

A NEW VENUE - A NEW BEGINNING?

Written by **Simon Barnes**



May 2019 saw the BHBIA 2019 Annual Conference take place in the sunny, regal surroundings of Windsor. Not only was it the first time in recent years that the event was held outside the centre of London, but it was also the first year the BHBIA themed the conference with a variety of subjects instead of one over-arching topic. The diversity of subjects over the two days showcased so many amazing projects and bold ideas carried out by old and new faces across the industry, that team members and I from THE PLANNING SHOP were proud to be part of the event.

An emotional and inspirational keynote address from Anthony Bennett – a survivor of a devastating illness as a young adult – kick-started the conference. Anthony made the delegates think about how we order our priorities within the context of our everyday working lives and how we can ‘reboot’ our motivations to redefine our fears and recognise opportunity when it presents itself. His personal experiences, whilst clearly physically demanding, also highlighted the mental barriers we sometimes see without focussing on the strengths that come from clearing these hurdles.

Throughout the rest of the first day, several technology talks highlighted the opportunities that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is having on our industry now and in the future. Different perspectives were put forward about whether we should tread carefully in adopting these technologies or grasp them with both hands. Overall, delegates and speakers deemed that the reality of opportunity lies somewhere between AI complementing rather than replacing our industry’s traditional MR techniques.

In our home lives we are feeling our way and still exploring the opportunities that the Amazon Echo or Google Home (amongst others) present. With more and more companies entering the AI field, it is only a matter of time until this technology starts to make waves in our industry.

As always, the Gala BHBIA Evening Reception on day one gave everyone the opportunity to smarten up and celebrate the Best of Business Intelligence Awards (more affectionately known as the BOBIs) which continue to showcase outstanding performance across the UK Healthcare Market Research scene. As a representative from THE PLANNING SHOP I was

The mental anguish, as well as the associated physical pain of a chronic disease was demonstrated through the eyes of a patient – one who was extremely brave in sharing her experience at the BHBIA event

delighted that our company was highly commended for the 'Best Business Impact Award' with our entry in partnership with Grünenthal. Whilst we didn't win, we congratulate BMS and Strategic North for deservedly winning this highly competitive category – and we look forward to challenging them again next year!

I was also excited about the 'Newcomer Category' as our very own Rawaa Shami performed well in the final. I've been involved in judging this award for several years and in 2019 we saw some amazing entries and talent, none more so than Katharina Krasser from Ipsos who justifiably took home the trophy.

All award finalists and winners put an enormous amount of effort into their BOBI submissions across all categories (as well as completing the projects themselves) and they deserve every credit for their achievements – especially the winners!

The second day of the BHBIA conference moved into different areas with an interesting and thought-provoking paper hosted by Kantar Health offering a different perspective (to the discussion on day one by Anthony Bennett), about patients suffering from chronic illness. The talk focussed on how the devastation of a life-long chronic disease

which is marginalised by society, creates isolation, depression and solitude which patients often hide from others. The mental anguish, as well as the associated physical pain of a chronic disease was demonstrated through the eyes of a patient – one who was extremely brave in sharing her experience at the BHBIA event. The session taught us that a condition trivialised in the media and wider society could be felt by the audience through a clever use of visual and auditory aids, as well as engaging techniques by the presenters who worked well to tell an effective, clear and impactful story.

The team behind the BHBIA 2019 Annual Conference did a great job in putting together a programme that covered a wide spectrum of themes, to an audience well represented by clients (research and analyst), agency, and fieldwork companies. As the BHBIA is, by definition, UK focussed it successfully managed to leverage our relatively close-knit community by taking a risk with its content, changing venue and location, and yet sticking to their reputation of presenting important and relevant information to key stakeholders across the industry. Long may this continue!

Well done BHBIA. Here's to the 2020 conference!



About the Author

Simon Barnes

Simon Barnes is Research Director at THE PLANNING SHOP with a focus on market research in the UK, covering all therapeutic areas. He has worked in pharmaceutical market research for over 20 years across several different therapeutic areas, including eye care in an international role. He leads the Ophthalmology Business Unit alongside his UK-specific role.



UK

C P House
97-107 Uxbridge Road
London W5 5TL

US

2005 South Eastern Road
Suite 300
Doylestown, PA 18901



planningshopintl.com



+44 (0)208 231 6888