Meryl Zausner, 2007 HBA “Woman of the Year”

Meryl Zausner seems to be the only person who is mystified about why she was named 2007 HBA Woman of the Year. Everyone else knows. Letter after letter paid tribute to her business savvy, leadership, compassion, and generosity.

Zausner, Vice President of Novartis Pharmaceuticals, CFO of Novartis Oncology, and a member of its Executive Coordinating Committee, will be honored as the HBA’s 18th Woman of the Year (WOTY) luncheon on Thursday, May 3rd. Cathy Kerzner, Founder, EKR Therapeutics, Inc., and HBA President, said, “Meryl is an extraordinary role model for the HBA Woman of the Year. Her combination of business acumen, passion for women’s issues, and generosity of spirit exemplify everything the HBA stands for.”

For Zausner, the new position was an opportunity to grow professionally in an area that had special meaning for her, as she had lost her beloved husband, Stuart, to cancer in 1999. Although it was difficult emotionally, it was “a comfort and a chance to give back.” The new job also meant she could remain in New Jersey, critical for her son Ethan, then only 9 years old.

 Giving Back

“Giving back” is a governing theme in Zausner’s life. “I get more joy out of doing for others than for myself,” she says. And she has given so much. A founding member of the Novartis Pharmaceuticals Global Diversity Council, which

Lonnel Coats, Honorable Mentor

Lonnel Coats, President and Chief Operating Officer of Eisai Inc., is being honored as the HBA’s seventh Honorable Mentor. The HBA created the award to honor one man in the industry who has demonstrated long-term support of the advancement of women in the healthcare industry; who has a personal dedication to developing, mentoring, and promoting women in the industry; and who has been supportive of the HBA.

Shellie Caplan, Star Volunteer

When you put the words “HBA” and “Volunteer” together you naturally think of Shellie Caplan. Anyone who knows Caplan knows that she is passionate about living life to the fullest and helping others realize their potential. Anyone who has had the privilege to have worked with her, or called her friend, has felt her caring, compassionate support. It is that support that has inspired others to reach further, to try harder, to work smarter, and be better professionals and colleagues.

www.hbanet.org
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* Executive MBA Council Research Statistics  **Based on Graduate Management Admission Council research of Corporate Sponsors.

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Spirit | Intellect | Purpose
A Culture of Contribution: Volunteer Leadership at the HBA

LAURIE COOKE

An association is like any other organization and has its own unique culture. Within the HBA, there is an opportunity for the board and staff to identify the culture they want the HBA to represent and then to successfully execute a targeted plan to achieve that goal.

Recently, the HBA board recognized the importance of creating a positive culture and is taking steps to increase the support of the volunteer at the HBA in an effort to cultivate a Culture of Contribution.

Associations are endowed naturally with a tremendous power: the potential to act collectively to make a difference. In Clayton M. Christensen’s book The Innovator's Dilemma, he identifies “disruptive technologies” as those digital breakthroughs that are reshaping the governing economies of industries. In the association world, we can think about this in terms of volunteer leadership. Through a board’s willingness to forgo the status quo, members can use their “disruptive vision” to set a leadership agenda for the organization that strategically positions it to establish and make progress toward an aggressive vision. The HBA board has taken this leadership stance and in 2006 established a 10-year vision to be the premier catalyst for the professional development and leadership of women in healthcare worldwide.

But the HBA is a volunteer-driven association. In fact, HBA volunteers represent the organization’s greatest strength and are its greatest talent. These women—and men—are the source from which other volunteers and professional staff draw inspiration. They have tremendous knowledge and expertise that they bring from varied companies, geographic locations, and life experiences.

Today, the HBA is taking a strategic stance that our members’ personal leadership development can be directly impacted by an active and rewarding volunteer experience. To this end, the HBA board is cultivating a Culture of Contribution by supporting you—the volunteer—to optimize your experience as a volunteer and, in so doing, enable innovation and personal development to flourish.

