

Joe Heins

Executive Director, ThinkGen



Extensive Experience in MedTech

Unlike many in the healthcare market research industry, Joe knew early on he wanted to pursue a career in market research (MR). During his MBA program, his independent studies focused heavily on market research and statistics, furthering his interest in the industry, and driving his job search post-graduation. Joe's career in the MedTech MR industry began when he was referred by a top MR firm in Seattle for a junior position with their MedTech research team in Chicago.

Joe enjoys working with numbers, data, and analytics to help his clients achieve their commercial goals. He views every MR project as a unique puzzle to be solved, enjoying the challenge, mental stimulation, and ultimately the gratification of uncovering hidden insights.

Over the span of an 11+ year career, Joe has established a broad base of experience in the MedTech sector. He has worked in nearly all facets of MedTech, including surgical tools, implantable cardiac devices, health monitoring devices, injection devices, incontinence solutions, imaging equipment, and healthcare IT systems. As his career progressed, Joe was fortunate enough to be entrusted with several larger, corporate-level initiatives, establishing himself as a point-person for insights all the way up the executive suite. Ultimately, Joe enjoys being a go-to when MedTech expertise is required to answer complex questions.

When Joe compares conducting market research in pharmaceuticals to MedTech, he notes that research for MedTech is less structured and pre-planned. In his experience, larger pharmaceutical companies require more ramp up to

product launch and know what boxes need to be checked to safeguard the launch. Joe has found that pharmaceutical projects have a pre-determined roadmap and FDA-set parameters for a timeline to follow and companies are required to adhere to those FDA timelines as they progress through each phase.

Joe notes there are many unique considerations for MedTech research. MedTech product lifecycles fluctuate to a greater degree compared to the pharmaceutical industry where development and launch cycles are more standardized. Therefore, MedTech clients are often tasked to support multiple products with varying lifecycles. Competing demands and lower certainty decreases the ability for long-term research planning, and in turn increases the need for flexible, ad-hoc research programs. Joe finds this aspect of the MedTech industry particularly exciting, allowing for more freedom in research design and analysis. Because of his experience, Joe has become an expert in developing programs which meet strict budget and timing requirements without sacrificing the integrity of insights.

Joining ThinkGen

Joe arrived at ThinkGen the same way he entered the industry: he was hired by Senior VP Muhammad Asim, the same person who gave Joe his first job in MR. Muhammad and Joe worked together for over five years before Muhammad left to work for several other MR firms and eventually, ThinkGen. Once Muhammad confirmed ThinkGen was a great environment for research experts, he brought Joe on board to support his team.



Why ThinkGen?

There are two main aspects Joe enjoys about working at ThinkGen. The first is the freedom he has as a researcher, to service his clients in the best way possible. As a smaller company, he believes ThinkGen is more open to new and creative methods of achieving results, and therefore more agile (a huge bonus for MedTech clients).

The second is the range and quality of expertise ThinkGen has assembled. ThinkGen has been able to bring together an impressive stable of senior researchers, each with a vast array of unique experiences. In fact, with over 11 years in the industry, Joe is one of the least seasoned researchers at ThinkGen! Having these resources under one roof keeps everyone learning, allowing ingenuity and creativity to thrive.

Taken together, these two facets of working at ThinkGen have allowed Joe to get back to the roots of research and re-discover what initially attracted him to the industry.

Memorable Projects

Despite involvement in many memorable projects over the years, Joe recalls his most memorable being a multi-stage patient record tracker he worked on for over four years. The project collected thousands of records of patients with cardiovascular implantable electronic devices (CIEDs), and the data was used to project and forecast market share, profile segments of patients and physicians, and measure the entire competitive landscape of the category. Joe started on this project as a supporting analyst, ultimately progressing to ownership of the entire program over time. Though this process, he developed deep expertise in the therapeutic category and became known internally as the go-to source for all topics related to electrophysiology. He considers the knowledge he gained in this category a great source of pride.

Outside of Market Research

Had Joe not found his calling in healthcare MR, he could perhaps see himself working in a life sciences-focused R&D lab. He believes this would appeal to him for many of the same reasons he finds MR so engaging: lots of puzzle-solving, data dissemination, and experimentation. Looking back, he could see himself pursuing this path had he chosen to focus his education on the natural sciences rather than business.

Outside of work, Joe enjoys traveling to new places. Though the COVID-19 pandemic recently limited the scope of travel, i

it provided an opportunity for him and his girlfriend Randi to explore locally, finding hidden gems in and around the Midwestern United States. When at home, Joe spends his free time cooking, exercising, collecting records, enjoying the local Chicago dining scene, and chasing around his recently rescued Pitbull-Weimaraner mix, Whiskey.

