

## The Bizarre World of Healthcare (2)

# Innovative Claptrap

Formality and superficial appearance must be crucial in business. Why else would companies exude such an air of self importance?

Searching for suitable information about life science companies is a disheartening task. Consider this medium-sized biopharmaceutical company from Basel, Switzerland. The company website, perfectly designed and populated by determinedly smiling, wholesome people, reveals the following under “our business”:

*ABC Inc. is a biopharmaceutical company that seeks to create value for patients, partners and investors by developing innovative therapies.*

Hurray! That sounds great! No reader could fail to be impressed. But hang on a minute! What does this statement actually mean? What do they mean by “value for patients”? Will the company top up its customers’ bank accounts? And what in the world are “innovative therapies”? More effective therapies? Faster therapies? Therapies that are more expensive than traditional ones and therefore more lucrative for ABC Inc.? All of the above?

A few sentences further on the reader is brought to a stumbling halt once again:

*ABC Inc. develops novel therapies through focused innovation.*

“Focused innovation”, eh? How impressive! ABC Inc. certainly appears to be highly innovative, whatever that might mean.

But what does this thunderous statement mean when dissected? “Focused” can mean many different things: “bundled”, “decisive”, “resolute”, “purposeful” and “fixed” for example. And “innovation” means, in a narrower sense, “modernisation”. Again the reader is slightly perplexed: “Bundled modernisation”? “Fixed modernisation”? “Decisive modernisation”? Which one is it? Further reading reveals nothing (neither about innovation nor anything else). What a pity! This is clearly a fantastic company with just one small drawback: nobody can understand what they are doing.

ABC Inc. is in good company. Take this other Swiss biotech firm, located in lovely Lausanne, as another example of corporate obscurity. The company, let’s call it “SuperBio S.A.”, informs their website’s readers of the following:

*We search for new ideas through a systematic, but open-minded evaluation of every opportunity.*

Do you understand what this means? Congratulations! You’re the first to crack it!

**“This is clearly a fantastic company. It has just one drawback: Nobody can understand what they are doing.”**



Let’s visit another website. *www.XYZ-AG-de* is operated by a German-based leading provider of innovative technologies and solutions.

Solutions, eh? How does this provider transport its innovative solutions? XYZ AG must surely operate a huge fleet of accurately cooled liquid tanks in which to store its precious solutions. And how can such a solution be ordered? By phone? Email? “Dear Madam, please ship three hektolitres of your innovative solution to my university lab. Our recent experiments have failed and we are at a loss. Your precious solutions are our only hope!”

A word of advice: don’t try ordering by phone. XYZ’s customer service staff will cut you off.

Other European countries are also home to puzzling companies. Many proclaim that they are *integrated biotech companies*, or that they offer *integrated services*.

What does “integrated” mean in this context? Twisted? Holistic (in an esoteric sense)? Encircled (by what)? Once again, one is tempted to call the company hotline and find out.

But perhaps the most astonishing observation when examining company mission statements is the following: every single life science company is somehow or other a “world leader” (or at least a leader in some way or another). Statements typically go as follows (please ignore the bumpy grammar!):

*MegaBio is the world leader biopharmaceutical company committed to discover new marine-derived drugs.*

**“Every single life science company is a leader – at least in using enzymes to clean waste water.”**

...or sound like this (a Danish firm):

*GigaZymes is the biotech-based world leader in using enzymes as waste water cleanup.*

...or like this (a US company):

*UltraBio is a global leader in the field of biodecontamination with unique application solutions.*

...or like this (a Swiss group):

*UltraPharm is a world leader in diagnostics, the leading supplier of medicines for transplantation and a market leader in virology.*

A “world-leading-market-leader”. Impressive! Best regards from me, a world-leading provider of clarity-focussed journalism solutions for Europe’s market-leading biotech publication! W. KOEPELLE