

Letter from the Editor

Discussing challenges in the chemical industry for five years

Five interesting years of the “Journal of Business Chemistry” (JoBC) have passed and many more are hopefully lying ahead of us, with the 6th volume currently in your hands. The JoBC is read throughout the world. Even though the `sectorial` focus seems quite narrow – concentrating on the chemical and related industries – the overall approach of the JoBC is rather broad and interdisciplinary. As “chemistry” is interwoven with a multitude of rapidly progressing fields, many topics from nano- or biotechnology to pharmaceuticals and materials have also been covered. Management topics from innovation and portfolio management to REACH regulation and investments have been analyzed and discussed.

The scientific literature had not provided a platform to discuss interdisciplinary topics of science and business in the chemical industry before. The JoBC has tried to fill this gap and to provide such a platform for academic as well as practitioner-oriented discussions on hot topics in the related sectors. The field of chemistry itself becomes more and more interdisciplinary as the boundaries between industrial sectors and sciences are fading away. This trend provides tremendous opportunities but also challenges for practitioners and academics alike and thus creates the need for discussion forums like journals and conferences on how to stay on top or get to the top in a world of radical changes.

This will likely be even more so the case in the near future, with an omnipresent financial and economic crisis around us, that yet has to unfold its total impact. As a large supplier for most of the highly affected industrial sectors, the chemical industry and all its partners are facing challenging and turbulent times. Measures to cut costs, shrinking markets and severe restructurings will be the effect. However, we are confident that the chemical industry will, in the end, be strengthened. Whatever risks and opportunities the chemical industry will face, the need for a discussion platform on business chemistry issues will only increase. The JoBC hopes it can help to share best practice examples and provide detailed academic analyses of how to act and react in an era of fundamental change.

In the light of these effects, which will be likely to affect all of the firms in the chemical and related industries, we are happy to present in this issue articles on the more traditional branches (like the chemical and the pharmaceutical industry) as well as on more recently established areas (e.g. biotechnology or biopharmaceuticals).

In the commentary section two authors present their opinions on the future of the chemical industry. Rudolf Jerrentrup highlights four trends that contribute to changes in the chemical industry. Furthermore, Matthias Hornke takes a closer look at one of the causes and results of those changes: recent M&A activities and trends in the chemical and pharmaceutical industry.

The articles of the research section deal with the supposedly more modern industries biopharmaceuticals and biotechnology. Minna Allarakhia connects the concepts behind open source software and biopharmaceuticals. Based on the well-known example from the software industry, she evaluates how open source models could be used as a mode of entry into the biopharmaceuticals industry.

Anthipi and Anastassios Pouris review research activities in the South African biotechnology sector. In their paper, they establish a framework for benchmarking domestic research activities with other countries, which are leading in the respective areas. Finally, they contrast their findings with the plans issued by the South African government.

In the practitioner’s section, Andreas Boller and Markus Keerl discuss the possible effects of REACH on transfer pricing. They present possibilities of how to optimize a firm’s transfer pricing setup. Additionally, they link their findings with some more in-depth issues like cost allocation or tax audit strategies.

Now, please enjoy reading the first issue of the sixth volume of the JoBC. We would like to thank all authors and reviewers who have contributed to this new issue. If you have any comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to send us an email at contact@businesschemistry.org.

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