

# MIM&M



# MIND YOUR TALENT 2017

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## FROM THE EDITOR

If you're reading this supplement — *MM&M's* Mind Your Talent 2017 — you're likely an employer, talent scout, or a person seeking to advance. As such, you'd probably like more than a trend analysis. You want concrete insight into building your own great teams or moving up the ladder. So, alongside features spotlighting those who have successfully hiked the pharma career path and agencies endeavoring to attract and retain the best talent, here's an analysis you may not have expected: What of the 15%, or 131 people, whose job satisfaction levels were at the low end of the scale in *MM&M's* 30th annual Career and Salary Survey (see *MM&M's* September 2016 issue for more information from the survey)?

Those in this cohort tended to be women working for drug or device makers or agencies. Despite an average six-figure salary, they report fair to poor advancement prospects and overwhelmingly say they are on the lookout for new positions this year. Advancement and environment and culture, along with money, were cited as job-changing motivations. There was also a core group who seem disenchanted: Overall, 16% said they want out of the industry altogether.

It's not good when anyone in an industry wanting for top talent is running for the exit, but given the industry's problem with gender parity, and nontraditional players such as tech and consultancies poaching talent, it can least afford for those people to be women. It needs to be sure that more women advance to the highest echelons, not leave them frustrated and looking to get out.

To be sure, industry's long-term record when it comes to offering a rewarding employment experience is a positive one. Agencies and manufacturers can try to do a better job of ensuring that everyone gets that same opportunity.

Marc Iskowitz, editor-in-chief, *MM&M*

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# AGENCY CONFIDENTIAL

It's not exactly a news flash that talent acquisition and retention have long been the agency world's most vexing challenges. Here, seven execs from A-list agencies weigh in on that particular headache and more

**Moderated by Larry Dobrow**

**What is the current state of the so-called talent war in the agency world? What are the most active fronts, so to speak?**

**Lori Grant, Klick Health:** Agencies should focus on the term "talent experience" rather than on "talent war" and provide candidates with a good feel for the agency experience they can have there. We started doing experiential recruiting a couple of years ago for this very reason: to give people a taste of Klick's culture, introduce them to Klicksters, and help them envision what it would be like to work with us.

People want to join inspiring, culturally rich workplaces that value and ignite their talent and allow them to work on things they are really passionate about. At Klick, we focus on culture and the employee experience and never take either for granted.

**Ross Toohey, 2e Creative:** Cultivating an agency talent profile in today's market is simultaneously wonderful and infuriating. And things aren't slowing

down. From our perspective, there are really two major drivers behind it all.

First, there's the changing face of the workforce, where agencies are scrambling to adapt compensation, benefits, training, and cultural engagement to the evolved preferences of millennials. Slow-moving agencies with stale corporate cultures will continue to see key talent fleeing for more nimble, attractive environments. Leaning on higher compensation alone to attract and retain talent will both lure the wrong type of people and increase costs, and clients will pick up on that pretty quickly.

Second, there's the perpetually expanding universe of digital, and the resulting stresses it places on agencies to cram digital talent into an oddly defined box. With the proliferation of digital strategies, media, and channels, finding talent with the brain and muscle to be fluent and effective in the digital space is a mind-crushing task. Add to that any sort of fluency in regulated healthcare and it's like discovering a Mickey Mantle rookie card in your grandfather's tackle box. Recruiters know that.

**Robin Roberts, Concentric Health Experience:**

The macro issues haven't changed, because in this industry it's always been a constant battle for good people. What has changed is that the process now has to move so much faster. Gone are the days of meeting a candidate half a dozen times. Now we have a very incisive vetting and interview process and can bring them in and evaluate their skill set much more quickly than, say, five years ago. Our onboarding process also enables us to ensure people hit the ground running.

From a tactical perspective, we still see good mid-level account people and strategic planning as the most important — and challenging — active fronts.

**Anshul Purohit, Purohit Navigation:**

It's as active as ever. We've tried to stay on top of talent retention, as well as be open to alternative and nontraditional recruiting sources to find and cultivate the best teams. Remote staffing has also yielded success. We are focused on finding not just the best talent, but the best-fit talent for our culture and philosophy and intend to stay in front of this issue so as to keep it that way.

**Didi Discar, Carling Communications:**

Many young professionals working in East Coast agencies jump around, leaving one healthcare agency for another every year or two. Taking advantage of the talent war, these creatives or client-services folks move for higher salaries, more responsibility, and a belief that the grass is greener at another agency. Carling Communications is one of few healthcare advertising agencies in Southern California, so we don't face this pressure. The local labor pool generally lacks healthcare experience, so our challenge is to entice experienced agency talent to relocate to California. Identifying

top talent is already a difficult task, and relocation can add to that difficulty.

Our talent acquisition manager spends his days seeking out candidates who will be a great cultural fit and who can bring new perspectives and thinking to the agency. We put candidates through an intense vetting process because most new hires will require relocation packages. At present, 90% of new hires were personally recruited and hired because of their successful track record.

