

15466 COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

Not having learned any restrictive lesson from this earlier experience, I am here again to discuss some recent controversies involving the pharmaceutical industry, and to express from my experience what might be a way to avoid such unpleasant situations in the future.

Certainly none of us, in the industry or outside it, can take any pride or satisfaction in listening to the recital of the promotional excesses that the Committee has heard in the last few days. Essentially however, this is just the newest example of the fact that pharmaceutical managers live and work in a goldfish bowl which makes all of their actions reviewable by a large and varied audience of critics, most of whom are not inclined to be overly sympathetic.

The root of most of the problems that the industry has with its critics over promotional matters is the feeling that somehow sales pressures, advertising, commercial exploitation, and selling in its strict dollar and cents aspects are all foreign to, and incompatible with, the practice by the physician of his profession. Choice of treatment, drug selection, and indeed, the whole physician-patient relationship seem not properly affected by any forces outside the physician's training, abilities and understanding of the patient and his malady. The idea that anything coming out of such fields as advertising, sampling, sales pressures, price advantage, or third party recommendation of any kind could intrude on this relationship is somehow repugnant to the public