



THE PERFORMERS

× CANADA'S INFLUENTIAL THOUGHT LEADERS ×

MICHAEL BISKEY

president, Express Scripts Canada

"HOPE ISN'T A STRATEGY TO KEEP BENEFITS PLANS AFFORDABLE—I KEEP SAYING THAT TO PEOPLE. COMPANIES NEED TO INTRODUCE INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO SUSTAIN THEIR BENEFITS PLANS."



WHAT'S BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR CAREER?

It is hard to highlight one single event in my career. I believe that there are a series of accomplishments that have led me to where I am now. For example, I am proud to see my colleagues at Express Scripts Canada develop a complete understanding of the very real threat to the drug benefit in this country and work together to introduce viable solutions. My most rewarding accomplishments occur when I've brought ideas or solutions that have helped people because, through this, I've developed many lasting friendships.



WHAT KEEPS YOU AWAKE AT NIGHT?

Changes are being made to benefit plans that will have a profound effect on many Canadians in the future. A significant number of plan sponsors are beginning to place caps on their drug plans. I would prefer to see a plan sponsor take action and introduce innovative solutions rather than simply saying, "OK, I'm going to cap or shift costs." And that's exactly what's going on right now. This leaves some unfortunate Canadians with little to no coverage—which they may desperately need.



WORDS TO LIVE BY?

Build trust by acting with integrity and delivering value, and good things will follow.



DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR PLAN SPONSORS?

Hope isn't a strategy to keep benefits plans affordable—I keep saying that to people. Companies need to introduce innovative solutions to sustain their benefits plans.

What drives you both as president and as the leading pharmacy benefits manager in Canada?

I want to help Canadian employers preserve their drug benefit plans. Employers that provide drug benefits to their employees have experienced steadily rising costs. Unfortunately, our research proves that a huge portion of the money employers spend on these benefits is wasted due to poor patient decisions. I'm driven by the opportunity to change the Canadian drug benefit landscape with innovative services, unlike anything Canada has seen before, that leverage things like the behavioural sciences to actually help patients make better drug benefit decisions. Better decisions reduce costs, improve health outcomes and will help employers preserve the drug benefit for their employees. Driving this change is a challenging but very rewarding endeavour.

Why did you decide to launch a new business model in 2011?

Costs for drug benefit plans will continue to increase unless something is done about it. We see a huge amount of waste in the Canadian drug benefit system—and traditional controls do not deal with the root cause of that waste. Express Scripts Canada had the foresight and the means to introduce solutions to combat this threat. We leveraged the very innovative drug benefit solutions that our parent company has been using for the past 20 years. We adapted these solutions to work effectively in Canada with our

Canadian culture, healthcare system and employee benefits model.

What have been your biggest achievements in Canada?

My greatest achievements have all come from driving real, quantifiable value to clients through innovative strategies and solutions. I get deep personal satisfaction from seeing a great idea work, particularly if it results in change and innovation within an industry.

The new drug benefit business model that we developed for the Canadian marketplace and we delivered to some of our clients—[like] Canadian Pacific rail—is a great example. They (CP) were keen on looking at ways to contain benefit costs, particularly in an era of increasing drug costs—and they had difficulty getting their employees to use programs intended to better manage costs. We brought a solution to the table that was very unique and innovative—and it worked.

It isn't enough any longer to simply react by processing an incoming drug claim. Instead of simply reacting to claims, our new services are designed to impact the prescription by helping patients make better decisions.

How does it feel to work for a company that was designated as 2014's most ethical company?

In today's marketplace, we understand that patients, customers, employees and investors place a high premium on trust, ethics and good governance—so we are both honoured and humbled to receive that designation. The honour

recognizes organizations that continue to raise the bar on ethical leadership and corporate behaviour. Integrity is the compass that essentially guides our work, and being viewed as one of the world's most ethical companies is an honour and a privilege.

What have you learned in the PBM arena that has changed how you lead?

Challenge the status quo. I came to this industry nine years ago with very little knowledge of it. That allows me to look at things unencumbered with traditional thinking. As a result, I've helped people within the industry understand that the status quo doesn't always work and that changes are required.

I learned that while everybody knows that drug benefit costs climb annually, many people didn't understand the root cause, or what to do about it. The root cause is that plan members have not made the best decisions considering all the necessary information. When I explain this to people, it's like a light comes on. They say: "That makes perfect sense."

My role is really to challenge what's been going on forever and say: "Are there different ways of looking at this?" What you have to do is find a way to engage the plan member at the point they're making the decision—and help them understand the choices so they can make a better decision.

