



Pfizer Canada

The Mantle of Leadership

Talking with Catherine Buisson, Vice-President, Marketing, Pfizer Canada

Please review your career path to date, leading up to your appointment as Vice-President, Marketing, at Pfizer.

I am proud to say that I began my pharmaceutical career in 1983 “carrying a bag” as a Pfizer representative in my native France. I have never forgotten the lessons I learned working with doctors and patients on the front lines. To this day, I never underestimate

the importance of our representatives as the face of Pfizer—these are the people who personalize our company to our customers.

In 1986, I moved to Pfizer France’s head office, as a marketing trainee. I loved marketing, and decided to build my career in this discipline. After working in a series of marketing roles in rheumatology and cardiology, I was appointed to a new team that designed and implemented pilot disease management pro-

From left to right: Karalyn Empsall, Associate Director, Market Intelligence & Analytics; Richard Fajzel, Director, Marketing; Catherine Buisson, Vice-President, Marketing; Michael Rubin, Director, Marketing; Anne Maheu, Director, Marketing.

grams that were conducted across Europe. I returned to Pfizer France in 1996 to take the position of Marketing Manager, Central Nervous System (CNS), and to direct the launch of Zoloft™. Between 1997 and 2000, I was the European CNS team leader, with responsibilities for Aricept™, Zoloft, and Zeldox™. After working on the Pfizer/Warner Lambert integration team for Pfizer France, I was named Marketing Director for the Netherlands in 2000.

My education has been a major part of the foundation of my passion for the pharmaceutical industry. I undertook medical training at the Scientific and Medical University of Grenoble, France. I also had the opportunity to complete a post-graduate degree in international marketing at the *Centre d'Études Industrielles d'Île-de-France* in Gentilly.

Pfizer is the largest pharmaceutical company both in Canada and worldwide. How does that affect the way you do business, particularly the way you market to customers?

Leadership gives you profile, which confers benefits and offers instant credibility, but also involves major responsibilities. Doctors, patients, and governments see us not only as a key source of innovative medicines, but also as an ambassador for the whole pharmaceutical industry. I should emphasize that Pfizer strongly supported the development of the new R_x&D Marketing Code, and we believe it is essential that every company behave in a manner that is above reproach. We have made it a major element of our company culture to act as leaders should. We go out of our way to set the standard in terms of innovation, providing added value to customers, and conducting our business in a manner we can be proud of. In essence, we take the responsibilities of leadership very seriously.

Pfizer has purchased two major pharma companies in the past few years. How does this rapid growth impact your marketing department?

Mergers are difficult. They do not always result in a better (or bigger) company, particularly if the merger process has not been well thought-out. I would say it is to the credit of Pfizer, globally and here in Canada, that the mergers with Warner Lambert and Pharmacia were very carefully considered. The result was not just the acquisition of good new products—though that has clearly happened—but also, the close attention that was paid to the needs of new team members from both companies. We paid particular attention to the knowledge-transfer process, to ensure that key know-how was retained during the integrations. It was also equally important for us to maintain our valuable existing relationships with customers; we've worked hard to build on that trust.

In terms of our marketing department's rapid growth, I have been pleasantly surprised with how smoothly that growth has progressed. Part of the reason

for this smooth progression has been that, for several years now, Pfizer has been seen as a company that thinks innovatively and rewards employees who demonstrate its core values (including integrity, customer focus, and performance). We've been able to attract some of the best talent in the industry from across Canada. I think we've built the best marketing team in the country, and I'm very proud of that.

Global branding is a relatively new concept that has been adopted by Pfizer. How is global branding of benefit to a sophisticated marketing group such as yours?

Global branding makes sense because it means the whole organization is speaking with one voice with respect to the value of a new medicine. It emphasizes



Catherine Buisson, Vice-President, Marketing, Pfizer.



Pfizer's leading lineup of "Best in Class" medicines.

- help identify the most effective strategies, given current and future market trends;
- monitor implementation of cross-functionally developed and executed brand plans; and
- offer justifiable answers to questions regarding customer needs and behaviours.

The insights we gain from the market also allow us to build the marketing mix from the bottom up; this ensures we are addressing customer needs to the full extent that our products and services allow. The level at which our market intelligence and analytics group performs delivers a clear competitive advantage. In short, we

the truly global effort that goes into researching and developing a new treatment or cure. Every Pfizer affiliate in every country benefits from the worldwide awareness that new and better medical options are available. Global branding helps us get the right information into the right hands at the right time.

However, I should emphasize that global branding does not mean identical global marketing. Every country is different, as are its physicians, its patients, and the needs of its health-care system. Therefore, I subscribe to a particular philosophy: Brand globally, market locally. If our ultimate objective is to change the lives of patients for the better, we need to keep the Canadian health-care environment in mind. For example, if Canadian seniors need access to our more advanced medicines, we have to make a special effort to demonstrate to provincial governments that our products are worthy of reimbursement—in other words, that our products will alter the disease process, reduce complications, and reduce the overall cost of health care.