To create the infrastructure to support the volunteer, the HBA board is taking a two-prong approach. The first component is the establishment of a Talent Development program, which is being tackled by Donna Ramer, an HBA board member and long-standing contributor to the HBA. In her role as Director of Internal Communications and Talent Development, Ramer is working to create a world-class program to foster volunteer leader recruitment and development that will connect HBA volunteers with meaningful opportunities. The second component is to assign professional staff to the largest area of our current volunteer pool. To this end Mary-Margaret Armstrong was brought on board in January as the Relationship Executive for the Chapters and Affiliates. Armstrong is creating an environment where the volunteer leaders who run the chapters and affiliates have the tools and training they need so they can focus their energies on running their organizations.

The HBA has an exciting year ahead with the challenging aspirations and active leadership to ensure we achieve success. As professionals and volunteers, we want to be inspired to be the best we can be and contribute at the highest possible level in all we do. By choosing to be an active member and volunteer in the HBA, each of us can find new ways to increase our satisfaction in our work and our daily lives through an expanded network of colleagues and friends, educational events where we can be life-long learners, and hands-on skills development as volunteers. Through our efforts we will define the HBA’s Culture of Contribution.
SHELLIE CAPLAN from page 1
It is what has made her an indispensable member of the HBA community, and has grown her business, for Caplan is no newcomer to our industry—she has built a successful executive recruitment firm, specializing in the healthcare industry, for more than 27 years. Luckily for us, Caplan’s passion for people, and devotion to the advancement of women’s careers in healthcare, brought her and the HBA together long ago. Caplan has diligently devoted more than 20 years of her professional career in helping to build the HBA into the prestigious industry organization it is today, and in doing so, has created a sense of community. Caplan has served on the HBA Board for more than 18 years and has actively participated in and led numerous committees. She is viewed as the exemplary embodiment of the HBA.

Caplan is honored to receive the Star Volunteer award, and her excitement is multiplied many times over by sharing the stage with one of her closest friends, Meryl Zausner, the 2007 HBA “Woman of the Year.”

In an exclusive interview with the HBA Bulletin, Caplan talks about what volunteering means to her and how the association has evolved over the years.

BULLETIN Can you single out one volunteer activity that you have enjoyed the most?
CAPLAN The Executive Women’s Breakfasts (EWW) are my passion. This program fills a unique void in the industry, as it allows top-level women executives who are running large pieces of businesses the opportunity to get to know one another, to network, and to engage in the sharing of best practices. Previously, there were no programs specifically designed to address the challenges of these high-level women, and now there is a forum for these stellar performers to share their experiences and give support to each other.

BULLETIN What advice can you give to other HBA members who are hesitant to volunteer because of time, resources, etc.?
CAPLAN I would say one must separate the urgent from the important and I urge my fellow members to take the important step of getting involved as the HBA will pay you back in so many ways: it will support you when you need sage advice; it will make the urgent tasks easier to tackle; it will support you in the decisions you make; and it will build a sense of community that will enrich your life in so many ways. I can’t imagine a more rewarding organization to belong to because it is a place where women can network, share, support, and care about each other. I know I am not alone when I say my support network and friendships were formed from this sense of community. It started out as a way to strengthen my professional life—it is now a way to live my life.

As HBA has grown and matured over the years, it has encouraged women to grow and embrace new challenges—teaching us that our reach should exceed our grasp. I am taking a leaf from that book, so I am pleased to say I am starting a new chapter in my life—I am creating advisory boards for women entrepreneurs. The statistics are astounding around how many women are leaving the industry and their corporate lives to become their own bosses. This is my new passion and it complements what I have been doing with the HBA all these years.

I am forever grateful to the HBA for giving me the opportunities to serve our members as a volunteer and a Board member, and the rewards are countless. I look forward to my active membership for many years to come because it is one of the most fulfilling parts of my life.