**Lauren Wetmore, Create NYC:** With the continued success and momentum of the healthcare industry, rising stars in the healthcare agency world have an edge. Talented individuals, especially those with more than five years of experience in account or creative management, are in high demand. This industry trend has made the idea of building a future at any one agency something of a rarity and something that is not necessarily valued by many agencies.

A large focus for Create NYC is not only to attract top talent, but also to ensure they thrive in our culture. With a commitment from both sides, we've seen employees buck industry trends, putting down roots for a long-term career.

**Becky Chidester, Wunderman Health:** Healthcare agencies are in a race to add digital skill sets to their teams. The competition for this talent is only getting stiffer as the industry continues to expand and agencies find themselves competing against new players like Google, Facebook, and other consulting and technology companies. With rapid, continued growth in personalized marketing, we are looking for candidates who possess not only strong digital skills, but who also have a combination of skills — familiarity with data and technology platforms combined with an understanding of the multichannel strategies for crafting better user experiences.

**What are some of the changes your agency is making in response to more heated competition for A-list talent, whether in terms of compensation or capabilities or anything else?**

**Toohey:** The recruiting process doesn't end when someone accepts an offer. In fact, it's never really over. It's easy to fall into the trap of wooing someone to join



**ANSHAL PUROHIT**  
EVP, strategic development  
Purohit Navigation



**BECKY CHIDESTER**  
CEO  
Wunderman Health



**DIDI DISCAR**  
principal  
Carling Communications



**LAUREN WETMORE**  
SVP, account services  
Create NYC



**LORI GRANT**  
president  
Klick Health



**ROBIN ROBERTS**  
general manager  
Concentric Health  
Experience



**ROSS TOOHEY**  
CEO  
2e Creative

your agency and setting them up with a desk, then assuming they're a done deal.

At 2e, we've embraced an engaging cultural mission to drive change for brands that shape the world. We've created new programs to help team members learn, grow, and explore the world. Our VP of creative, Lynda McClure, recently launched a mandatory program where the entire agency is assigned a weekly creative challenge designed to encourage entrepreneurship and cross-pollination.

**Purohit:** As far as finding talent, we've added and successfully recruited from several nontraditional sources. Though training some of these folks requires a little investment, their intelligence and drive compensate for this. When it comes to staff retention, we have been actively working on offering such perks as work-from-home flexibility, as well as more leadership growth and participation for those interested. We're also looking at things like office and building amenities, proximity to mass transit, office configuration for maximum collaboration, and other conveniences to ensure that our people have the most ideal situation given how much work they put in on a daily basis.

**Wetmore:** We position our corporate culture as a critical component to our success, one that also provides a competitive advantage. In 2016, we further developed it by collectively creating a "culture manifesto" and adding regularly scheduled off sites to ensure we connect often on both professional and personal levels. In addition to driving culture, 100% of our employees participate in a bonus program of 10% to 50% or more of their salary along with medical benefits, a 401(k), and a custom-made wellness benefit, among other perks.

But perhaps the biggest game changer is our telecommuting policy, which puts employees in charge of managing their business and deciding the most efficient way to get their work done. Whether that is at a client site, a home office, or at the Create NYC office, the choice is theirs.

**Roberts:** Getting people in the door is what we see as the hardest part. Because from there, the culture we've created supports the rest. We're willing to invest in people and where they want to go in their career. We work with people on flex schedules. We've designed a new space that blows people away and has plenty of spaces for fostering a community feeling. All of this supports our view that once you bring in good people, they'll bring more good people with them.

**Chidester:** Beyond the chance to work with some of the most important brands in the world and competitive compensation, we recognize that to succeed as a business and a culture, we need to support both the personal and professional sides of our people. In

2016, we launched an overall talent strategy, You Time, which is dedicated to building a culture of openness and authenticity. The effort includes such initiatives as Because Conversations Matter, in which we ask managers and employees to go off-site and have an open dialogue about goals and what that individual employee needs to be successful.

Cocktails and Conversations is a local event series that encourages networking and discussions around industry issues. Pass It On is a two-day empowerment workshop to support talented women across our network. Across all these programs, we have a single goal: to ensure we are supporting our team around the world both personally and professionally.

**Discar:** We challenge our employees to produce the best-quality work. Since many of our clients are geographically diverse, this can result in early morning or late-night client calls. To compensate, we provide perks and benefits — unlimited vacation, full-time concierge service to run errands, catered lunches, free workout classes, and, most importantly, plenty of advancement opportunities. We started the Carling Apprentice Program to cultivate talent among new college and business school graduates. The initial rollout resulted in two solid hires. CAP will be expanded to other departments in 2017.

Another HR initiative was the Carling Special Forces Bootcamp, which built on the agency's already-successful onboarding program. It brings together new hires to discuss personality and adaptive styles and discusses how to have difficult conversations and be successful in a high-performance culture.

