbursement, and regulatory affairs.

The PCSC has attracted the interest of several major industry players who have also joined the competition as major sponsors. These sponsors include IMS Health Canada, Group Encore ITS, and Chronicle Resources, publishers of the *Chronicle of Healthcare Marketing*.

Companies begin to assemble their teams for the third annual Challenge in late February 2004. **CPM**

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