

FROM THE PAGES OF *LEADERS & LUMINARIES* E-MAGAZINE ...

Vintage Voice

10 Things to Make People Love, Want to Be in Healthcare Supply Chain

By Rick Dana Barlow

SCHAUMBURG, IL (April 8, 2024) – The month of April teems with a plethora of acknowledged, well-established and modern-day made-up-for-prime-time holidays.

We start with saluting Fools, then a birthday (mine!); there's also National Carmel Day, Deep Dish Pizza Day (big in the Chicago metro area, naturally), occasionally Easter, always Tax Day, Earth Day, 420 Day (celebrates cannabis) ... you get the idea.



Even though National Healthcare Supply Chain Management Week doesn't occur until the first full week in October (when we hold BLFIRE just for that purpose since inception 17 years ago!), April marks the half-year celebration of healthcare supply chain's annual and deserving back-pat. This also means we're six months away from BLFIRE17 so mark your calendars for October 7 now!

Since October 2008, we have honored and inducted 143 Bellwethers into the Healthcare Supply Chain Hall of Fame (notice the rebranding?). Since October 2015, we have saluted 39 Future Famers. Since October 2020, we have recognized four Ammer Honorees. This fall, we add to all four auspicious lists.

One of the common threads woven throughout the careers and experiences of all these esteemed professionals remains a demonstrated appreciation for, devotion to and passion for healthcare supply chain as an essential, mission-driven endeavor and enterprise. That's part and parcel of why each earned recognition.

With that sobering lead-in, however, we veer toward the satirical in a whipsaw fashion like Forrest Gump playing ping-pong, so read on and hopefully enjoy some humorous reasons on how and why to fall in love with and want to be in healthcare supply chain.

- When you're sequestered in the basement no one can find you or is willing to visit. And no one can hear you scream (even though you're not dealing with "Aliens" ... maybe).
- That being said, while you may not be allowed into the C-suite, everyone's invited to your B-suite.
- A day when the phone doesn't buzz, and the email box remains empty, is like spending a day at a relaxing spa.
- Not so fast, however: You're so much in demand that no one allows you to travel anywhere anyway. Nor should you be spending.
- You get to see, sniff and touch all the latest products before anyone else. Well, at least those products that don't come in through the back door or via sales rep trunk stock.
- Sometimes dealing with physician preferences can resemble ushering two-year-olds through a toy store quickly or teenagers through the hormonal upheaval known as puberty.
- Clinical equivalence serves as the value-added "CE" mark that justifies product swaps akin to computer motherboards and semiconductor chips.
- They say the only constant is change, but the one constant is continually talking about managing through change, the need for data standards and

slashing contract pricing by changing vendors, sales reps, GPOs ... or healthcare supply chain executives.

- Revenue? Who needs revenue when you must manage (and reduce) all these expenses!
- Two words: Free loaners. (Not loaders. Hopefully.)

Remember: A little levity lasts a long time.

Rick Dana Barlow serves as Co-Founder and Executive Director, Bellwether League Foundation, and Executive Editor of BLF's Leaders & Luminaries e-magazine. Barlow's column, Vintage Voice, is posted/published in Leaders & Luminaries and here. Barlow has nearly four decades of journalistic editorial experience, more than 30 years of which have been dedicated to covering a cornucopia of healthcare operational topics, including supply chain, sterile processing, surgical services, infection prevention, information technology, diagnostic imaging and radiology and laboratory for a variety of print and online media outlets. For more, visit Bellwether League Foundation's web site at <https://www.bellwetherleague.org/> and Barlow's online profile at <https://rickdanabarlow.wixsite.com/wingfootmedia>.