**Grant:** From the hiring side, we're doing what we've always done. At Klick, we take a considered approach of always interviewing and hiring slightly ahead of need. When we find the right talent, we hire them. That means that both we and our candidates have the opportunity to take the time needed to ensure everyone is making a great decision.

We're also evolving with new Klick offerings that attract talent and clients alike. Case in point? Klick Labs serves as the digital innovation partner to a growing number of global biopharmas and has been featured on CNBC and Fox. Based on its popularity, we've built a Klick Labs component into our employee-onboarding program. Similarly, people are getting excited about what we're doing with Klick Platforms' approach to revitalizing omnichannel marketing programs using smart technology.

**How might the possibility of ACA repeal affect the way agencies go about their business from a staffing or offerings perspective?**

**Discar:** Carling prides itself on being able to provide free healthcare to employees. The ACA has negatively



**"If an ACA repeal were to result in lower premiums, the agency could redirect the savings as compensation for additional hires or bonuses for current employees"**

— Didi Discar, Carling Communications

affected our small business by artificially capping our headcount due to increasing premiums, the cost of which the agency absorbs as an operating expense. If an ACA repeal were to result in lower premiums, the agency could redirect the savings as compensation for additional hires or bonuses for current employees.

**Toohy:** If anything, ACA repeal will alter the trajectory of evolution in the agency business, but I don't think it'll impact the velocity very much. We're already an industry rocked by dynamic change. We're used to adapting. ACA repeal will see focus and resources shift from more "traditional" pharma marketing efforts toward things like disease state awareness, clinical-economic value articulation, and consumer education. From an agency-staffing perspective, this means talent investments will favor strategy and planning functions, with emphasis on building scalable talent pools for creative and production.

**Wetmore:** Affordable medical coverage is one of the most-sought-after benefits by candidates. A repeal of the ACA will undoubtedly make this even more important. Since the agency was founded, Create NYC has been and remains committed to reimbursement of 80% of the entire cost of staff healthcare.

In addition to medical coverage, we also place a large emphasis on health and wellness programs aimed at increasing our team's overall well-being. We even go so far as to include wellness as a core success factor by which we measure employees. We've found that a happy, well-balanced employee will inevitably provide better output for the agency.

**Grant:** There's a lot of speculation regarding the outcome of the proposed ACA repeal and it's not



especially helpful to add to the rhetoric. If repeal occurs, it will unlikely be a wholesale repeal. We will monitor the situation and will address and adapt to any changes if required. It's an incredibly complex act to be sure, but at its core, it's about patient protection. Interestingly, even though most people refer to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act — PPACA — as simply the ACA, casting aside any reference to patient protection, it's important that we as an industry always keep the patient top of mind.

**Chidester:** Focusing on better patient outcomes will be highly relevant, even if the ACA is repealed. The emphasis on preventative care and adherence will continue as the entire healthcare industry looks for ways to reduce the cost of care and provide more quality treatment. What this could mean for healthcare agencies is that the current focus on product promotion will evolve toward more targeted patient-support services. We could see a reduced need for brand and product messaging skills and a greater need for people with multichannel and behavioral science expertise — especially people with training for overcoming the inertia and inaction often seen in health as well as inspiring persistent healthy behaviors.

At Wunderman Health, we continue to add such offerings as enhanced data mining, analytics, and strategic consulting to support the insights needed for these services. In addition, we are forging innovative partnerships with companies like IBM Watson, LifeQ, and various data suppliers that enable us to identify and understand patients by their risks, so we can tailor the most appropriate interventions.

**Roberts:** We don't feel it's going to have an impact. We didn't see much upheaval when it arrived, so we don't anticipate much upheaval should it exit. A greater impact on our agency has been the presidential election, which always makes clients more cautious in an uncertain climate both on spending and initiatives. The minute we passed Election Day, we saw that start to change.

#### How have your client relationships evolved during the current outcomes and social media era?

**Chidester:** As the healthcare industry increasingly focuses on outcomes, we are more fully leveraging our strengths in data and analytics to ensure our clients have the right insights to inspire action and healthy behaviors. We help clients build more robust and dynamic understandings of their customers based on predicted “moments of truth” and other actions they take around which we can deliver highly engaging content, services, and omnichannel experiences. And as a trusted partner, we help clients maximize their marketing spend. We use a variety of methods and tools to look at performance and track how well our

**“The emphasis on preventative care and adherence will continue as the entire industry looks for ways to reduce the cost of care and provide more quality treatment”**

— Becky Chidester,  
Wunderman Health

creative assets and engagement models deliver. We optimize accordingly, shifting our creative output toward the topics and formats that resonate best.

**Grant:** We have always striven to ensure that our client relationships are partnerships as opposed to transactional relationships, which means we focus on outcomes instead of optics. The evolutionary curve doesn't have so much to do with client relationships as it does with the full integration of data and communication layers along with the drive for efficiency and innovation required for today's sophisticated clients.

