

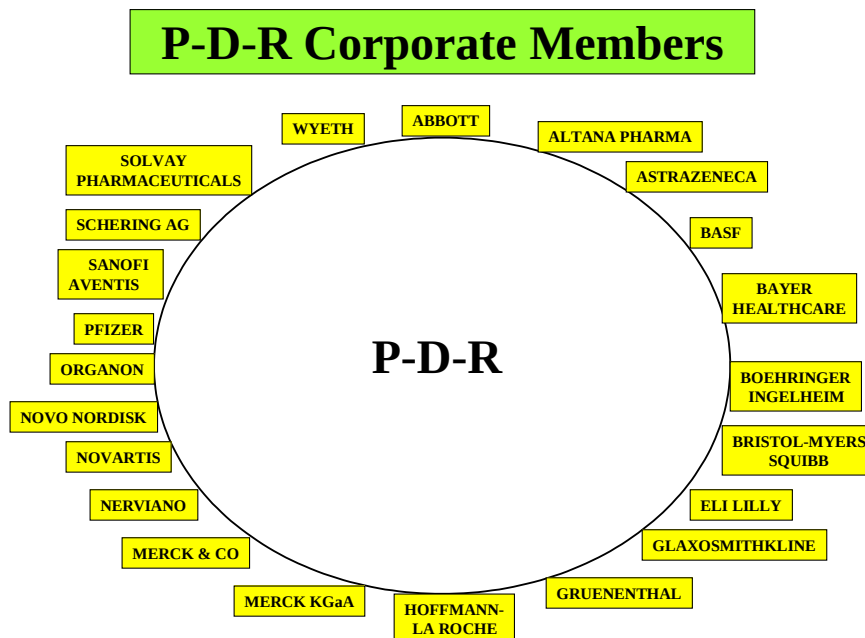
Press Release



Information and Knowledge Management in the International Pharmaceutical Industry

46th Annual General Meeting of the P-D-R (2004)

The Pharma Documentation Ring (P-D-R) held its 46th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Bürgenstock, near Lucerne, Switzerland from the 5th – 8th October 2004. The P-D-R is an association which represents the scientific information departments of the leading international R&D-based pharmaceutical corporations. Despite merger and acquisition activity in the pharmaceutical industry, the number of corporate members has remained stable at 22. The latter account for approximately 60% of the total global turnover of ethical drugs (approximately \$470 billion in 2004); by far the majority of top 20 global pharmaceutical players are P-D-R members.



Status: Oct. 2004

35 delegates from 9 different countries in Europe and North America attended this year's meeting, which was expertly hosted by Hofmann-La Roche. An informal reception for delegates prior to the official opening of the meeting was organised by Dialog Datastar.

In his opening address, Henning Nielsen (Novo Nordisk), P-D-R President, reported on the success of a special P-D-R meeting on Quality Standards in Berlin for STM Electronic Journals. The outcome of this meeting was a draft document on quality standards for e-journals, which will be presented on the P-D-R website once it is finally endorsed by members.

A joint task force involving the P-D-R and several STM (Scientific Technical Medical) publishers, has produced a Code of Practice document for the external use of e-content which seeks to clarify the terms that frequently arise in discussions with publishers and information providers relating to regulatory, legal, medical information (reactive distribution of single copies) and marketing use (proactive distribution of multiple copies) of e-content.

The P-D-R participated in a UK House of Commons Select Committee inquiry into scientific publications/open access debate, their final report included several references to the P-D-R standpoint.

With respect to the P-D-R website, further gratis commercial sources of information have been added e.g weekly Monitor article from Markletletter, Pharmadeals Reviews etc.

As in previous years, two strategic topics were selected prior to the AGM and discussed in depth:

- The Changing Information Scene
- E-Learning

During the 'Changing Information Scene' session, Vin Caraher, CEO of Thomson Scientific, outlined the company's strategy for providing enhanced products to the pharmaceutical industry and their commitment to ensuring adequate levels of customer support and service.

