

## Integrated Care

An Interview with Pascale Witz,  
Executive Vice President, Diabetes & Cardiovascular, Sanofi

**EDITORS' NOTE** Pascale Witz is also a member of the Executive Committee. She holds a Master's degree in life sciences/molecular biology from Institut National des Sciences Appliquées Lyon and an M.B.A. from INSEAD. Witz started her career in a research lab before moving to marketing at Becton Dickinson France in 1991. She joined GE Healthcare in 1996. Throughout her 17-year career within GEHC, Witz headed up a number of businesses. She was VP Information Technology and VP Six Sigma and Quality, General Manager, Nuclear Medicine & PET, VP Sales & Marketing Services, and VP & General Manager for the Global Interventional Business for France and U.S. Since 2009, she was President & CEO of the GE medical diagnostics business. She joined Sanofi in July 2013.



Pascale Witz

**COMPANY BRIEF** Sanofi ([en.sanofi.com](http://en.sanofi.com)), a global healthcare leader, discovers, develops, and distributes therapeutic solutions focused on patients' needs. Sanofi has core strengths in diabetes solutions, human vaccines, innovative drugs, consumer healthcare, emerging markets, animal health, and Genzyme.

### What makes Sanofi so special?

It's a culture of commitment and passion, with innovation, but also with a touch of "nothing is impossible." We are a company that has grown by being challenged, a company that went to emerging markets much earlier than others, and a company that for diabetes developed their own devices earlier than other companies. So it's about this commitment of passion, talent, and a focus on execution, but also the ability and readiness to try new things.

### Would you discuss the strength that Sanofi has in cardiovascular and diabetes areas?

We have a very long history and heritage in diabetes. Lantus has set up a gold standard of care, and helped millions of patients. We launched Toujeo, a new version of insulin glargine, last year, and we submitted a combination GLP-1 and insulin. Also last year, we announced two very important licensing deals with two very different companies: one with Lexicon that would bring SGLT-2, a great addition to our portfolio. The SGLT-2 class have an impact on the cardiovascular outcomes; the other

company we partner with, Hanmi, has a very interesting technology that can prolong the duration of the effect of some diabetes therapies, and would deliver a long-acting glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP1-RA), a weekly insulin and a fixed-dose weekly GLP-1/insulin combination.

I'm very proud of the partnerships that we've signed with globally, because it shows our commitment to focus on patient outcomes and to trying different things, in particular leveraging technology. The aim of our partnership with Google, for instance, is to drive the convergence of science and technology, namely combine our expertise with clinical and drug development and their expertise in miniaturization, data collection, sharing, and connectivities. Together, we can build something that benefits the patient's life and therefore help patients be more in control of managing their diseases.

We know that patient engagement is an important driver of better adherence, and adherence is one of the limiting factors of the outcome, which is why we're taking this broad approach. This integrated care approach is important for diabetes, but could also apply to cardiovascular; we're just more advanced with diabetes.

With cardiovascular, Sanofi does have a long heritage as well, but it was more with cardiovascular drugs such as Lovenox and Plavix, which were huge successes for the company.

Last July, we launched Praluent, a lipid lowering product that lowers the level of LDL by 50 to 60 percent, on top of standard care. This medicine is intended for patients who have already been treated but have a ways to go with their LDL and are highly exposed to CV risk.

So we continue to work on our pipeline, and on compounds for diabetes and cardiovascular.

**Many feel a lot of advancements are taking place at smaller companies, but Sanofi has been focused on maintaining an innovative culture. Is it hard to be innovative when your company is so large?**

The industry and our business model have evolved with a higher proportion of research coming from the outside. We can only make the right bet if we ourselves are good enough to really seek and select. This is an industry trend, but it has been a way to augment the reach and potential number of projects that we are involved in.

Usually, small companies cannot bring their product up to commercialization and this is why there is a need for partnership. It's a question of the system working this way. It increases the number of projects we can work on, and the potential for success, and it can help the whole system become more efficient and, at the end of the day, help patients in need.

**How critical are patient-centric programs to the company?**

While one drives this initiative, the expertise we have in drug development and the commercialization of drugs remains important. We need to have enough people who understand the pharma world and who can also be experts in the technology area. They can then actually evaluate and help us make the right decision in terms of who we partner with.

It's important that we recognize and reward appropriately these types of leaders because they are not the traditional type of leaders in pharma. We cannot compare them with those developing a drug. They do need to have good expertise but it's not only about a profile; it's also about the personal skills and mindset. These are usually people who can learn new environments very quickly and can be 'bilingual' so they can bridge different fields, and drive this convergence of science and technology.

**Is it hard to be optimistic when there are so many healthcare challenges? How can the industry work together?**

We are committed to it. I hear the challenges and it's why it's important to focus on the outcomes.

Today, it is hard to look at the holistic approach. With integrated care, we want to make sure we make a difference on the outcome and we know that the outcome can be heavily impacted by adherence. Adherence is not just a question of having the right drug. We also need the patient to have access to the right treatment and follow it.

With a complicated disease like diabetes, this is where being able to develop solutions that fit the patient's life makes a difference. Technology can help a lot.

In terms of our partnership with Google, we talk about being able to collect the data and share it. This is to help the patient control the disease and it is also to help the patient share the information with the physician or caregiver, and be better supported.

This can make a huge difference for a disease as complicated as diabetes. ●