Our ability to match proven capabilities with evolving client expectations distinguishes us as invaluable for the uncertain but exciting road ahead.

**Roberts:** Client relationships have evolved in that it's rare we see any client who isn't held to metrics by their own management, so we need to support that. We have analytics experts in place who can converse with clients about how to measure outcomes on any given initiative and then use performance data to determine if an effort is working or not. This has elevated our relationship in nearly every case because it strengthens our collaboration as trusted partners.

For social media, we just move much, much faster now. Clients understand that content can fast become yesterday's news, so we have to deliver quickly and remain nimble enough to make changes at the drop of a hat. That speed of content to market has also elevated the level and frequency of client collaboration.

**Toohey:** Agencies like 2e are no longer viewed simply as idea producers. Clients now look to us as stewards and navigators, as pilots who navigate the seas of communications tools, technologies, and tactics while connecting market trends with their business objectives. Our relationships with individuals have grown stronger. Once brand managers find an agency they're compatible with, they stick together for life.

Our relationships with procurement have grown as well. In some organizations, procurement groups have successfully cracked the code of how to connect agencies with their internal clients for mutual benefit. We love those folks.

**Discar:** Social media has humanized relationships, providing a richer client-agency experience. LinkedIn provides optics into a client's thinking and potential plans in a way that wasn't possible several years ago.

For example, you can gain valuable insight by observing a client's current connections and who they are adding. If a client adds a competing agency to their contacts, this could be an early warning sign that the account may be in jeopardy. You'd want to initiate a conversation immediately to review agency performance and solidify expectations, and, maybe, pick up additional business.

**What are the qualities that characterize the best agency-client relationships and how have they changed? What are the qualities that characterize the worst ones?**

**Purohit:** These qualities have not changed at all. The best relationships have been those anchored on strategic partnership, trust, and openness. These relationships work because they allow us to think creatively on behalf of the brand and recognize that ROI is based not only on cost, but also on how far the dollar is stretched and on overall goal and metrics achievement. Conversely, the worst are anchored around cost-savings and scrutiny — a commodity-based agency view. While cost-efficiency is always an important component for agency evaluation, it rarely if ever makes for a healthy foundation for a long-term client relationship.

**Discar:** Human nature hasn't changed, so the fundamentals of what constitutes a strong agency-client relationship haven't changed. At its core, good relationships result when all parties work as true partners for the mutual benefit of the stakeholders. In the healthcare industry, this translates to the client and agency working in unison to improve the lives of patients through the healthcare professional.

**Roberts:** No matter the year, no matter the industry, relationships are and will always remain the most important aspect of business, and the best ones are built on trust, authenticity, and capability. For our leadership team, it is paramount to establish a long-view perspective to client relationships within everyone at our agency — at all disciplines and all levels. This approach ensures everyone, including our clients, are aligned on our collective priorities and are invested in ensuring team success.

**Wetmore:** The best relationships are built on a commitment to deliver, especially in less-than-perfect circumstances. Regardless of the deliverables, agency-client partnerships that lack transparency and accountability are destined for rough patches.

**Chidester:** Best is an agency-client partnership built around a commitment — and permission — to experiment, learn, and take risks. In order to drive innovation, generate new ideas, and deliver meaningful customer experiences, agency-client teams must be willing to accept, learn from, and improve through failure. The best partnerships allow agencies to rethink how brands connect with consumers, leveraging creativity, data, and analytics to bring fresh insights on how to be most relevant and build work that achieves this relevancy.



Worst is where there are silos among disciplines. While clients still have the need for discipline experts, the trick is to create a structure and culture where each agency works as part of one team.

**Toohy:** Our strongest relationships are with clients who treat us as an extension of their team, rather than as a vendor. It's easy to forget that at the other end of the phone is a group of people dedicated to your business. Agency teams that feel connected and engaged tend to produce better work more efficiently. The worst client-agency relationships are those in which the agency is relegated to a costly production resource. It kills motivation and drives off talent.

**What can agencies do to help address the pharma and healthcare industry's image, perception, reputation — whatever — problem?**

**Chidester:** The industry has taken a beating, especially over the past 12 to 24 months. Much of this is the result of a lack of understanding of the time and cost in getting best-in-class medical treatments to market. Opportunities around open-source development, shared data from machine-based learning, maturity in operating in a more transparent world, and increased understanding of the value of medication would do a lot to improve perception.

**Toohy:** There's a real science to telling a clinical or economic value story in a compelling, believable way. Unfortunately, very few agencies excel at this craft — because until recently, clients didn't invest much in it. As advisers for clients, agencies should reinforce ethical claims in creative. Unfortunately, the agency review RFP process is often calibrated to reward agencies pitching concepts with irresponsible claims.

**Grant:** It's important to support the industry and provide client support and guidance as required.



In the case of drug-pricing transparency, our CEO, Leerom Segal, recently wrote about the need for biopharma execs to educate the public, media, and policy influencers and foster an open, honest, and objective dialogue about innovation, investment, and public health to combat the irrational vilification of the industry and such culprits as rising insurance co-pays.

