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Good Partnering Practices (GPPs) @ Paris IPLS

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By Anthony Hoerning, Philippe Beaupère Swiss HLG

After a brief personal introduction at the beginning of the workshop, participants listed observations about licensing transactions in their personal experience that had been, from a pure process point to view, less than optimal. Issues around reliability, responsiveness, decision-making authority, in-transparency about the objectives of the process and about the proposed process itself were raised, along with doubts regarding participants' politeness and culturally-flavored behaviour which had been difficult to deal with. These issues were manifested by apparent miscommunication (for example between parent company and subsidiary), as well as feelings of being manipulated, by the others (usually it is "the others" who behave this way, not us...) and a sense of complexity not well explained by business needs (financial, risk aspects...).

Recognizing that each deal is different and the needs of companies in BD are very variable, there was nevertheless a sense that there ought to be some standards of what is "right" and what "wrong", which led to Philippe Beaupère and Anthony Hörning briefly introducing the GPPs (<http://www.swisshlg.com/category/ourinitiatives/gpp/>).

The workshop leaders also shared the body of evidence regarding market participants expectations: Vantage Partners and Boston Consulting Group, among others, have collected data over many partnering surveys in our industry, that there are clear procedural expectations for example by Biotechs when they engage in the partnering process with Big Pharma: Leadership attitudes and behaviours, responsiveness and ease of access of the BD&L team members, availability of alliance management capabilities etc.

Participants contributed to a lively discussion of what if...? What if, for example, the industry began to publicly disclose their observations about the experience in working with the other companies, perhaps in a similar way that the market participants in transportation services (Uber...), overnight stays (AirBnB...) or restaurant visits (TripAdvisor) have become used to do?

After Anthony divulged that his rider rating on Uber is 4.78, many participants quickly checked theirs...

Is it conceivable that, following the abrupt dismissal of a licensing project, the would-be licensee were to publish a "two handshakes" (out of five) rating on the licensor on the GPPPPP (Good Pharma Partnering Practices Performance Perfection Platform)? We mulled over the fundamental goal for such a rating tool, what exactly would we gain with such feedback? Would it be anonymous or personal, would it be verbal comments or just a stars system, with or without specific categories (transparency, timelines, senior management engagement...) and descriptions of levels? Hard to say, but clearly, we already informally engage in some exchanges regarding these questions...we call it networking.

Attendees left with some practical questions to consider: thinking about the over 120 individual recommendations and statements in 25 subject groups of the five SCENIC chapters of the GPPs, and implementing them in their company, which to prioritise, which to adapt for the specific circumstances of their licensing strategy? The participants themselves suggested that they would compare with their existing company SOPs and use the GPPs as a checklist and for training as well as for open discussion with new partners.

The Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals, ASAP, has published a Code of Conduct for AM professionals, large Pharma has begun to integrate the GPPs into their business model, and referring to standards of partnering behaviour explicitly in their publications (often from an ethical code point of view). When will your company study, adopt and divulge the GPPs?

A second GPP initiative will be launched in the near future, so please watch this space!





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