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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★☆ BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

Bean Counters: The Boom and Bust of Pharmaceutical Sales

G.E. Beaver
Create Space
Unknown $0.00 (pp)
978-1-4515-0982-3

The average American does not know what goes on behind the scenes in pharmaceutical sales, and most will never know why some drugs are popular (i.e., formulary) and others are not. Though the development of lifesaving medication is a noble endeavor, marketing pharmaceuticals for financial gain may attract unqualified individuals to the field, a disillusioning aspect of the business explained in *Bean Counters: The Boom and Bust of Pharmaceutical Sales* . This concise book is a must-read for anyone seeking background information on an industry that impacts daily life.

Author G.E. Beaver's "bean counter" is an incompetent, high-level pharmaceutical manager—aggressive and undereducated, wanting to increase sales, capitalize on any competitor's success, and push samples on doctors without doing mandatory homework. At least this is the impression that Beaver gives in his timely diatribe against what he perceives as a once dignified, but now deteriorating profession. He explores the changes that have taken place in this lucrative field from the 1970s to the present. The "bust" referred to in the book's title occurred in the new millennium.

With an eye-catching cover design and written from a personal standpoint, this enlightening, cynically humorous presentation will capture the interest of anyone curious about the disreputable, monetary aspects of the pharmaceutical trade. Informative and direct with only occasional typographical errors, *Bean Counters* can be ranked a mere step above a pamphlet due to its size. The book barely touches on its topic before signing off. However, the author has backed his work with research, experience, and common sense, which offsets the brevity of his book. Contained within this tiny reference is worthwhile material that the consumer needs for self-preservation.

G.E. Beaver worked for a major US pharmaceutical company for almost thirty years. He holds a master's degree in psychology and family therapy. *Bean Counters* should be required reading for students entering sales or production of pharmaceuticals and may also be an excellent supplemental text for medical professionals who want to confirm what they probably already know. At the core of this publication is a questioning of integrity, a factor that influences every type of commerce. Comparing pills to beans may be flippant, but the author's funny analogy makes a crucial point. Medication is a serious business, not a financial competition, with long-term consequences that can be good or bad.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (May 10, 2011)

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