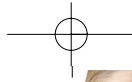


Career Insights

from Lucy Randle, STAR Medical



Steve Tarpey joined Boehringer Ingelheim after 12 years in the pharmaceutical industry. Promoted to Sales Director in July 2006, he is responsible for setting the salesforce strategy and ensuring the effectiveness of the processes for the motivation and direction of the company's 300 sales staff. He explained why he feels Boehringer Ingelheim has such a low staff turnover.

Last year Boehringer achieved 2nd position as the Employer of Choice within PF's 'Company Perception, Motivation and Satisfaction Survey' and was placed within the 'Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to work for' for the fifth time in a row. How does that make you feel?

We are proud of these achievements. They confirm we are succeeding in our mission to ensure employee engagement – my number one objective. We are extremely consultative and work hard to ensure buy-in to the company objectives. These external measures are further echoed by an anonymous employee survey which showed that a very high proportion of our field force is positive towards the company with an employee commitment index of 91 compared to a European Pharma Industry benchmark of 59. This tells us that our people feel connected with the company; they care about it and identify with what it is trying to achieve. As a result, they have strong ownership for their work and feel motivated to deliver their objectives. Turnover here is just 8% per year.

Why does Boehringer Ingelheim routinely achieve such accolades?

We continue to benefit from being family owned but our culture has evolved over the last 5-6 years. The biggest difference has been providing clarity on our strategy, ensuring focus for the future. From this we have been better able to recognise top performers by implementing a transparent promotion and rewards scheme. We now offer top quartile salaries, fantastic benefits and an excellent car policy. We are serious about our employee development programmes and have also developed a robust succession planning scheme to maximise talent.

How would you describe the culture at Boehringer?

'Always Individual, never alone.' We allow people the freedom to be themselves and bring diversity to the table. It is a 'no blame' culture, where people are encouraged to take risks (within the bounds of the ABPI). If the risks don't pay off we are constructive, making sure we learn from our mistakes and move forward. The hierarchy is in the background, and everyone's opinion is valued and welcomed.

How are you meeting the changing needs of the NHS?

Our challenge is to work even closer as a total team across all elements of the business; sales, marketing and medical. We will only succeed by being customer intimate and flexible at representative and field management level. We are working hard to ensure that people are properly empowered to make the right decisions around customer segmentation and manage key accounts within the local NHS networks to drive their business forward.

How are you empowering your Key Account Management?

We are upskilling all our salesforce, and helping them to map out the local networks, identify stakeholders and influencers and plan the inputs into those networks. They are then coached on building positive relationships with appropriate individuals within the network. Nowadays, it is such a complex environment. This is why our Unit Business Managers are empowered to differentially resource to reflect the needs of their local NHS. We are trying to role model excellence in Key Account Management and continually share best practice to help us become the partner of choice for the NHS.

One of Boehringer Ingelheim's key strategies for success lies in effective 'Key Account Management' – developing high sales potential from fewer accounts. Lucy Randle talks about this hot topic and shows that sometimes less is more.

If you have heard the statistic that 80% of business comes from 20% of customers you will understand why Key Account Management is a smart way to work. To be successful as a Key Account Manager you need to change your mind-set. Instead of visiting hundreds of customers just a couple of times a year you will need to focus on visiting fewer high potential customers more frequently.

Identify your key accounts

You can use historical sales data to see how your products have been performing and identify any patterns. Divide your customers into 4 categories and focus on the first 2:

- (1) Customers with high growth potential – often experts in their field or those who work in geographical areas with a greater need for your product.
- (2) Guaranteed business requiring continuing customer service and special attention.
- (3) Existing customers with lower potential due to changing business needs.
- (4) Customers with little or no potential.

Fact find

Find out the names and contact details of these customers. Consider who you might need to speak to first in order to reach them. Uncover their goals and needs and bear in mind any possible restrictions, for example local PCT guidelines.

Customer service

Always deliver what you promise. Be clear in your own mind about the service you can offer and then make sure the customer knows what they can expect. Keep your team members in the loop so that they too are sensitive to your key customers' needs.

Planning & evaluation

Stay focused on your own objectives too. What are your goals – to encourage the use of value-added services or simply to increase sales? Evaluate your sales figures and identify any trends that can be further developed. Make plans for how you'll generate leads and set targets with specific times and dates. Note which approaches have been most successful and repeat! Most importantly, continually evaluate your relationship with the key customer. Learn from the strengths and weaknesses of your competitors' relationships with the customer too.



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