**Discar:** The public's perception of our industry has been bad for years, but social media has heightened awareness of the negative actions of a few individuals. Agencies, as true strategic partners, must continue to act as the voice of reason and challenge clients to think about how their marketing actions will be perceived in the marketplace. It's imperative that agencies understand the regulatory pressures being faced by clients so we can be sensitive to our clients' pain points and help find solutions.

**Roberts:** Given strong capabilities and a deep understanding of the market, we're better able to identify moves that may have a negative impact on the brand. With the right level of trust, you can be honest with clients about things that give you pause. This can go a long way in preventing a bad perception not only for a brand, but also for the industry as a whole.

**Purohit:** We can continue to encourage transparency and honest communication with HCPs, consumers, and patients. One of the most important dynamics we can help manage is the tone and intention behind market development and DTC and DTP communication, as these areas are often highly visible yet essential to the success of new brands.

**What is your best-case scenario for the healthcare and pharma marketing business in 2017?**

**Chidester:** In healthcare, the big game changer will be increased consumer cost-sharing. Some forecasts

"We'd love to see trends toward patient education, engagement, and empowerment continue. It's what we do best"

— Ross Toohey,  
2e Creative

estimate that deductibles, co-pays, and co-insurance will grow 40% over the next five years. Shifts in self-care and financial ownership will further empower consumers to take more responsibility for their health. The best-case scenario for healthcare marketers in 2017 will be, first, a true recognition of the role of the patient. This means an investment in new tools that truly help empower patients to manage their new responsibilities.

The second scenario is activating digital healthcare professionals to help these empowered consumers. This includes going beyond brand promotion to support providers in all aspects of their businesses and patient care, including providing them with resources like education, analytics, and connectivity.

**Toohey:** Our core focus is connecting people with therapies and technologies that enhance life. We'd love to see trends toward patient education, engagement, and empowerment continue. It's what we do best.

**Roberts:** One thing that was very exciting about 2016 was that we saw more innovation and fewer me-too products, which in turn led to faster FDA approvals. We're hopeful that 2017 will see more of the same.

One thing we'd like to see more of in 2017 is for more pharma brands to push for digital innovation. There are so many exciting things happening in the health space, from machine learning to virtual health apps. If pharma brands push to the frontier in their engagements with both doctors and patients, it could be a game changer.

**Discar:** We would like to see the industry normalize or increase investment for patients. Supporting innovation for better patient outcomes would generate additional business opportunities for agencies. Our agency will continue to encourage clients to think — and operate — as true commercial marketers.

**And what's the worst-case scenario?**

**Chidester:** The worst-case scenario is that the industry continues on the path it's on, looking at digital as an "add-on" exercise confined to delivering product messages via channels like emails and websites.

**Roberts:** Most agree that the new administration will likely be good for pharma, but if a worst-case scenario arises, it would be a rogue tweet from the White House that makes people skittish and sends stocks plummeting.

**Toohey:** A tax credit that incentivizes pharma marketers to invest more budget sending unsolicited faxes to doctors' offices. Please, no. ■



# CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

Paths to the top in pharma are rarely straight — or straightforward. Here, five highly placed insiders in a range of roles and therapeutic categories share secrets to their success and advice that served them well along the way

**By Larry Dobrow**



**“Ask for new responsibilities and never be afraid to negotiate”**

— Sierra Towers

## Sierra Towers

Executive director,  
respiratory marketing

**Boehringer Ingelheim**

**Time in the industry**  
more than seven years

**What was your original career goal, as a youngster or when you got out of school?**

To open, develop menus for, and run high-end restaurants.

**What were your previous jobs?**

All of them were in hospitality, either running established restaurants or opening and running my own.

**How did you get into healthcare?**

I switched careers, went back to school, and started in pharma after I graduated. BI found me at the MIT Sloan School of Management. I met with the leadership team, visited the campus, and knew I wanted to work there. It reminded me of what I loved about Sloan: The environment was completely collaborative. No egos, no hierarchy — just working together to get the job done.

**What were some of the challenges you faced along the way — and how did you get past them?**

I struggled with people who did not take me seriously. I had to work hard to earn respect or to get that first meeting. I had to prove I deserved the job.

**What has surprised you most about working in the industry?**

I did not appreciate all the complexities of pharma: the science, medicine, regulation, payers, health systems and contracting, the competition and impact of politics and healthcare reform.

**To whom do you owe success?**

While I want to give myself some credit, I have to say I am where I am because of a man I met who told me I could do anything. Eighteen years, a couple of kids, and 14 years of marriage later, he is still my biggest supporter.

**What do you consider to be your most useful career skill or greatest professional strength, and how did you develop it?**

I am not afraid to ask for what I deserve. I am my own advocate. I read years ago about how women are paid less than men for the same jobs and thought about the people I have hired. Men always negotiated; women, rarely. I wondered how often a woman's pay could have been higher had she asked.

