Introduction

Pharmacy is the cornerstone of health in the community, and should embody the same trust, empathetic care and compassion as a mother giving her own child medicine to cure from pain or disease, pharmacies should be that deep extension of selfless promotion of the nurturing for others.

A prescription for pharmacy is based on the essence of mixing business with compassion to pharmacy leaders who are driven by a powerful sense of care to other human beings and posses a humanness that inspires those around them to look beyond the financial transaction in today's cut throat business economy, and look deep into the human touch that only the most compassionate of professions can exuberate and that is the great profession of pharmacy. The profession of hope, hope that a first time grandmother with diabetes can caress her grandchild for years to come. Hope that a retired policeman who served his country for 30 years lives his final chapter pain free and with dignity due to prostate cancer.
You need not look far at all, your pharmacies doors are open to thousands of individual's who walk through them in the pursuit of hope, the hope of a cure, the hope of relief, the hope of better health and life which are the most valued possessions a human being can ever posses. Everyday you open your pharmacy doors to one of the greatest human feelings ever conceived, trust. The honour of having people trust you with their deeply valued health is never to be taken lightly. Embrace this trust, nurture it and transform the transactional business mindset to that of interactional alignment of both mindset and heart-set to create a loyalty between all those you touch, from your team, your customer and your community. Value customers not sales, a valued pharmacy starts with the leaders who know that committed employees create committed customers, committed customers create committed communities and committed communities create a thriving and prosperous pharmacy eco-system. Such humanistic values are what retain your greatest staff, attract compassionate driven new team members to pursue a purpose guided vision, to put each individual customer first in the pursuit of improving their lives.
In the pursuit of finding the most satisfying accomplishment that radiates a sense of belonging, there is nothing as gracious as having a cohesive team. It's not easy to reach that level of teamwork, but the journey great teams go through extends far beyond the walls of the pharmacy they work in, it makes them better parents, children, siblings and friends. What they learn inside their second home which is the place we work in, has a profound ability to create a positive flow on effect into people's lives. Having stable team members inside and outside of work is a blessing, many of us know how hard it is to go to work when you have to deal with harsh issues at home or anywhere outside of work.

Every year millions of dollars are spent on marketing, discounts and promotions to lure customers into pharmacy doors, primarily driven by financial transactions, this book helps you look beyond money to make more money, it focuses on the valuable measures that matter, the measures that are not physically seen in the cash register at the end of the hard working day, but are felt in prosperous measures beyond the financial metrics. You can not measure whether that twenty dollar note in the till is from a new customer referred by their neighbour due to your remarkable service and care or is the last you will see from a dis-gruntled one. For those who say loyalty can't be measured, this book proves you wrong. For those who believe that business needs to be cut throat and rage price wars, this book will also prove you wrong and for those who believe that there should be no emotion in business, again this book proves you wrong.
The greatest competitive advantage in this era of cut throat business is how much you care. Customers don't measure you by the degree of your discount, they measure you by the sincerity of your care. Think about a memorable interaction you've had while purchasing something, what made that interaction memorable?
With the Australian pharmacy industry growing at a slow 1.2% (IBIS 2014 report) is it any wonder that so many pharmacies are using discount tactics and declaring price wars.

In the subsequent chapters of this book, the principles require important shifts in thinking as well as sustained, committed effort, the shift of both mindset and heart-set constitute the basic principles

