



## MAKING SAFETY HAPPEN

### ADDRESSING SHARPS SAFETY ISSUES IN HEALTH CARE

## THE LAUNCH ADVISORY TEAM

BusinessCare for HealthCare™

### SUMMARY & BENEFITS

- Restoring Market Confidence
- Integrity and Responsibility
- In-Depth Market Analysis
- Uncovering Blind Spots
- Identifying Gaps and Pitfalls
- Advancing Marketing Excellence

A leading medical device manufacturer faced serious industry challenges and safety concerns regarding an increased rate of accidental needlesticks with healthcare workers; many of their needles were used for blood collection and drug delivery, many of their needles were contaminated after patient use with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and Hepatitis B virus, and many of their contaminated needles contributed to the death of healthcare workers. In response, the manufacturer focused on innovating new safety products to help prevent further accidental needlesticks while engaging communication organizations, public relations firms, industry consultants, and clinicians to communicate their commitment to safety. All of these efforts resulted in a negligible impact for effectively advancing sharps safety and addressing industry concerns.

A member and lead consultant of the Launch Advisory Team (LAT) was subsequently engaged to evaluate the reasons for these inconsequential results including an unsatisfactory adoption of safety products and the lack of effective clinical acceptance and involvement. Conducting surveys, focus groups, and interviews, the LAT member and his team identified current practices, clinician perceptions, behaviors, and habits regarding sharps safety coupling those findings with an in-depth analysis for existing safety awareness and training, best practices, the use of new products, and other safety initiatives including sharps disposal. The research disclosed several startling gaps, barriers, pitfalls, and blind spots.

Having recommended a plan to transform perceptions, conversations, and behaviors (in the effort to create a new culture of safety), the LAT member addressed the seriousness of accidental needlesticks (many clinicians in interviews suggested accidental needlesticks were common and to be expected); addressed the need for being present and intentional in handling sharps safely, developing best practices, and disposing sharps safely; and addressed the misconceptions of calling newly developed products as “safety products.” All sharps products (regardless of their protective shields, sleeves, covers, retractors, and other devices), deployed by the user, are nonetheless unsafe. Also, by labeling newly developed products as safety products, the conversation, *de facto*, condemns previous products as products that are unsafe suggesting all responsibility for safety is within the product and not the user. Rather, the conversation changed the language stating newly developed products as products that “encourage safer practices” putting emphasis on user skills, practices, and responsibility. Accordingly, the LAT member also recommended moving the focus to *Making Safety Happen* with safety seminars (defining quality, safety, security, and risk), product workshops and demonstrations, skill-set training, patient and clinician awareness and education programs, provider safety performance improvement programs (PIP), safety resource centers for promotional and motivational materials, and sharps disposal programs (recommending a universal *Safety Protection Rating* system for collectors) for clinician, patient, and healthcare worker safety, and other initiatives.

As a leader in needles, syringes, IV sets, winged sets, and other sharps for blood collection and drug delivery, the manufacturer reestablished and restored its reputation, expertise, market share, and sales in the world through its commitment to safer practices. What’s more, many of the principles, practices, and programs this manufacturer developed with the assistance of the LAT member were adopted by clinicians, providers, and the industry as standards in the delivery of health care serving as a major milestone in medicine.