

## The Reinvention of a Journal

Presenters:

**Linda K Hengstler**

Formerly, *Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine*

Currently, Journal Group, Dowden Health Media

Montvale, New Jersey

**Phillip E Canuto**

*Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine*  
Cleveland, Ohio

**Ray Borazanian**

*Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine*  
Cleveland, Ohio

Reporter:

**Devora Mitrany**

AdvancePCS

Scottsdale, Arizona

How do busy physicians read the 60 to 80 unsolicited publications they get every month? They don't. They look regularly into only a few favorites. That's the tough audience targeted by the *Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine*. Plagued by declining readership and ad revenue, the staff worked closely with the editorial board and the Cleveland Clinic Foundation to redesign the publication in 1996.

The revamped journal has reversed those trends. It increased ad pages 8-fold in the 5 years after the relaunch, expanded from bimonthly to monthly, and increased readership from 23% to 48%—leaping from ninth to second place in the percentage of average-issue readers in the internal-medicine office-based market niche. "My favorite of the 20 journals I receive", said one subscriber. "I enjoy it more than *Newsweek*", wrote another. Yet, it was noted at this session, the journal is peer-reviewed, clinically rigorous, and pertinent

to everyday practice.

Various elements of the journal—text and design—work together. Continuing medical education is integral to each issue, and the motto "Dedicated to Lifelong Learning" headlines the cover.

Linda K Hengstler used a recent issue to demonstrate the changes. The "One-Minute Consult" embodies the journal's new focus. An eye-catching logo, a large "Q" preceding a specific clinical question, and a two-paragraph answer present the basic facts. Readers who want more information can read the entire article—less than two pages total.

For a longer "Current Drug Therapy" feature, the abstract is less than 150 words but summarizes the conclusions so that, if time is at a premium, physicians need not read further to understand the main points. Similarly, the first two sentences capture the article's essence, and the third describes content so readers can decide whether to continue.

Subheads, callouts, and graphic elements work together to communicate clinical information. Stuffy this journal is not: A table title reads, "Do statins decrease fractures? Four studies say yes, four say no."

Hengstler and Ray Borazanian described the gradual process of educating authors, editors, peer reviewers, and others. Although Phillip E Canuto could not attend, in his videotaped presentation he delineated how the editorial board of physicians provided backing and planning.

Citing "Ogle's truisms", from a 1989 Council of Biology Editors presentation by Peter Ogle, Hengstler characterized a well-read medical journal: educational, entertaining, timely, authoritative, and a window to the audience. To these she added "Hengstler's truisms": clear purpose made apparent to the reader, acknowledg-

ing the audience's interests, top editorial and graphics talent, and a functional and appealing format.

To aid readers pressed for time, Hengstler said, the journal is designed to have a "payoff on every page". Callouts are complete thoughts, and the first words of every article imply "yes" to the physician's unspoken question: "Do I truly need to read this?"

As managing editor, Borazanian confronts the day-to-day challenges of putting out a scientifically rigorous, yet engaging and accessible monthly publication. From the beginning, the copyeditors heavily rewrote many articles to fit the new style, but the medical editor, John D Clough, and deputy editor, Brian Mandell, carefully paved the way with authors accustomed to writing only in the research format.

Borazanian demonstrated the integration of graphic elements that enhance the journal's message, from choosing and placing the front-cover illustration to balancing the editorial content with the increased number of ad pages. Publishing timely information—even "scoops"—presented another set of challenges. These too have been mastered: The December 2001 issue included three articles on anthrax.

Borazanian and Canuto acknowledged Hengstler's pivotal role in forging a new mission for the *Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine* and her skill in transmitting her vision to the editorial board, staff, and authors.

To let a reader have the last word: ". . . wonderful journal for people like me who have little time for study . . . good, quick information to use today. I save 'em all." Mission accomplished. 