BULLETIN What have been the most significant changes at the HBA you’ve witnessed in the last 20 years?
CAPLAN One of most significant shifts in the organization was when the HBA brought in The Charles Group, our association management firm. With the help and guidance of The Charles Group we were able to develop

Name the Bulletin Contest
And the Winner is...

... Sorry, you’ll have to wait for this year’s WOTY luncheon for the official unveiling of the new name and design!

In the meantime, we are delighted to announce that VERONICA DENTI, Global Brand Manager Diabetes, Novartis Pharma, Basel, Switzerland, submitted the winning entry. Along with the gratitude of the HBA, Veronica receives one free ticket to attend this year’s luncheon on May 3rd in New York.

Our thanks to the 54 HBA members who submitted a vast array of excellent suggestions—156 names in all—so kudos to all who participated for your creative and targeted suggestions; you should be pleased and proud. Also, our thanks to the editorial panel and HBA Board for their thoughtful deliberations throughout this process. The tremendous response from you, our members, made the process of narrowing down the selections very difficult to choose only one winning name.

The new Bulletin is just one way the HBA is redesigning all of its communication vehicles to better meet your needs as members. In future issues, there will be more “Skills for Success” articles, in-depth features on key HBA events, a showcase for the 2007 Rising Stars class and interviews with HBA members on industry-related trends and other topics of professional—and personal—interest.

As always, we encourage your feedback! So send your suggestions to tgrom@pharmavoice.com. And, I look forward to seeing you on May 3rd when we unveil the new Bulletin! — Taren Grom, Editor

and grow as an organization, gaining structure and stature. We also started to develop a wide variety of initiatives and programs that allowed us to attract an active diverse membership of women, from sales reps to presidents and CEOs.

The other significant event is when the HBA initiated the Woman of the Year in 1990, where we honored Karen Katen. A couple of years later, I remember walking in the door at the WOTY luncheon between two male presidents/CEOs of major healthcare advertising agencies who took one look around a room filled with a 1,000 women and men, and they said, “They are not messing around anymore.”

The growth has been phenomenal—when I look at 9 chapters and 3 affiliates in the United States and Europe, it’s like watching my kids graduate college. Now the organization has grown to the point where it needs a CEO, and Laurie Cooke is doing a wonderful job. She will contribute significantly to the HBA’s growth.

**BULLETIN** What new ground does the HBA need to break?

**CAPLAN** I feel very passionately that the HBA should start a scholarship fund to assist young women to pursue a degree in healthcare. This idea has been brought up many times, but I believe the organization is now ripe to take this on. It is our turn to start giving back, and in doing so, to support the budding careers of young women in healthcare while strengthening and ensuring a future of active and involved membership.

**INSEAD HEALTHCARE2020.FORUM 2007**

Presented by the INSEAD Healthcare Management Initiative (www.insead.edu/hmi) in cooperation with the HBA Europe Affiliate and Johnson & Johnson, the healthcare2020.forum to be held June 15–16, in Fontainebleau, France, will focus on the rapid, complex interaction between the global economy, health, and healthcare under the theme, Globalization, Transformation and Health.

The forum brings together leaders and thinkers to distill strategic management insight at the intersection of business and health through cutting-edge presentations, controversial viewpoints, and group discussions. The 2007 healthcare2020.forum is aimed at those who play, or will play, pivotal roles in the transformation of global health.

HBA sessions at the INSEAD healthcare2020.forum will answer questions, such as “What will be the characteristics of successful women in healthcare in the future?” and “How can we ensure that women are well represented at the executive level and above within the industry?” The conference will also feature a group of senior executive panelists who will define women leaders of the future and how women can develop their full leadership potential.

There will be special HBA members-only sessions on the afternoon of Saturday, June 16th, on topics centered on the development of participants’ individual leadership agendas.

As the HBA heads into its 30th year, the challenge is for all of its members to reflect on the leaders that each of us wants to become. This conference will support this 2007 goal by helping to focus on the skills and characteristics members need to leverage to become visionary leaders in their own right.