**Looking back, is there anything you would have done differently?**

Yes and no. Yes, I can think of a dozen things I could have done differently, but I am not sure I would have. My greatest failure was selling my restaurant to pay off secured creditors, but I would do it again. But in pharma, I don't think I would change much.

**What advice would you give others looking to get into the industry or move up the ranks?**

Be your own advocate. Have confidence you can do the job and deserve the opportunity to grow and develop. Ask for new responsibilities to round yourself out and never be afraid to negotiate.

## "You need to listen, collaborate, and bring the best out in the team"

— Kelly Page

### Kelly Page

VP, strategic planning

**Takeda Oncology**

**Time in the industry**  
20 years

**How did you get into healthcare and pharma?**

I earned my bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry from Providence College and accepted a position in a Ph.D. program. I had second thoughts and went to work in the pharmaceutical industry until I decided what I wanted to do. I started as an analytical chemist and found I enjoyed the work. Over time I had opportunities in a variety of roles and eventually moved into drug-development management and global commercial roles.

**What valuable skill did you pick up from your previous roles?**

I learned how to work with a diverse group of people. As a team leader, you need to

listen, collaborate, and bring the best out of team members to meet goals.

**Do you remember your eureka moment?**

In 2003 I worked on a team developing one of the earliest immuno-oncology agents. For the first time in my career, a patient came in and spoke to us about the impact we had on his life and how lucky he felt to participate in the study. I knew at that point that what I was doing was the right thing.

**To whom do you owe your success?**

No doubt my parents. They sacrificed a lot to ensure we had opportunities, instilled in us strong morals, and taught us the importance of education, family, and generosity.

**Who were your inspirations and mentors?**

A former executive at Takeda Oncology, Karen Ferrante, was an incredible influence. She showed me how to do the right thing.

**What advice would you offer others?**

One of my favorite ways to give back is to visit colleges and speak to students. Looking back, I never knew how many different career options were out there for someone with a chemistry degree or with an MBA. I enjoy opening students' eyes up to the possibilities. You need to love what you do to make some of the needed trade-offs.



## Matthew Shaulis

President,  
North America Oncology

**Pfizer**

**Time in the industry**  
19 years



### What were some of your previous jobs?

VP, U.S. oncology, Pfizer; VP, global multiple sclerosis, Teva; head of oncology sales, Teva; head of oncology marketing, Cephalon; and various roles at Johnson & Johnson.

### How did you get into healthcare and pharma?

I started in finance, working in audit for Ernst & Young in U.S. and international banking and investment companies. I was recruited by J&J to work on global treasury centers and various life sciences. I then completed an MBA at Duke University before moving into global commercial roles at J&J.

### What valuable skill did you pick up from your previous roles?

Marketing and global roles provided analytic, strategic, and commercial skills, while sales-management experiences provided large-group people management, development, and leadership.

### What were some of the challenges along the way — and how did you get past them?

My biggest challenge was to strike the right balance of being a committed leader at work while being a good husband and father. My wife, Sheila, has great energy and is a phenomenal partner.

### What has surprised you most about working in the industry?

The value of relationships and reputation both within the industry and with customers, thought leaders, and stakeholders cannot be underestimated.

### To whom do you owe your success?

Numerous previous managers provided constructive feedback. This included developing strong listening skills, succinct communication, and the ability to focus time, effort, and execution on the things that matter the most.

### What do you consider to be your most useful skill or professional strength?

I try to find a way to deliver results consistently — on business performance, strategic initiatives, and people and organizational development. Honoring commitments consistently is the best networking opportunity.

### What advice would you give to others?

Deliver results and opportunities will come to you.

**“Honoring commitments consistently is the best networking opportunity”**

— Matthew Shaulis



**“The most valuable skill is curiosity — the passion to learn from others”**

— Mary Michael

## Mary Michael

VP, patient advocacy and stakeholder management

**Otsuka America Pharmaceutical**

**Time in the industry**  
more than 28 years

### What was your first career goal?

I had numerous interests — all in the sciences. In high school and college, it was medicine and forensic pathology.

### What were your previous jobs?

Interning for the U.S. Navy throughout college and working at a nonprofit, the Virginia Head Injury Foundation.

### How did you get into healthcare?

The best man in our wedding was a sales representative for Mead Johnson Nutritionals, and he suggested I might enjoy pharmaceutical sales.

### What valuable skill did you pick up from previous roles?

In marketing, the most valuable skill is curiosity and the passion to learn more from various customers and stakeholders.

ers. In my early career, I learned selling skills, messaging, marketing strategies, appreciation for cultural diversity, and adult learning principles — sales training. At my current company, I have had such a broad range of experiences: digital medicine, health IT/population health, social listening, cause marketing, and disease landscape analytics.

### What was your eureka moment?

I joined a launch team in marketing in what was called a “whiteboard” position, which turned out to be a hybrid position. It was the start to a career path I have enjoyed since. It filled me with excitement and a sense of adventure.