This was followed by a presentation on the development of an innovative new end-user product - T-Pharma - by Ian Tarr, Vice-President of Thomson Scientific. The product had apparently been designed following a survey of end-users in pharma companies conducted by a third party on behalf of Thomson Scientific. This interesting new product uses portal technology to provide a single interface to all Thomson Scientific content. The licensing strategy was also outlined to the P-D-R group. The connected P-D-R presentations focussed on the needs for high quality patent related information (both expert user and end-user) and for tailored customer support. In the second of these presentations, the importance of a smooth transition of customer support during and after acquisitions was underlined using (general) examples of what should not happen during such processes.

In the discussions that followed, P-D-R company representatives provided feedback on Thomson Scientific products and services, together with comments on the proposed T-Pharma licensing model beyond 2005.

During the second special topic session on 'e-Learning and distance learning', Anne Caputo (Factiva) described some e-learning initiatives within her own organisation. In her experience, successful e-learning programmes are closely linked to the day-to-day activities of staff, avoid being driven by the features of the tools being used, and are supported by activities such as group discussions.

A survey conducted amongst P-D-R member companies revealed that about 50% of P-D-R companies had already developed e-learning modules to train end-users in the use of desktop information systems. Typical examples included applications such as product literature databases, Ovid, MicroPatent etc.

Three P-D-R companies gave presentations including live demonstrations of in-house applications of e-learning, using different approaches and tools. Glaxo SmithKline discussed the use of the Docent author learning management system, Aventis their application of streaming video, and Abbott discussed their early experiences with the Impatica web conferencing tool, a number of simulation tools, and course authoring tools including Lectora and ZMS.

Other highlights of the meeting included

- a presentation by Rachel Ecclestone (Blackwell Science) on possible technical approaches to mining the published scientific literature. A system architecture was proposed that could satisfy the needs of the pharmaceutical industry.
- a review of the use of electronic laboratory notebooks in the Pharmaceutical Industry and a presentation on the current activities of Merck & Co in this developing area.
- formal approval of the "quality standards for e-journals" document discussed earlier

A prominent part of the meeting is when company representatives report on non-confidential developments that have been taking place in their respective organisations during the previous year.

Several members reported on a major increase of their electronic journal holdings, both with current subscriptions and with electronic backfiles. Subscriptions to e-books had also increased with companies adding electronic versions of reference books to their collections during 2004. In many companies, print subscriptions have been dramatically reduced.

A number of delegates confirmed that they were using SFX linking technology for their e-journal collections or planned to use it in the near future.

The Company Reports' sessions also confirmed that intranet portals continue to be the primary means of delivering literature and information services to end-users within P-D-R companies, several of which reported the introduction of enterprise-wide portals with integrated taxonomy tools.

As agreed at last year's AGM, the P-D-R board had decided to make a special award each year – the Jane Whittall Award for Excellence - in memory of Jane Whittall, an active, popular P-D-R member who met an untimely death in 2003. The silver salver that will be allocated annually to the member who had contributed most to P-D-R activities over the previous 12 months.

The inaugural award went to Jeanet Ginestet of Sanofi Aventis who has been closely involved with the P-D-R for many years and has been primarily working in the compilation and production of the monthly P-D-R e-Newsletter. Over the years, Jeanet has alerted her P-D-R colleagues to many important developments in the information industry. Recently, the content and format of the e-newsletter has considerably improved which is very much appreciated by all members.



In summary, it was a highly successful and interactive meeting and a survey conducted amongst attendees indicated there had been, once again, a very high level of relevant and quality presentations by P-D-R members and invited speakers. The meeting continues to be regarded by most participants as the major annual event of its type for the international pharmaceutical industry.



The 47th P-D-R AGM will be held in Frankfurt, Germany from the 4th - 7th October 2005 and will be hosted by Sanofi Aventis.

The PDR web site can be found at <http://www.p-d-r.com>.