Additionally, the conference features sessions on:

- Business and the New Health Markets
- Innovation and Technology: Promises and Controversies
- Global Challenges, Global Responses
- Building Sustainable Capacity in the Health Sector

For more information or to register for this exciting event, please visit www.hbanet.org.

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**HBA CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**MARCH 23, 2007**

**SAN ANTONIO AFFILIATE LUNCH PROGRAM**

“Hot Topics in Health Policy: Issues and Options for Payers, Providers and Patients”

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Oak Hills Country Club
San Antonio, TX

**MARCH 27, 2007**

**METRO CHAPTER WHIT AFFINITY GROUP**

“Building a High Performance Career in IT”

5:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Johnson & Johnson
Raritan, NJ

**APRIL 12, 2007**

**HBA RTP EVENT**

Women’s Interactive Networking Luncheon
11:45 am - 1:15 pm

Cafe Parizade
Durham, NC

**MAY 3, 2007**

**2007 HBA WOMAN OF THE YEAR LUNCHEON**

Registration Now Open
11:00 AM - 2:30 PM

Hilton New York
New York, NY

**JUNE 15, 2007**

**HBA EUROPE / INSEAD**

2007 healthcare2020.forum
Fontainebleau, France

**DECEMBER 6-7, 2007**

**2007 HBA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

Renaissance Hotel
Washington, DC

For additional details and the most current information, go to www.hbanet.org
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Patient Perspectives on Medication Compliance

Donna R. Cryer, J.D.
CEO of CryerHealth, LLC

Costs to the pharmaceutical industry are escalating into the billions because of two salient factors: (1) patients do not take their medications as prescribed; and (2) physician reimbursement is shifting to a “pay-for-performance” model where doctors are judged by outcomes as well as interventions. As a result, interest in understanding why patients do and do not comply with their medications is increasing.

Physician surveys consistently report that a top complaint is that patients refuse to take their medications as directed. Just as consistently, patient surveys report that they are fully compliant with their medication regimens. Somewhere in between lies the truth.

Making Sense of the Terms

First, consider the term compliance. Compliance, as defined by the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, is the act of conforming, acquiescing, or yielding. The good news: Free will is no longer traded for blind obedience when clothes are traded for a paper gown. In this age of personalized medicine, patients demand—and deserve—a personalized plan that empowers them and inspires them to take their medication.

Second, consider how questions are asked. The physician says: “Have you taken your medicine?” This may seem like a yes or no question. But in fact, the patient is being asked a series of implied questions. “Did you fill the prescription in a timely manner?” “Did you take the right dose at the right time in the right way every time (with food, without food, with a full glass of water, on an empty stomach, without lying down for 30 minutes)?” “Did you take all the medicine (even after you felt better)?” “And did you refill the prescription as soon as you finished the first?” A patient may answer yes if she fulfilled even one of these criteria.

There are any number of reasons that would drive a patient—even if diagnosed with diabetes, heart disease, or another serious, life-compromising condition—to not follow “doctor’s orders.”

- Doesn’t like being ordered around by the doctor
- Medication tastes bad
- Side effects too much to bear
- Method of administration painful or unpleasant
- Taking the medication reminds the patient of her mortality
- Doesn’t believe the condition is that serious
- Treatment interferes with lifestyle
- Forgot

Addressing the Challenges

So what can an army of pharmaceutical, medical, and communications professionals do when faced with a non-compliant patient?

1. Think of the patient as a person not a condition. A patient had a life before entering the doctor’s office and she will have a life afterward that includes, but may not be defined by, the particular condition that led her to seek care. As much as patient communications can honor and encompass a patient’s values, cultures, and life circumstances, the more successful these messages will be. There are numerous factors that need to be considered when developing a communications plan, such as:

- Will the patient’s family need to be involved in the decision to begin or continue a therapy?
- Does the method of administration embarrass the patient?
- Is there an alternative medication that can be taken if, as prescribed (with food for example) it would violate a patient’s religious beliefs (during a period of fasting)?

