

In our interviews with the advertisers, we got the definite impression that the AMA, while widely respected as the strongest single political factor in the medical field, was liked or understood by practically none. The new and marginal manufacturers were fairly subtle in their stating of these attitudes. The strong, established, leading ethical drug manufacturers, on the other hand, were very explicit in their statements. The theme runs continuously through the interviews and through the comments reproduced in this report.

At least a large part of these unfavorable attitudes are based on misunderstandings of the AMA, or even on definitely false beliefs.

Public relations experts say that good relations with the public are never achieved by accident. They are the result of a definite, organized and continuous program of telling the public the favorable things about oneself, and admitting one's past faults and telling the public about the efforts that are being made to correct them.

The AMA has a two-fold job: that of understanding the problems of the advertisers, and making the advertisers understand the problems of the AMA.

A comment of a small drug manufacturer indicates the consciousness on the part of the advertisers of a need for closer cooperation:

"The ironing out of the difficulties and disagreements between the manufacturers and the AMA is of tremendous importance. JAMA could and should be a made-to-order, natural medium for advertisers of medical products. It has *everything*, or it could have, if it would clean itself up and become a real professional journal. I should like to be able to use JAMA to the exclusion of all other medical journals."

Another drug manufacturer made a similar statement:

"We would like to see the industry get closer to the AMA from the marketing standpoint. There has been a step in that direction here. For a while, this company has been a bit standoffish. The trend is going in the other direction now. We actually submitted more products in the last six months than in the previous two years."

One of the large ethical drug firms issued this plea for cooperation:

"We get along very well with the AMA, but they could do a better job with their advertisers if they found out what problems those people have to face, and cooperated with them. A committee of the pharmaceutical industry might be jointly set up with one from the AMA to work out some of these problems in an across-the-board fashion."

There were a number of advertisers interviewed who expressed the opinion that the AMA today is considerably better off than it has been in the past. We quote the following large drug manufacturer as typical of this group:

"There have been improvements. Dealings with the AMA are easier now, but still hard, although Stormont personally is wonderful. His predecessors, however, will not easily be forgotten. The damage Leach did will rankle for many years to come. The AMA cannot go ahead on the policy that everyone is out to get the better of it. It must know that most of the manufacturers respect and want its approval, but by making it impossible to deal with them, they antagonize the very people who are doing their best to uphold the AMA's standards."

Here is one medical advertising agency head's comment on the AMA's need for better public relations:

"I do think that the AMA ought to do a better public relations job. No one, for example, knows the new editor of JAMA; and in some areas, such as New England, the doctors are anti-AMA, which means, among other things, that Council Acceptance carries little weight. Something should be done about this."

The aloofness of the AMA was expressed by one contraceptive manufacturer as follows:

"The journal is too far away. Many of us would do more in JAMA if the AMA acted like they wanted us to. They act like they don't want to sell space. If they offered to help us get approval, we would undoubtedly advertise more in the Journal. Our only contacts with the AMA are through our agency."

One of the bluntest statements was made by a small eastern ethical drug manufacturer:

"The public relations of the AMA are lousy. They have no thought of dealing with anyone in any but a high-handed manner, including the people who support them."