### What were some of the challenges you faced along the way — and how did you get past them?

The greatest challenges were to demonstrate value to individuals who had never been exposed to a similar position or workstream. Peers and leaders are exposed to traditional commercial or marketing roles, which may have some overlap of responsibilities. The greatest challenges have been to overcome preconceived notions of roles, responsibilities, and value and impact to the business and the organization.

### What do you consider to be your most useful career skill or greatest professional strength, and how did you develop it?

Connectivity and creativity. I am not quite sure if they are developed skills or if they are simply innate abilities. Somehow I can see connections in concepts and match them with individuals who may be able to help drive ideas, concepts, or initiatives to fruition.

### What advice would you share?

First and foremost, find your passion. Be excited to take on opportunities that are beyond your area of comfort or expertise. Above all else, stay curious and challenge conventional thinking. We are in the most exciting time for healthcare, one in which AI, the Internet of Things, robotics, a vocal social universe, and other technological advances are transforming how we manage our health.

**“If an opportunity presents itself, it is worth conversing about it”**

— Eva Jack



## Eva Jack

Chief business officer

**Mersana Therapeutics**

**Time in the industry**  
more than 10 years

### What was your original career goal?

Lawyer or professor.

### What were some of your previous jobs?

I was initially a lobbyist for Intel, so I moved from high tech to biotech.

### What valuable skill did you pick up from your previous roles?

The importance of listening to others. It's important to take a step back and think about the goal you want or need to accomplish.

### What was your eureka moment?

We had a patient come in and speak about his daily routine — the amount of medicine taken every day and daily physical therapy

requirements. It made me want to be part of an industry that could one day help this person and others live without illness or make their lives more manageable.

### To whom do you owe your success?

Too many people to count. I have received a lot of encouragement and mentorship.

### Who were your inspirations and mentors?

My parents. Both were immigrants to the U.S. They worked hard, emphasized the importance of education, and always encouraged us.

### What do you consider to be your most useful skill or professional strength?

Networking. I've met a lot of people in the industry over the course of my career. It's a great way to learn about different kinds of jobs and areas within the industry. Never be afraid to ask people about what they do or how they got into the industry.

### What advice would you offer someone?

Career-growth opportunities present themselves in different ways. If an opportunity presents itself, even if you only have a remote interest in it, it is worth having a conversation about it. You never know where it might lead. With the exception of my first job out of college, I've made all of my job changes based upon someone I know reaching out to me.





## WHY GIVE LESS THAN 100%?

You could hire a separate digital agency to build your website. Maybe another to manage your social media. But multiple agencies struggling to keep content aligned while also trying to pilfer each other's work is a recipe for inefficiency. And disaster.

Why not give 100% to an agency that's successfully incorporated digital media into its clients' branding mix for more than 15 years? One whose only agenda is delivering the right content, through the right channel, to the right audience. Who's 100% committed 100% of the time.

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TO YOUR BRAND**  
IT'S THE WAY WE THINK



AbelsonTaylor





AbelsonTaylor

# AbelsonTaylor

## Fast Facts

**Address:** 33 West Monroe, Suite 600 ■ Chicago, IL 60603

**Phone:** 312-894-5500 **Email:** info@abelsontaylor.com

**Year Founded:** 1981 **Employees:** 408

**New Business Contact:** Jay Carter, SVP, director of strategy services ■ 312-894-5625 ■ jay.carter@abelsontaylor.com

## COMPANY PROFILE

In 1981 we started an agency because we wanted to chart our own course. AbelsonTaylor believed that to give our clients our best thinking, we needed to answer to them and not to someone else. Thirty-five years later AbelsonTaylor has become the largest independent healthcare agency of record in the world. We continue to give clients our best thinking, steering their brands across the omnichannel waters. And yes, AbelsonTaylor is still charting its own course.

We also learned a long time ago that to be the best agency, you have to attract the best people. So AbelsonTaylor aspires to create an environment that encourages people to always feel proud of the work that they do, trust that they work with ethical people, and feel as though they're working with friends.

## SERVICES AND OFFERINGS

Of course, a lot has changed since AbelsonTaylor opened its doors. We're still full service and we excel in bringing brands to life from ideation to execution. Today AbelsonTaylor also builds meaningful connections to client brands by using some of the latest technologies and analytics available. And AbelsonTaylor is out of this world when it comes to developing and executing direct-to-physician, direct-to-patient, and direct-to-consumer programs.

## CORE CAPABILITIES

**Branding and Identity.** Many of the most recognizable campaigns in health and wellness were conceived at AbelsonTaylor. We believe that successful branding constitutes more than bold graphics and



What steps have you taken to make your company an attractive destination for both healthcare marketers and talent outside the business?

The thing that makes our agency attractive to non-pharma players is that we train our staff well. The way that AbelsonTaylor is an attractive option to those employees is much more inclusive — sure, we train people well, but we work hard to empower them, offer work-life balance, and give outlets toward social responsibility. Finally, we offer our very strongest employees equity — something that very few competitors offer.

