

## Communication and Public Relations in the Pharmaceutical Industry

### CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR COMMUNICATION

The institutional image of the Pharmaceutical Companies and of their Association assumes today a particular significance. Target of an increased media attention, the sector must open to the outside, either to the public awareness of what our activity involves, either to self-defense, and always through the responsible demonstration of facts and indicators that may highlight the contributions of the Pharmaceutical Industry to the welfare of Citizens.

### CONSTRAINTS AND IMPLICATIONS

The medicinal product constitutes a fundamental instrument of social development and, at the same time, an essential piece in the balance between economic power and political power.

Public Health is an asset to preserve and the continuous and sustained obtaining of gains in health is an objective which we endorse as citizens and professionals.

The new health policies, particularly those that involve the introduction of products in the market, prices and reimbursement, the European legislation and its transposition into the regulatory framework of our Country, the defense of industrial patents, the over-the-counter medicinal products system, and the growing influence of the Media in the Public Opinion and the decision-making, are signs of emerging market rules and a reason to look at our role of Communication and Public Relations in a more participative and consequent way.

At the same time, a growing demand for information about health-related matters by the general public is observed. The health policies in Portugal do not cover the accomplishment of this objective which is urgently needed.



Also new customers, audiences and targets emerge, – Health authorities and organizations, technicians, Charities, consumer/patient – for which we feel obliged to direct our communication, providing it with transparency, exemption, quality, depth and speed.

## **METHODOLOGIES TO IMPLEMENT**

Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the communication and Public Relations structure of the Companies and of Apifarma to in light of the new challenges. This is only possible with motivated professionals who are aware of the importance of the Pharmaceutical Industry and of the Companies' strategies.

The framework of our activity is based on the solemn acceptance, and without exception, of all the principles mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Universal Declaration on the Rights of the Child and in the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic. Similarly, we fully respect the provisions of the Code of Ethics of Apifarma and of the International Public Relations Code of Ethics (Code of Athens), transposed to the European level by the Code of Lisbon, approved in 1978 and amended in 1989.

Thus, this Code of Practice has the following purposes:

At internal level:

- To maintain and strengthen the efficiency of the institutional link between the several member Companies of Apifarma;
- To harmonize the communication techniques, forms and concepts to use in the course of the activity of Communication and Public Relations of the Pharmaceutical Industry, in order to ensure the respect of competition between the several companies, through ethical excellence.

At external level:



- To ensure the full recognition of the activity of Communication and Public Relations, through titles obtained by representative associations of the activity and internally issuing the certification of communication professionals of the Pharmaceutical Industry;
- To ensure the total transparency of the Pharmaceutical Industry at the eyes of the several audiences and of the public opinion in general;
- To strengthen the awareness of the Pharmaceutical Industry and Apifarma, respecting its "Letter of Mission and Values";
- To promote the disclosure of the activities of the Pharmaceutical Industry in all its aspects, to the defense of citizens' health, in particular, prevention, therapeutics, scientific research and innovation;
- To contribute to honor the irreplaceable mission of the specialized press in the field of Health;
- To ensure that all communication processes, in particular the materials produced for external disclosure, are in harmony with the provisions of this Code of Practice and of other ethics documents of professional groups which are our partners, as well as those for Health, Media, Marketing and Advertising, among others, as well as in the laws in force;
- To promote the disclosure of the projects in partnership with the community, in particular of patient associations, medical societies, official entities and non-governmental organizations.

## **PROCEDURES FOR COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS**

### **METHODOLOGIES TO IMPLEMENT**

- To create greater engagement and trust relation with all Media (Press, Radio, Television and Online Journalism), sensitizing them to the specificities of our activity and highlighting the importance of being considered partners and reliable sources in the area of Health information;



- To intervene in all processes of crisis, when appropriate, seeking to avoid or minimize sensationalisms and unnecessary panic situations, providing information of eminently public interest to those involved (primarily to the Media), in an objective, reliable and proven way;
- To ensure the timely disclosure of accurate information and promptly correct any inaccuracy, regardless of their source;
- To ensure the highest standards of integrity and credibility of the communication and information produced, duly identifying the sources, in particular when this information comes from third parties;
- To ensure the confidentiality of the information not intended for publication and to retain all the professional information whose disclosure would only result in personal promotion;
- To strengthen the adoption of transparent practices, in order to avoid dubious situations, either for the Communication professionals from the Pharmaceutical Industry, or for the journalists;
- To assume the commitment that any invitation to journalists or media is based, only and exclusively, in the disclosure of strictly scientific relevant information;
- To sensitize the management (CEOs, DGs, PMs, etc.) of the companies to the responsibility of an ethical and transparent relationship with the journalists, focusing the information in the institutional aspect rather than on the product – safeguarded the exceptions arising from the specificities of the specialized press, and the appropriate promotion tools, such as advertising and infomercials.

## **CONDUCTS TO AVOID**

- Do not accept, under any circumstances, rewards or payments for professional services, which do not arise from the employer;



- Do not provide gifts to journalists or other partners, under any form, particularly with the purpose of obtaining compensations;
- Do not promote the invitation or entice the participation of journalists in events/actions involving displacement, whose character is eminently commercial.

This document has been approved by the Management of Apifarma in March 2003.