2. Educate the patient to make her own decision. If patients fully comprehend the implications of the disease or condition—including the risks and benefits of various options for treatment and nontreatment—they can perform the personal calculus necessary to choose and value a treatment.

- What is the timeframe for making a decision?
- Are there consequences for waiting?
- Would the medication avert surgery or other complications later?
- Did the medical research include patients just like me?

3. Provide tools and approaches for success. Even a patient fully convinced and committed to a treatment plan can fail if she cannot overcome an obstacle course of barriers, such as cost, health literacy, and the vicissitudes of life.

- Does the patient’s insurance cover the medication prescribed?
- Can the patient afford the co-pay?
- Does the patient have a ride to the pharmacy?
- Is the complicated treatment regimen written in plain language? (“Once” is one time to an English speaker, 11 times to a Spanish speaker.)
- Would a multi-compartment pill box or alarm watch help the patient remember?
- Would a call from a member of the medical team a week after the visit make the patient feel both more supported and more accountable?

Communications, marketing, and other healthcare professionals who consider patients not as passive recipients of medications but as full partners in developing, describing, and delivering health solutions can achieve healthier companies and medical practices, as well as patients.

Donna R. Cryer, J.D., is CEO of CryerHealth, LLC, a patient-centric public relations firm based in Washington, D.C. Ms. Cryer serves as President of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter. She can be reached at dcryer@cryerhealth.com.
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Building a Positive Image from the Hidden Jewels in Your Organization

Shelly Gordon  
Senior Vice President  
G2 Communications Inc.

Between exorbitant health-care costs, the growing number of uninsured, the fragile state of Medicare and the daily variety of other healthcare issues bombarding consumers daily, it is the rule rather than the exception that healthcare is an industry fraught with negative news.

Under the weight of a controversial image, healthcare organizations are reacting to contentious news stories and carrying out their crisis communication plans after the media has already set the agenda, rather than setting the agenda themselves.

Yet so many healthcare organizations do such great work and don’t get the recognition and credit they deserve through the media. Unfortunately, reporters rarely come calling when the news is good. Even groundbreaking results in medical treatments often are viewed with a skeptical eye by the press.

A proactive PR campaign makes it possible to let your target audiences know just how well you are doing and build long-term positive relationships through the media. It takes honesty, understanding about what makes a compelling story, and a heavy dose of persistence.

Marketing vs. Public Relations

Many healthcare providers spend vast sums of money on advertising, newsletters, Web sites, and even privately broadcast television shows to spread the word about their values, programs, physicians, new therapies, treatments, etc.

Public relations, however, often is relegated to another marketing tactic where press releases—which may or may not be newsworthy—are mass-targeted over a newswire, often resulting in limited, if any, coverage. The organization also may respond to press inquiries for stories already in process.

But while marketers focus on reaching customers directly and repeatedly with product and service information, benefits, and promotional messages while omitting the negative, public relations can actually sway editorial coverage and third-party endorsement, which carries more weight in the audience’s mind than any marketing brochure.

It is difficult to place a value on relationships with the media or to measure media respect and trust. So, companies tend to focus on the level of media awareness and the direct impact this has on buying decisions. Public relations programs reach customers and other audiences through the media acting as an intermediary, and generate long-term, credible relationships. Effective public relations conditions the market and influences the customer’s buying decision.

For example, a public relations pro pitches a story about a patient whose life is saved in the ER when a new digital radiology system allows the ER doctor to share X-rays online with a brain surgeon in another hospital. Instant remote access to the digital X-ray helps the surgeon make a quick and precise diagnosis and a treatment recommendation that ultimately saves the patient from a severe stroke.

The story appears on television stations, in local and regional newspapers, and in a top technology trade publication. The media coverage sparks positive feedback from the community and increases trust in the hospital’s value through its medical staff and new technology. And the coverage is captured and posted on the organization’s Web site for continued viewing. A successful public relations campaign can dramatically improve an organization’s image.