### Jay Carter

SVP, director of strategy services

clever headlines. It takes a deep understanding of what motivates people to take action and form strong personal bonds with products.

**Engagement Strategy.** We think that engagement is a critical element that elevates great ad campaigns today. It moves the viewers to go beyond words and pictures and, regardless of the medium (print, digital, broadcast), gives them a reason to act and return, ultimately becoming loyalists.

**Animation.** AbelsonTaylor has a full-service art and animation business unit that excels in creating MOA videos and 3D as well as in just retouching. We can do the simple art or the most complex animation.

**CRM.** Our Customer relationship management programs enhance our clients' communications strategies by tracking, refining, and maximizing those relationships through traditional and digital media, and we help them prepare as media evolve in the future.

**Experiential Marketing and Conventions.** We drive traffic in and help clients educate and entertain the visitors. From advertising and pre-show promotion to unique booth design and post-show fulfillment, AbelsonTaylor does convention work, not conventional work.



# READY FOR IMPACT

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WE'RE CARLING COMMUNICATIONS, AND OUR MISSION IS TURNING YOUR VISION INTO REALITY. A FULL-SERVICE CREATIVE MEDICAL ADVERTISING AGENCY, BUILDING BRANDS IS WHAT WE DO. WE THINK FASTER, SEE FURTHER, AND PUSH HARDER—ULTIMATELY DELIVERING CONTENT THAT CAPTIVATES AND CREATIVE SOLUTIONS THAT CONSTANTLY REWRITE THE RULES OF WHAT'S POSSIBLE.

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CARLING

## Carling Communications

### Fast Facts

**Address:** 2550 Fifth Avenue, Suite 150, San Diego, CA 92103

**Phone:** 619-269-3000 **Email:** hello@carling.com

**Year Founded:** 2010 **Employees:** 87

**Sample Clients:** Global pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device companies whose business model can benefit from Carling's "It Can Be Done" philosophy

**New Business Contacts:** Didi Discar, principal, 619-344-6970, didi.discar@carlingcom.com, and Randy Adams, EVP, client strategy, 619-344-6972, randy.adams@carlingcom.com

### COMPANY PROFILE

When describing what differentiates Carling from other agencies, employees will refer to the scene in *Apollo 13* when NASA is challenged to find a solution using only the items available on the spacecraft. New and existing clients are drawn to Carling's Mission Control approach of being there with each client every step of the way: calculating, assessing, building, constantly innovating, and implementing the best strategy to help each client reach its business goals.

### SERVICES AND OFFERINGS

Carling Communications is a full-service healthcare communications agency with offices in San Diego, California, and London, England, that specializes in pharmaceutical advertising, medical education, and meeting services. Agency expertise includes market assessment and opportunity identification, product positioning and value proposition creation, strategic business planning, lifecycle management, and commercialization and launch strategies.

### CORE CAPABILITIES

**Strategic Partner.** Carling works with global pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device companies to create potent and targeted strategic marketing plans. Our veteran team leverages its diverse brand knowledge and broad industry relationships to develop and drive dynamic strategies for brands wherever they are in their lifecycle.

**Peer-to-Peer Programs.** Carling gives clients direct access to the pulse of our industry through its vast



What steps have you taken to make your company an attractive destination for both healthcare marketers and talent outside the business?

Carling's headquarters attract seasoned well-regarded industry professionals from across the nation to San Diego's weather and beaches and the agency's "It Can Be Done" philosophy. Located in an iconic landmark building, the office utilizes an open-floor design that encourages the flow of ideas and communication and the building of strong friendships in and out of the office. Employee benefits include competitive compensation, unlimited vacation, company-paid employee health benefits, garage parking, onsite fitness classes, and volunteer time-off.

**Didi Discar**  
founder

network of physicians developed over nearly two decades. Carling's peer-to-peer programs provide an arena in which leading KOLs exchange information relevant to commercial products. These custom-designed programs yield valuable insight at any point in a brand's lifecycle.

**Personal and Nonpersonal Communication.** Carling develops the most appropriate solutions to deliver vital information clearly, effectively, and efficiently to one — or one million — while deftly reinforcing each and every brand's unique messaging. Creatively and strategically aligned, these face-to-face and digital assets help generate interest, introduce value, and build credibility with customers throughout the sales cycle.

**Product Launch or Relaunch.** Carling develops powerful go-to-market solutions that position the brand as a market leader. The agency helps prepare the brand, the organization, and the market for a successful entry while protecting budgets during the vulnerable launch process. Each Carling team incorporates pre- and post-launch strategies that analyze and optimize opportunities unique to particular brands.

**Creative Expertise.** Carling employs some of the best creative talent in the industry to guarantee that all creative executions are scientifically sound and on strategy. From pitch to final tactic, Carling's creative team strives to turn the key insight into motivating messages that achieve business goals.