How do you ensure that Pfizer Canada adheres to the “brand globally, market locally” doctrine, and makes it work in practice?

We have placed enormous emphasis on our market research function. We rely on our market intelligence and analytics department, to:

have found that better local market research provides for better local market performance.

Lipitor™ has become the most widely prescribed statin worldwide based on your marketing expertise and on the results of many clinical trials. Do you expect Lipitor and Pfizer Canada’s cardiovascular franchise to continue its rapid growth?

Lipitor’s success has been based on two considerations.

First, the Atorvastatin Landmark Program has become the most extensive and rigorous clinical trial program in the world. It continues to prove the astonishing benefits of Lipitor for people with heart disease and related risk factors. Simply put, Lipitor has been demonstrated to save lives, and I think we’ve only seen the tip of the iceberg in terms of the patients who can benefit from it.

Second, our cardiovascular marketing team has done an outstanding job of ensuring this information reaches everyone who needs to know about Lipitor and its value, including doctors, nurses, patients, governments, and the public.

With Lipitor, as well as with Norvasc™ and Accupril™, Pfizer Canada has become by far the leader in cardiovascular care. Customers are now looking to us for more than just great products.

They expect true leadership—insights into improving outcomes, professional and public education, and support in enhancing not only heart disease treatment, but also its prevention. That's one of the key reasons why I have reorganized our marketing department and created a new senior position, Director of Marketing, Cardiovascular and Metabolic Care. As a company, we want to ensure that every Canadian who can benefit from one of our cardiovascular medicines or wellness programs can have an informed consultation with their physician. However, we also want to make sure that we're part of the solution and that we're helping improve the cardiovascular health of this country for the long term. We are embracing leadership. We are acknowledging our big-picture responsibilities. We are expanding our commitment and involvement in basic and clinical research of the highest standards. So, I expect our eminent role in cardiovascular care to continue to grow rapidly.

Pfizer is also a major player in a number of other therapeutic areas beyond the cardiovascular scope. How will your reorganization affect other product groups?

A major portion of our growth over the next few years will be driven by two other therapeutic groups: neuroscience-ophthalmology and rheumatology-urology-oncology/HIV/AIDS. We have thriving blockbuster molecules such as Viagra™, Celebrex™, and Aricept, as well as a large number of new indications and molecules in our pipelines. Our reorganization will allow us to place a very focused emphasis on these areas, which two very strong senior marketing directors are overseeing. We already hold leadership positions in these categories, and we expect very impressive growth from new and existing products.

You were born in France, and you've worked with Pfizer affiliates from all over the world. How do Pfizer's Canadian employees compare with those from other countries?

There is something I found very striking about Pfizer Canada employees since I started working here. Their outlook is neither American, nor European, but rather a combination of the best of both styles.



Pfizer's "little blue pill". The brand that is shaping direct-to-consumer advertising in Canada.

When I first arrived from Europe, I was pleased to find that Pfizer Canada staff exercised a fact-based, analytical approach to planning and problem solving, which was very similar to what I was familiar with in Europe. At the same time, there was a certain entrepreneurialism that one commonly associates with the U.S. Teams and team leaders never hesitated to take real ownership of their products and projects, and apply very innovative, creative solutions to problems, or take advantage of new opportunities.

What we at Pfizer call "leader behaviours" are very apparent and advanced in Canada. My Canadian colleagues from all functional areas encourage open discussion and debate, manage change extremely well, and never lose their focus on performance. These behaviours combine to create a dynamic environment that very effectively fosters teamwork.

This approach is evident in the entire senior leadership of Pfizer Canada, and I think our president, Mr. Jean-Michel Halfon, has become a role model in this respect. He has encouraged all employees to bring their leadership potential to their jobs, in addition to the discipline and planning that help us

Pfizer Canada

meet our forecasts each quarter. He's excited by the creative leaps and surges in performance we've achieved in Canada, and that enthusiasm infects every Pfizer Canada employee.

Even though you are the largest pharmaceutical company in the world, you have established joint development and marketing agreements with Boehringer Ingelheim and Aventis Pharma. Why are these joint ventures necessary? What are the major benefits of these joint ventures to Pfizer? Do you foresee other joint ventures for Pfizer in the future?

Our joint ventures and partnerships are a major source of our competitiveness. Partnering with other

companies with valuable and effective medicines allows us to complement our existing product portfolio and helps us develop a presence in emerging therapeutic areas. It also gives our partners access to Pfizer's powerful commercial strengths. Whether on a global or Canadian basis, we make it our business to attract partners by building win-win scenarios. Our promise is that both companies will benefit. More importantly, we promise to help make sure the best medicines reach the right patients. That's the most rewarding part of this industry; you have the ability to literally change people's lives for the better. You do well by doing a great deal of good. **CPM**

Discover the Strength within.

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