that underlie the entire book. Clarity of purpose, which is greatly lacking within an industry that predominantly deals with the most valuable asset any human being has and that is their health and life. The majority of the 8000 pharmacy visits I have conducted in Australia and across the globe lack a core sense of purpose and are mainly driven by financial transactions.
The concentration on social interactions over financial transactions is on the verge of a customer and entrepreneurial revolution, especially in health care. A prescription for pharmacy represents a rising breed of pharmacy leaders who are driven by the pursuit of a greater societal purpose. This might sound touchy feely to business owners who have been conditioned to crunch numbers and and focus on quantifiable measures like profit statements and sales metrics. I can hear some cynics groaning in the background. But what if we're right? What if the customer revolution against health care services erupts? What if pharmacies are found within the aisles of Australian supermarkets? What is going to make you different? Price? Definitely not!. The greatest differentiator in a highly competitive environment is a purpose driven culture, and it all starts with you, the leader.
Our motivation is driven from a personal, emotional, and a moral platform and yet our idealism is rewarded in the marketplace. The world is evolving faster than ever before, it is time to either ride the wave of change or be swept by the tsunami of transaction centric, money focused businesses. Our purpose is to help create a health care system that interacts with empathy and trust, so that each individual's life is valued. With this in mind we unlock the value of differentiation, talent acquisition and retention, team loyalty and sincere customer loyalty. The more you focus on something beyond money, the more money you make.
The rise of cultural transformation, human motivation, process improvement and quality service has been overwhelming due to the complexity of creating the ideal organisational culture. What pharmacy is deeply lacking is a method focused on the profession in terms of leadership and selling skills and not an overall book on business as a whole. What pharmacy needs is a tailored industry specific book that can remove the complex and distill the essence of all this knowledge into a clear methodology born from years of pharmacy observation and experience with a profound understanding of the essence of the pharmacy profession. That’s what we have focused on, tailoring our experiences, trials and tribulations to a profession that has long been part of our livelihood, pharmacy.
Our healthcare industry is faced with many challenges, over crowded hospitals, hours of waiting in Emergency departments, shortage of skilled physicians and nurses with waiting lists to see specialists spanning over a year, then we have the commoditisation of the family GP due to significant reductions in the solo surgery and the migration of GP's to the larger surgeries so that they can reduce costs and become less burdened by the costs of running their own practice and the stresses a small business goes through, over stress of general practitioners and their ageing GP population and then we have Australia's ageing population which has brought a massive wave of medical needs. The whole medical system is inter-linked and pharmacy is the core of it.
I truly hope that you don't think that I am naive on the subject of pharmacy management. I still believe that pharmacy students are thrown in the deep end when it comes to managing pharmacies and that they are not taught enough about how to run a pharmacy and sustain profitability and success. Most pharmacy students and graduates I have interviewed are really shocked to see the true way pharmacies are run and some of them are traumatised because they expected a profession where they practice their profession, but they found themselves like an autumn leaf being flung from dispensing to staff management to solving staff issues to being paid low wages to sales pressures and demands... and the list goes on. I actually commend every pharmacist who managed to adapt to the status quo and learn how to run such a complex business.I believe that running a pharmacy is one of the hardest management jobs in the world, the amount of constant focus mixed with dealing with staff issues, patients, stock, marketing, management and so forth is overwhelming. Yet one mistake, a single lapse during the pharmacists lunch break while the assistant is showing the pharmacist a dispensed prescription, can result in death or injury of a customer. You must be switched on one hundred percent at all times. I really wish that I could solve all the problems within pharmacy and make your life easier, but in reality I can't. But I can help guide you through a patchy path that many of your pharmacists are not conditioned to completely understand and that is the pursuit of bringing out the most valuable behaviours in yourself and your team in order to help provide the greatest possible care for the customer, who I also refer to as a patient in many cases and focus on how to reclaim the

monumental shift in the industry from community pharmacy to the retail pharmacy. Between the pages of this book our ultimate aim is to create a health care system that interacts, not transacts, with empathy and trust, so that each individual's life is valued

Although this book was written with pharmacy leaders in mind, it should also be of value to pharmacy students, instructors, managers and team members at all levels. I hope that this book ignites a flame of compassion and trust not just to your customers but most importantly to your peers. This book is about dealing with each individual as a valued person in our society. It is a reflection of intrinsic human behaviours that propel your purpose to new horizons. It reflects a deeper more valued approach to pharmacy based interactions by focusing on core communication skills that create trust and loyalty whether it be with the pharmacy team or pharmacy customers. Implementation is the key to change and it creates a culture that inspires us and those around us, so that we can re-model an industry that has been subject to overwhelming pressures that have reflected on the way pharmacies are behaving and thus portraying themselves as retail outlets with capitalistic behaviours. It is our moral obligation to create a culture that inspires those who work in the health care industry to re-create the customer perception towards a higher level of trustworthiness and compassion to promote healing of both the industry and those who are served by it.

As a child growing up in the 80's my parents only went to the one pharmacy for medicine and advice, my parents had a shop in Chester Square, directly opposite our shop was a big pharmacy, that was basically the only pharmacy I ever knew, rarely did we need medicines except for my younger brothers who had recurring respiratory infections, other than that is was smooth sailing for me, I only went into the pharmacy to watch the massive Kodak machine spit out photo's.
While helping my parents I always used to watch the pharmacist, he wore a long white robe and would walk through the pharmacy whenever he isn't dispensing scripts, I always looked at him as a man larger than life, listening to dad always saying that if I am ever to become someone special in life I need to become a pharmacist. This statement resonated throughout our lives and two of my brothers did eventually become pharmacists, I was too busy wanting to get out into the world and didn't want to feel like studying the extra years, ironically after I finished my nursing degree I felt like studying more and ended up with an MBA and attained a Certificate four in training and assessment in the workplace.
The reason why dad loved the profession of pharmacy so much was because of the remarkable support and advice he used to get from his pharmacist John. John never left a stone un-turned, he made sure that my parents were getting the best advice and he would follow up on how the effect of the medicine was. John was an amazing ambassador to the profession, kind, supportive, selfless, caring, he had every attribute of nobility. John knew us by name, he knew everyone in the family.
Pharmacy used to be a health hub, it was a place where you can get the best advice without having to worry about the bank account going broke,pharmacists used to look at the health and wellbeing of their customers and never did we ever feel we were sold at or that there was any financial gain on the back of the pharmacists mind, it was purely for the benefit of the customers the true embodiment of the community pharmacy.
No wonder pharmacy was the most trusted profession for many years, the focus was purely on health, you knew back then that to be a pharmacist you needed to have the greatest human attributes, care, compassion, trust, empathy and a heart that can fit the whole world in it. To be a pharmacist meant you gave selflessly to the people in the community and as a result the pay was great, pharmacists lived a plentiful life and enjoyed the greatest of respect.

