



Raising the whole bar, not just the drinks....

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It was with great pride that I watched as we celebrated the successes of individuals and companies that are making a difference to healthcare daily. I felt the Awards Gala was a significant milestone in the maturity of our industry. Yes it was a celebration, but it was more than that. It was symbolic of our ability to come together as a community and recognize those among us who truly dedicate themselves to the advancement of the industry.

There were examples of individuals who are taking leadership roles, whether over the lifetime of their careers, or at the onset, or those that are showing great promise. There were examples of the innovative use of technology that really make a difference to healthcare and of companies that are going beyond their purely commercial interests and giving back to the community in the form of time and energy. All in all there was a good cross-section of contributors to the industry.

And we did it right. The Royal York Hotel. Black tie. A fabulous meal. And what looked like a professional MC! Even a jazz club afterwards.

But all of this got me thinking.

Did the event reflect the essence of the industry as it is today? Oh yes, I think it very much did. It showed that we are maturing, that the private and public sectors can come together, recognize, appreciate and celebrate mutual success. That we are beyond the traditional, and somewhat simplistic, one-of customer-supplier relationships found in young industries. That we have matured to realize that success in such a complex undertaking is only assured with relationships of mutual respect among all the people and organizations that have the skills and products required. It warmed the cockles of my heart...

Secondly I wondered whether the award winners did in fact reflect the leaders of the industry and therefore those that exemplify the excellence we all strive for? Again I concluded, yes. For starters I would note that we had many very well qualified

nominations in each category. We had a formal evaluation committee comprised on healthcare and industry leaders that went through each nomination and compared them to pre-defined criteria. And the choices were tough. Any number of the nominees could easily have won. The committee did an admiral job of being objective and fair.

The resultant winners then each in their own right represented the ideal "package" for their respective categories. Collectively they represented a cross-section of the contributors to our industry. On the individuals side, some were young and in school, some early in their careers and showing great promise, and others having given a lifetime to the industry. On the company side, I was worried that we would only see the "usual suspects" - those whose name we always see at these type of events. Not so - we saw MedShare and WebMed - both relative newcomers - win major awards. We also formally recognized the contributions of CLINICARE and McKesson. And while both may be considered "usual suspects", the fact is they do put in the time and energy to support and advance our industry. They put the industry's agenda ahead of their own commercial interests on many issues.

This is admirable and should be recognized. To those who may snipe, and say "yeah it's always one of the insiders that gets the recognition", I say "get involved, spend the time and you too will be recognized".

So on reflection, I think we did raise the bar nicely. We have set a new standard for the industry, one that shows we are maturing, becoming more professional, and prepared to step out and reward those that demonstrate excellence.

Having said all of this, raising a drink seems appropriate at this time of year too.

Happy holidays!

