



## *Marni Lun, PharmD, MBA*

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### **Tapping into the Influence of a Few to Positively Impact the Actions of Many**

In her quest to find the pharmacy role that ignited her passion and fulfilled her goals, Marni pursued a career in the pharmaceutical industry, focusing on disease areas where her expertise could have a positive impact on patients. Along the way, she became an expert in identifying and developing relationships with healthcare opinion leaders and later collaborating with professional associations. This work helped her not only develop an appreciation for the value of expert opinion, thought leadership, and collaboration, it also helped her realize the importance of developing well-informed opinions.

Marni Lun is currently Director of Professional Association Relations at Novo Nordisk, Inc. Before joining Novo Nordisk, Marni was Director of Member Relations for the Pharmacy Student Forum at ASHP. An avid Florida Gator fan, she earned her PharmD and MBA degrees at the University of Florida. She is an active member of the Obesity Medicine Association, The Obesity Society, Obesity Action Coalition, American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, and ASHP.

Marni's advice is: ***Marry your well-researched thoughts with your opinions and use your confidence in your well-informed opinions to positively influence others.***

#### ***Dear Young Pharmacist,***

Professional leaders are among us every day—at your university, your pharmacy, your state or national association, and elsewhere. Leaders come in many varieties, but a few emerge to positions where they can effectively influence the thoughts, opinions, and actions of others. Even fewer are able to shape the profession or healthcare in our country and world. There is a term to describe these individuals: *thought leaders* or *opinion leaders*. Do you know one? Do you want to *be* one?

The fact that you are reading this letter is promising. I encourage you to make a habit of seeking out and supporting those among us who can inspire and guide our profession to a place of greatness. Even better, I encourage you to continue on the path to becoming a thought and opinion leader yourself. We need you. But, it's tough. I think President John F. Kennedy got it right when he said "Too often we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought."

With so much going on in our world, our nation, and our profession, it is impossible to be an expert on everything. Thus, we rely on the thoughts and opinions of trusted experts to guide the way. This makes sense! But, do not be too quick to accept opinions handed down to you without employing your own thoughts and perspectives to qualify them and to shape your views.

So, why have I chosen to write a letter about thought and opinion leadership? Let me explain. I knew fairly early in my pharmacy school education that my career would not likely take a traditional path. It became obvious to me that I would need to make a choice. Did I want to know a little about everything in pharmacy or a lot about one certain area? I found that, for me, being a generalist would not lead me in a direction of career satisfaction. Thus, I opted for expertise. My biggest dilemma was not knowing what specific area of pharmacy I wanted to pursue. The options were vast. I felt a little lost, a little confused, and a little excited about the possibilities. Despite the ambiguity, I liked the idea of becoming a pharmacist. The knowledge I would acquire and the influence I could have to promote the well-being of others provided my motivation to persevere through a 4-year pharmacy program and a 2-year business program.

With the opinions and suggestions of some pharmacy greats who came before me, I opted to start my career in the pharmaceutical industry. I landed a fellowship position supporting a large, field-based medical team focused on bone health and osteoporosis. We worked with experts and opinion leaders who were shaping the practice of medicine. From there I moved into a healthcare professional marketing role, this time in gastrointestinal health and ulcerative colitis. Within a few years, the infamous "volatility" of industry jobs hit home, and I had to make a major career choice. I exited the industry and pursued a different type of thought leader engagement—this time at ASHP. I had the privilege of working with the best of the best when it came to student leaders in pharmacy, many of whom were already on their way to having great influence on our profession. After ASHP, I took a position back in industry dedicated to identifying and cultivating relationships with the top national opinion leaders in the field of diabetes care. I have now landed in a role where I focus on collaboration with professional associations that have the potential for the greatest impact in the medical management of obesity. All were very different roles, but all had a similar thread tying them together—tapping into the influence of a *few* to positively impact the actions of *many*.