The reason why pharmacists had this focus was because they weren't under constant stress to be businessmen, pharmacy was looked at as a noble profession and not as a business, being a pharmacist was not merged with the essence of being a businessman as we see today, it was looked at as a sense of duty and care for the community and hence it was called the community pharmacy, there were minimal financial stresses, the government would remunerate them with the reward they so rightfully deserved, after all, pharmacy was the health hub of the community and the cornerstone of health and wellbeing of the nation.

They were never worried about competition, pharmacies were not cannibalising each other as we see nowadays, they were at one, each had eyes for their own quality care and service, competition was only against their own standard of service, there were no price matches, discounts and we will give you a script 10% cheaper than anyone else. There were no discount pharmacies, only the true essence and spirit of the community pharmacy and that was the very reason why my dad, as he stood behind a candy shop counter overlooking John's pharmacy, being a migrant living in harsh conditions with his parents and much loved family thousands of kilometres away, all this sacrifice was to give his children the greatest possible chance to live the dream of financial freedom, respect and dignity, he had a dream that his kids would someday wear those magnificent white robes, he knew that being a pharmacist was the most noble and rewarding profession in the world.

As we see time and time again, great leaders are always surrounded by great people. and it is no different with pharmacy teams of the past, it was known that to be a pharmacy assistant you need to have a heart that fits the world in it. As I grew up and transitioned from primary to high school, I got to know the wonderful girls who worked at the pharmacy I grew up next door to, they were the kindest and most supportive people I had ever come across, amazingly over 25 years later I still remember their faces. Working in pharmacy has it's own aura, its own culture, just like nurses who are constantly ready to support the patients no matter what the risk may be, you needed to have the heart and soul of giving selflessly to support everyone who enters the pharmacy doors, I never forget the constant smiles I got while filling ice cream cones for my customers, I even used to get a smile and the great Aussie wink, nobody in the world gives that passionate wink with the nod of the head like we do, from John the pharmacist whenever he was wandering around the pharmacy taking care of his customers. You see; it was as though the customers were not customers, they were guests treated with the utmost care, the pharmacy team held the attributes of their passionate leader and you could feel their warmth even when I was not in the pharmacy.
The pharmacy team was pure, they had not been contaminated by sales tactics and up-selling, they advised and supported from the heart, customers did not feel sold at, the tactics of do you want to buy the cheaper brand or the Australian brand were non-existent, customers got the best products available without manipulation, advice was given solely for the benefit of the customer and not for the profit of the pharmacy, this built true loyalty, there were no loyalty cards and discount vouchers, I call them retention cards that do not build any sense of loyalty. True loyalty was like my parents, they went to the one pharmacy all of our childhood life and mum and dad felt so respected and cared for they never set foot into any other pharmacy only in cases of an emergency, it was as though they had a share in it, they would not settle for anyone else.
Now this is true loyalty, when your customer feels guilty buying from anyone but you, can you imagine having a community of customers that are treated as though they are guests and have so much care for you and your team that they buy from you regardless of price and actually feel guilty in cases of emergencies because they set foot to another pharmacy? Now that is the true definition of loyalty.
What I am embarking in this book is not the process of selling a product or service to increase profitability alone, I believe that profits and service go hand in hand, but the importance of sincere human interaction with your customer community in-order to genuinely improve the lives of others so that they feel and breathe your sincerity, which creates a valuable bond between you and your customers who will stand by you in thick and thin in the short term and for the long run.
There is nothing more gratifying than being supported and cared for when you are ill. Now imagine a business that people migrate to when they are unwell and seek medical and health advice. When a person is sick, they are most open for advice, support and very importantly they feel vulnerable and this vulnerability opens people's hearts to the hope of getting better or improving on their health. This is the blessing of pharmacy because pharmacy is the industry of hope.
In the subsequent chapters of this book, the methodologies and principles require important shifts in the mindset of those within the industry and an application of sustained, committed effort. It all starts with you, it is imperative for a pharmacy owner and pharmacy managers to lead not only by example, but to also lead effectively.