

Welcome and overview of the 6th Forum

By Katharina Janus

Ladies and Gentlemen – Bienvenue à Paris !

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Center's 6th Forum and worldwide expert meeting on challenges to market access, strategic development and life sciences partnerships. As the founder and director of the Center for Healthcare Management I am proud and excited to be here in this beautiful residence and thank our host and sponsors for making this possible.

Today we celebrate together with you already the Center's 6th Forum – this time in Paris, after Berlin, Hamburg and Washington D.C. It is time to reflect and also to reinvent ourselves constantly based on the experiences we make. This is what the fashion guru Karl Lagerfeld proposes as the sole viable approach for long-term business strategy. Well, business strategy certainly goes further than constant re-invention, but the described mindset has driven learning and innovation for centuries.

Take this place: Reid Hall. It started out as a porcelain factory in the 18th century, then first educational activities were held in the 19th century when it also became a residential center for women. In the 20th century, when Elizabeth Reid turned it over to her daughter who was the first director of Reid Hall it became a cultural and educational hub. In 1964, it then became part of Columbia University and one of Columbia's Global Centers in 2010. A place of transformation and innovation over centuries.

Last year I talked about our host in Berlin – Robert Bosch – who was an innovator in his time. Some of you might remember and appreciate the invention of the dishwasher, but he also worked on the ignition for cars and other aspects of life that we take for granted today, but were revolutionary in his time.

Today, knowledge is growing and human experience makes knowledge applicable to particular challenges in business and science. But the wealth of knowledge allows the human mind to be experienced only in particular fields/medical specializations/business units and the like. Within those silos, we know what to do, but connecting the dots among silos becomes increasingly difficult. For example, as a physician you have to understand the patient as a whole rather than the disease. In fact, experience is counterproductive if increased specialization leads to silos that limit an integrated perspective which could and should connect silos to a bigger picture. We experience the side-effects of this issue of modernity – fragmentation, boredom, and lost learning opportunities.

Take the topic of market access – and here are a few things we learned from our clients who convinced us to pick this topic for the 6th Forum:

1. While global organizations have great competencies in some countries, these are missing in others. Formal structures prevent cross-country learning, collaboration and synergies (efficiencies 😊) and thus coordinated action – is there a global market access strategy?
2. Traditional alleys of reimbursement are increasingly difficult to tackle – especially for truly innovative products. Are there other, more creative approaches? Can we create partnerships for pilots to prove added value?
3. We have evidence, but it is limited. Usually, it only applies to one country, but what you need is modular evidence that can be used in different countries. There is also an inherent conflict of interest of science versus marketing: a professor wants to publish – but you need the evidence for reimbursement strategies and marketing.

4. We have evidence, but it is boring. Who wants to read a 100-page whitepaper? The executive summary is called like this because it is the only part that executives read.
5. Budgets are very limited, especially for non-patent protect products and also for high-end innovations (the "newest cancer drug") that get approved fast to make them available which in turn prevents comprehensive data collection, and thus, evidence to prove added value for reimbursement.

So what?

1. If you have no (or less) money you need a good story. We never paid a doctor to participate in our projects. It's about strategic communication.
2. Evidence has to be modular for use in different countries and created for your purpose.
3. Evidence needs an appealing package.
4. Beyond and in conjunction with evidence strategic partnerships are gaining importance to explore non-traditional ways of reimbursement.
5. Creativity is needed to draw the bigger picture and put the puzzle together.

But Creativity calls for courage (Henri Matisse), taking a stand and aller en dehors du sentier battu (walk outside of the beaten path). It also requires questioning established methods and a "just-do-it" attitude. But courage does not mean the absence of fear (fear and careful budgeting keeps you alive). It just means that other things are more important, as Mark Twain. We felt that these emerging issues of market access are important for you. That's why we are here.

Tackling emerging issues and approaching them in an innovative format were (and are) my aspiration and inspiration when I started the Forum more than six years ago and I'd like to introduce you to our approach now. Aspirations usually grow out of a perceived lack of "something" as the current market access debate shows. I felt that attending traditional conferences was increasingly boring. Technology had made it easy to show the same slides (and content) again and again. Sometimes, you even see your own slides recycled as a surprise by other speakers. Easy access, fast dissemination, but what about the content? I also realized that human interaction – the dialogue among experts was vanishing. And with that the fun, the enjoyment. So instead of just coping with my boredom, I decided to create something new in the spirit of

Convening instead of conferencing

My goal was to create a new, very interactive format and I called it a Knowledge Party, like a dinner party with more content – meaning actionable knowledge that guests can take home and apply in their respective settings. Slides are clearly not the right medium if you want to throw a party, so they are not allowed here. Instead, we've placed a high premium on face-to-face conversations. That's why you are sitting at roundtables.

Like at a dinner party, the first step is to find a hospitable space in which to set a gathering. The next step is to bring the right people to the table, each of whom offer their own expertise, but also their own questions and need for advice.

All participants must also share certain essential characteristics, such as mutual respect, interest in others' perspectives, and most importantly – as John F. Kennedy said – a willingness to listen to one another, not just to respond, but to truly understand – not just to present information to others, but to contribute to a dialogue. There are no pretensions here – you can let your hair down, so to say, and expect an open exchange of ideas.

Of course, allowing for spontaneous reaction and adjustments in a highly interactive forum requires even more work and better preparation than a traditional conference: To support the process we use real-time visualization (such as flip-chart drawings and iPad sketches) and written reports to make breakthrough ideas tangible and available to all participants.

Over the last five years we have also made changes to improve and re-invent our approach. Last year, we introduced our "ideas corner" where ideas will be captured using an electronic format. These efforts will generate a cloud of ideas that grows over two days and is projected on the stage. At the end of the second day we will condense "the cloud" into take-away messages for you to take home. So, when you feel inspired or you have a breakthrough thought please step up to the ideas corner – Marc is waiting for you over there.

With our Forums, we aim at creating the perfect approach for convening people. We are always grateful for your feedback and have made many adjustments based on your perceptions. Antoine de Saint Exupéry – an author, aviator and adventurer of his time wrote in his book "Terre des Hommes" (1939) – in English wind, sand and stars: It seems that perfection is attained not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing more to remove. And that's where we want to be. We want to be sure to have removed everything and created a format that is conducive to solving your strategic business questions.

Like at a good party we have always followed our maxim: there is no compromise on people and the quality of content. Those are the essential ingredients to grow knowledge with joy. At the Center for Healthcare Management we have had the pleasure to work with the best brains from around the world. Many of them are here today: we welcome experts from all perspectives and many different countries. Thanks for following our invitation!

Last, but not least before we get started, I'd like to thank our supporters: New York Presbyterian, Mount Sinai Health Network, my own consulting network ENJOY STRATEGY, CityMD, the department of Health Policy & Management at Columbia University New York and last, but not least the Paris Global Center. Let's get the party started!