

## cementing relationships in the hospital setting

For any sanofi-aventis sales professional, cultivating long-term customer relationships is essential to success. But for those working in the hospital setting, winning over key networks of influence is especially important when trying to gain widespread product support. *Driving Force* recently asked three senior specialty sales professionals who've done just that to share their winning strategies.

### Finding a Niche

In Ann Arbor, Michigan, Eric Reisin and Shelly Pesta (CV) discovered an amazing opportunity for Lovenox in the Orthopedics Department at University of Michigan Hospital. The duo devised a plan of action that ultimately resulted in wide-scale conversion from warfarin to Lovenox for all patients recovering from knee and hip replacement surgery—some 600 to 700 procedures each year.

"This institution had never been on board with Lovenox, and we were unable to get in front of the orthopedic surgeons because of the hospital's strict vendor policy.

Our challenge was to break down these barriers and convince the hospital staff—and eventually the physicians—that Lovenox is a more appropriate anticoagulant for their post-operative patients," says Eric.

He and Shelly first focused on the physician assistants (PAs), orthopedic nurses, and discharge planners, trying to drive demand from the bottom up.



Shelly Pesta, Medical Center Senior Sales Professional  
Eric Reisin, Medical Center Senior Sales Professional

"We started by in-servicing the floors and dispelling some of the myths the staff had about Lovenox—primarily cost," explains Eric.

Shelly and Eric continued to educate and meet with the hospital staff, gradually securing support for Lovenox.

"After about two years of this, to our surprise, we finally were invited to meet with the head of orthopedic surgery. He was convinced by the data supporting Lovenox, but he didn't want to be burdened with the details associated with the conversion. He asked us to make the process seamless and smooth and to assure him no patient would fall through the cracks," says Eric.

With enduring enthusiasm, Shelly and Eric reached further into the hospital community for help developing a new protocol.

**"We sought input from the pharmacy director, hospitalists, anesthesiologists, outpatient pharmacists, pain management specialists, discharge planners, and extended-care facilities. We wanted to understand every step of the process—from the scheduling of surgery all the way through discharge."**

"We set out without any help from the head of orthopedic surgery, who didn't want to be involved," explains Shelly, a 2004 Sales Champion.



She and Eric even worked with the Franklin Group (a service sanofi-aventis provides to customers to verify insurance coverage) and sanofi-aventis Managed Care (now IHM) to pre-qualify surgical patients for Lovenox therapy. Along with the PAs, Eric and Shelly met with patients, using the Lovenox Joint Education Kit and CD-ROM to teach them about blood clots, symptoms, and treatments.

The sales professionals also ran a one-week pilot of the new protocol. By June 2005, the conversion was complete and running smoothly.

"The orthopedic staff is very happy with the process. We're still in contact with them by e-mail each week, and we try to see them every other week. We still don't interact much with attending surgeons because of the vendor policy. This gives us a great opportunity to strengthen our relationship with the staff," says Shelly.

### A Double Winner

The relationships developed by 2004 Sales Champion Terry Frascino (MIT) with two academic centers in the Vermont/New Hampshire region have led to considerable growth for Lantus.

"Over the last four years, I've been able to develop advocates for Lantus at these large teaching institutions by offering solutions to the challenges of managing in-patient hyperglycemia. They both added Lantus to subcutaneous insulin protocols for in-patient management of hyperglycemia and designated Lantus the preferred basal insulin," explains Terry, a President's Club member since 2002.

Terry gradually created demand for the product starting with key staff from

endocrinology, nursing, pharmacy, and others involved with insulin management. She arranged several presentations by visiting professors and met with key customers to discuss the impact of glycemic control on decreasing morbidity, mortality, and length of stay.

The cumulative effect of Terry's tenacity showed in her sales performance. As of April 2005, market share surpassed 60 percent at these two academic centers, up from the high 30s two years ago.

### How Do They Do It?

The following tips from Terry, Shelly, and others can help you boost your bridge-building skills.

#### Consider the total team.

We all have hard-to-see physicians, so take the time to route through the department staff, and make sure everybody is equal. Many doctors are not as receptive to a staff member than a pharmaceutical representative.

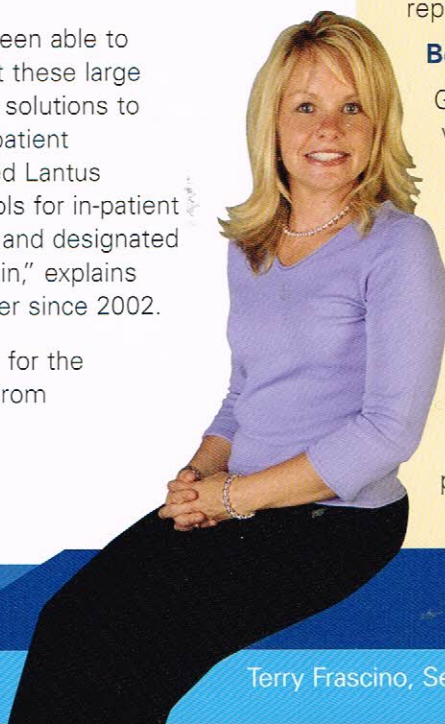
#### Befriend the hospitalists.

Get to know your hospitalist service and the physicians who are more hands-on with patient care than attending physicians.

The more support you have from other departments throughout the organization, the more you can advocate for your products.

#### Be persistent, not pushy.

Sales success is based on building relationships. If you can't see a doctor on a particular day, be flexible—it's about the physician's agenda, not yours.



Terry Frascino, Senior Speciality Sales Professional, MIT