

Women in Science: Shilpa Shah-Mehta

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Shilpa Shah-Mehta, Executive Product Director, Hematology Franchises

At Novartis, we value the contributions of women at every level of our business. We are proud to offer women the opportunities they seek, that allow them to explore their passions, develop professionally and address some of society's most challenging healthcare issues.

That is why we are especially proud to share our latest Stories series called "Women in Science," dedicated to the women within our Oncology unit. We look forward to personally introducing you to the women helping develop innovative oncology medicines for people with cancer and related diseases.

In the latest installment of the series, we're excited to feature Shilpa Shah-Mehta, our Executive Product Director, Hematology Franchises. Shilpa was recently inducted into *Medical Marketing & Media (MM&M)*'s "Hall of Femme," which recognizes 16 of the most senior female leaders in healthcare who have made a significant impact in marketing and communications in 2016.

Today she reflects on her induction into the "Hall of Femme" and shares anecdotes of her impressive career in healthcare so far.

What does it mean to you to be honored as one of the breakthrough women in healthcare for not only bridging the gender gap but also being a prominent leader in the industry?

Shah-Mehta: What stands out for me is the profound honor to be recognized in a series, "Women in Science." While I majored in the sciences in college, I have spent most of my professional career on the commercial side of the business. This recognition speaks to the deep connections between marketing and science. Commercial and medical cannot operate in silos and the recognition as a 'breakthrough woman in healthcare' certainly underscores the importance, to me, of the cross-functional collaboration and understanding necessary to ensure that our patients and customers receive the most effective treatments available.

At the Hall of Femme Summit in New York City on June 8th, you spoke about leadership. What would you say to our future leaders — the young women looking to make a

difference in the world of healthcare?

Shah-Mehta: As in any profession, persistence and curiosity are imperatives. The road to a successful career is never a straight line and one has to be able to constantly find alternative ways to navigate through circumstances, which are very often beyond one's control.

In healthcare, curiosity is particularly important because we can only thrive on the new and innovative. We wither away if we cling to the status quo. We must always be on the lookout for what's down the road, which emphasizes my earlier point about the synergy between commercial and medical. Successful professionals in healthcare have deep understandings in both areas in order to drive the development and commercialization of cutting-edge treatments.

Who have you looked to as a role model throughout your career? How did they help shape you as a successful business woman?

Shah-Mehta: I have looked to several women over the years who have made themselves available to me when I needed to talk things through – and we are still connected. While my default behavior was insecurity, they taught me not to be shy, ask for more, and realize that I could do most anything I put my mind to. They were great for building up my confidence and clearing away the doubt – and believe me, as you climb the ladder in this business, there is always plenty of doubt. These wonderful women made most of it disappear for me.

What most excites you about working in healthcare marketing at Novartis?

Shah-Mehta: What gets me excited about coming to work every day is that what I do has a direct impact on patients and caregivers. What could be better than that? We recently conducted a campaign that included new recipes for patients with cancer. The feedback we received was incredible – these patients were so grateful that they could incorporate so many more foods into their diet. I loved that. Someone who recently joined our organization commented to me that we really put the customer/patient first and are not so internally focused. That's what so exciting to me.

How do you hope to continue to make a difference in the healthcare industry through your work here at Novartis?

Shah-Mehta: I look forward to helping patients in a wide variety of disease states. We are a business and numbers do matter, but for me, the number of patients we can treat is the most important thing. When patients come first, the numbers follow.

"Novartis Presents: Women in Science" is an ongoing series showcasing women at Novartis who are helping develop innovative oncology medicines for people with cancer and related diseases.

"As in any profession, persistence and curiosity are imperatives." - Shilpa Shah-Mehta Novartis
#WomenInScience

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