Formulating the Public Relations Campaign

What does it take to conduct an effective public relations campaign that creates positive perception through the press? First, organizations must realize that journalists write stories, not product announcements. They are looking for the elements of a story with plot, character, conflict, action, resolution, etc. (think English Composition 101).

While many organizations are sitting on a goldmine of stories, most are sending out press releases in the hopes of generating free advertising for new products and services.

For a proactive public relations campaign to be successful, the organization should have a plan with clearly stated objectives and salient messages that communicate its value, benefits, innovations, etc., to the various audiences it serves. And the news coming out of the organization should hit some of the basic story elements.

- Take an inventory of potential stories throughout the organization. They might lie in new treatments, new services, physicians, technologies, individual contributors, fund-raising events, leadership style, company culture...virtually anywhere across the organization.
- Recruit managers and directors to spot interesting news and human-interest stories within their own departments, including individual staffers who have newsworthy stories of their own to tell.
- If your organization is announcing its incoming board of directors don’t just limit the press release to new board members’ names and affiliations. Say good-bye to the outgoing president and propose a story to a columnist about her accomplishments within your organization as well as her contributions to the community. Make sure to integrate key messages within the story by coaching the interview subject. There are many “homes” for these stories that may be of interest to a news reporter as well as a columnist or feature writer. Freelance writers, interested in a story, often will write an article on spec and sell it to editors who already know their good work.

Once positive articles begin appearing in the press, employees will likely be motivated and story ideas are sure to increase in frequency and quality.

Shelly Gordon of G2 Communications Inc., which is located in Palo Alto, Calif., has almost two decades of public relations experience, including 10 years as an independent public relations consultant. Ms. Gordon is a member of the HBA San Francisco Bay Area Chapter. She can be reached at sgordon@g2comm.com or 650.856.1607.
DISCOVERS

running a hospital saves lives too
the balance between cost and care
disease is global, so cures should be too
technology must be affordable to be effective
the easy answer may not be the right one

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“Lonnel was chosen as this year’s HBA Honorable Mentor because of the inspiring and powerful testimonies we received about his mentorship of industry women,” said HBA President Cathy Kerzner.

Coats joined Eisai as Southwest Region Sales Director in 1996 and, over the years, has quickly advanced through a series of positions, including Director of Managed Care, National Sales Director, and Executive Director of Sales. In 2001, Coats was named Vice President of Human Resources and a member of Eisai’s Executive Committee. In this role, he was instrumental in establishing a five-year vision and corporate values for the company. In 2003, he became Vice President of Sales and Marketing. Shortly thereafter, Coats was appointed President and Chief Operating Officer.

In an exclusive Q&A with the HBA Bulletin, Lonnel Coats discusses the importance of mentoring as well as the challenges that the life-sciences industry faces.

**BULLETIN** Despite a tremendously busy schedule, you continue to devote significant time and attention to mentoring employees, particularly women, on a regular basis. Why do you believe this is important?

**COATS** Throughout my career, I have experienced firsthand how mentoring can make a difference in a person’s professional and personal development. Therefore, I am committed to sharing my knowledge and insights with others to support their career aspirations. At Eisai, we place high value on learning and leadership development, because it is only through the contributions of our employees that we will continue to achieve success.

**BULLETIN** Which are the most important leadership skills you believe women and men in the life-sciences industry need to possess?

**COATS** There are many skills that men and women need to cultivate in order to be successful in the healthcare industry. One of the most important skills is learning how to lead cross-functional teams with influence versus authority.

**BULLETIN** You are the second Eisai executive to receive this honor from the HBA, the first being Bill Sheldon, then President and Chief Operating Officer, Eisai Inc. What does this say about the company, its mission, and its leadership and development philosophy?

**COATS** Eisai Inc. has achieved many milestones and successes in its short history. In fact, in our last fiscal year, we attained blockbuster or billion-dollar status for two of our products. None of these accomplishments could have been realized without the contributions of our employees—we recognize that they are our greatest asset. At Eisai, we place high value on learning and leadership development because we want to ensure we have exceptional leaders and contributors.

**BULLETIN** As one who has mentored many executives during your career, who do you rely on for mentorship?

**COATS** I still rely upon the mentors who I’ve had over the years, such as Bill Sheldon and others who continue to provide guidance, even subsequent to us not working together.

**BULLETIN** What is the biggest challenge you face in steering your company?

**COATS** Many pharmaceutical companies and their leadership teams face similar issues that affect the entire industry. For example, the single most pressing issue for our industry is image and its effect on public policy, which can stifle innovation. One of the largest challenges we face is overcoming these image issues. In addition, the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act (MMA) has brought unique challenges to our industry. Because of this legislation, the managed care industry is reshaping business strategies of the manufacturers from pricing and reimbursements to internal controls and the latest technologies.
Meryl Zausner from page 1

she now chairs, Zausner also helped form EWIN—Executive Women Impacting Novartis—and mentors women throughout the company. Zausner recalls when she and Cynthia Hogan, Senior Vice President for Novartis, returned to work soon after their children were born, they started a lunch group and invited speakers who could help other young mothers. She recalls that it was their equivalent of the “nursery school network.”

Debra Freire, Vice President, Patient Relations, at Novartis Oncology and an HBA Advisory Board member, encouraged Zausner and other Novartis women to attend WOTY and other HBA events. “We arranged for buses to transport the women to WOTY and we realized that they spent most of the time talking to each other and not networking with other HBA members,” Zausner said, and EWIN was officially born. Zausner recently received a mandate to expand the U.S.-based forum for networking and supporting the careers of senior women into a global organization. Freire also cited Zausner’s organization of networking for Novartis women at conferences at locations outside the U.S., and for women in finance and in oncology.

“Play Nice”

Zausner gravitated to diversity and women’s issues naturally. She grew up in a Brooklyn neighborhood with a religious and ethnic mix where “everyone enjoyed sharing their heritage.” As a woman in finance, she experienced negativity on the job, especially from other women, and decided her goal would be to “make women feel comfortable and trusting, and to be competitive with themselves not each other.” That is exactly what she has done at Novartis and what she looks for in senior hires. “I assume that a senior candidate will have the technical skills, so I look for the I-versus-we mentality. You have to be ethical and care about the good of the group. You must have leadership potential, be willing to take risks, and voice your opinion. You have to play nice or you can’t play here.” That’s a pretty good description of Meryl Zausner herself.

Michele Galen, Vice President and Head of Global Communications and External Relations for Novartis Oncology, expressed what so many of her colleagues said in their nomination letters: “Meryl is a rare combination of strategy and toughness when it comes to driving the business and doing what’s right for the organization to deliver the numbers, of caring and compassion when it comes to supporting women, of diversity and inclusion at Novartis; she generously offers friendship to all.” Freire added that “Meryl is very approachable and sends a clear message that encourages others to be themselves.”

Zausner has worked in consumer products and pharmaceuticals for 28 years. She joined Novartis (then Sandoz) in 1988 as an Associate Director in the OTC business, where she rose to Executive Director, assuming additional responsibilities for the U.S. pharmaceutical business, supporting field force expansions and business development and licensing initiatives. She was named Head of Finance for the global oncology business in 2000. Zausner began her career in public accounting and, after earning her CPA, joined Colgate Palmolive, where she was given a number of international assignments and was named Controller of a startup venture.

Zausner has her own mentors and heroes. On the business side, Thomas Ebeling, CEO of Novartis AG and an HBA Europe board member, and David Epstein, have been her mentors and friends. Freire, Shellie Caplan—the 2007 HBA Star Volunteer—and Nancy Miller-Rich, Schering-Plough, brought her into the HBA. On the personal side, her late husband Stuart “made me who I am.” His laid-back style helped her keep what was important in her sights, as did her stepfather, who “taught me to enjoy life.” Her mother, who urged Meryl to become independent early on, takes great pride in her daughter’s accomplishments. Son Ethan is the center of her life. Zausner moved HBA Leadership Conference attendees to tears with her story and the advice she would give her younger self.

Asked what the HBA WOTY Award meant to her, Zausner responded in her own understated fashion: “I sit in awe of these WOTY women. I never dreamed I could be one of them. Next to having a baby and falling in love, this is the best thing that has ever happened to me!” And, keeping in character, she added, “This is more important for Novartis than for me. It shows that people can have alternate careers here. People development constitutes 25 percent of my objectives; this is a huge commitment by Novartis.”

Zausner’s friend and companion, Mel Greenblatt, who wrote his own nomination letter noting the importance of family and friends in her life, said: “There is so much beauty in Meryl, so much charm, charisma, love, creativity and uniqueness, and so much caring for her fellow man and woman that you now can see why I believe she deserves this most honorable award.” Maybe Meryl Zausner can begin to see why, too.
Creating Current and Relevant Value for Leadership Development

Cathy Kerzner
HBA President

When you think about a leader, what characteristics come to mind? For me, a leader provides current and relevant value to help me achieve my development goals and aspirations: my leadership agenda. A leader is a person or an organization I actually need to be around, not just want to be around. A leader is not necessarily the most popular or visible person and you may not even have a personal relationship with her or him. What truly is important is that this individual has made an impression on you or has had an impact on you in some way.

In February, Warren Buffett published his letter to shareholders. As a business leader, he is well-known to many. But what is most striking is that people who will never buy a share of Berkshire Hathaway will read his letter, because of his incredible insights. He has the hallmark of a leader beyond his business acumen; people care about what he has to say because it has current and relevant value.

In January, the HBA Board held a 2007 kick-off retreat to set the leadership agenda for the year. Our goal was to agree upon our vision for 2007 and set priorities based on the HBA Strategic Plan to help us realize our vision. The board agreed that the overarching goal for 2007 is to increase the number of women leaders through education, recognition, networking, mentoring and research initiatives. How will we do this? As an organization, we will provide programs and initiatives of current and relevant value—to you, our members, that support you in achieving your individual leadership agendas.

The HBA's commitment to leadership development has unprecedented bandwidth this year. For starters, if you glance at our Website on any given day, you will see a robust variety of programs hosted by the Chapters and Affiliates that cover numerous aspects of leadership development. Here is just a small sample of the many offerings:

- How to Navigate Your Career Journey (RTP)
- Skills for Executive Success (Mid-Atlantic)
- Mastering Life Balance (Chicago)
- How a European Company Entered the US Market (Boston)
- Establishing Credibility (Metro)
- Personalized Medicine (San Francisco)
- How to Get and Stay Connected (San Antonio)

These are complemented by our landmark global learning events, such as the 2007 Leadership Conference (December 6-7, Washington, D.C.), where members gather to focus on themselves and their leadership development. Combined with the enormous number of affinity groups and networking events, members have countless options at their disposal for learning and growing as leaders.

This year, the HBA celebrates its 30th anniversary, which is another important milestone for our organization. As pioneers focused on helping women advance their careers in healthcare, the members of the HBA have demonstrated their commitment to developing themselves and others through their association with an organization that offers world-class programs and initiatives targeted to the achievement of each person's leadership agenda.

Priorities for 2007 also include expanding into additional segments of healthcare to further the impact of the HBA on a global scale and establishing strategic alliances both externally, with other organizations, and internally. In January, we successfully established a Global Women in Science group. This group will serve as a model to springboard into other functional areas to expand the HBA’s scope of support to develop and attract leaders in all areas of healthcare. Also, led by our European affiliate, we have established an alliance with INSEAD, one of the world’s leading and largest graduate business schools. The HBA is partnering with INSEAD for the Healthcare2020. forum 2007 in June, which will focus on the rapid, complex interaction between the global economy, health and healthcare. Women leaders from the HBA turn to PRESIDENT’S FORUM on page 10