

Muhammad Asim

Senior Vice President, ThinkGen



Over 20 years of experience working with pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device clients

After graduating from Vanderbilt University, Muhammad Asim initially considered pursuing a legal career until he spoke with friends in management consulting who really enjoyed their work, particularly research and advisory services and working with life sciences clients. On the basis of those conversations, Muhammad has now been working, in some capacity, in healthcare market research for over 20 years.

After college graduation, Muhammed joined a consulting company in Washington, DC, spending several years providing best practices research to hospitals and health systems—covering marketing, clinical, and administrative functions. What excited him most in this role was surveying and interviewing member organizations, eliciting their feedback, and connecting them with one another. This role ignited Muhammad's passion for primary research. What appealed most was helping member organizations identify new and unique programs that they could also implement to enhance services offered for their patients.

Muhammad's next move was to San Francisco where he worked with IT companies to develop and adapt their services to the healthcare industry. After several years, Muhammad relocated back east to be closer to family and shifted to healthcare market research, and eventually to leading his firm's global medical device practice. This opportunity provided him with access to new clients, experience in new categories, and an international focus—particularly emerging markets like China, India, and Brazil. In this role, he became heavily involved in end user experience research and expanded his qualitative experience, learning a great deal along the way.

Muhammad then spent several years at a marketing research agency based in the UK serving the medical devices industry, where he was appointed the US practice lead. He enjoyed the fast-paced, hands-on nature of the research; where every product and client was distinct. He dealt with everything from multi-million-dollar pieces of equipment to single use disposables, and everything in between. It was intellectually interesting for Muhammad as this role kept him constantly learning about new product categories and their associated business issues.

After several years, Muhammad decided to move back to the pharmaceutical industry, on the agency side, where he led the insights and analytics department for a healthcare marketing communications company. However, he soon found that he missed the direct client interaction in this role and yearned to get back to a key component he'd enjoyed about positions earlier in his career: developing close relationships with clients and taking the time to understand their business and become a trusted thought partner.

Joining ThinkGen

When Muhammad encountered an opportunity to work at ThinkGen, he quickly knew it would be the right fit. The size was just right for him—not so big to be forced to choose a specific niche, but not so small to be without resources to maximize client opportunities. He was excited by the chance to be an Strategic Business Unit leader and to build a team from the ground up. He ultimately decided ThinkGen was the



right opportunity at the right time with the right relationships. Now with ThinkGen for several months, he's enjoying building a well-rounded team with both qualitative and quantitative capabilities, and working with a depth and breadth of clients and therapeutic categories.

Why ThinkGen?

At ThinkGen, Muhammad finds great satisfaction in applying new methodologies and techniques to support his growing list of clients. He relishes the challenges the pharma brands offer, and appreciates working with different methodologies like ThinkGen's Habit EngineeringSM, which he finds to be more comprehensive than other behavioral sciences approaches he's experienced at other companies.

Muhammad's favorite thing about working for ThinkGen specifically is the people. He appreciates working with such a seasoned group of researchers. Muhammad knew quickly from talking to CEO and Founder Noah Pines that ThinkGen is a company comprised of dedicated researchers first and foremost. This was attractive to Muhammad because he enjoys a more hands on approach working with clients and other team members. He also enjoys the flexibility and adaptability of ThinkGen where he is provided the latitude to focus on the areas of greatest interest or opportunity. He enjoys working on a mix of business development and core research with pharmaceutical, biotech and medical device clients—focusing on what makes the most sense for his team and the company overall.

Memorable Projects

While Muhammad has been involved in a multitude of projects over his 20+ year career, there are a few projects that stand out in his mind. Early in his career he was involved in a project in China for a multi-million-dollar piece of equipment that was failing to meet sales projections. Market research wasn't central to the product development or launch process and the client had assumed that the Chinese market was more cost-sensitive than western markets and therefore needed a low-cost version of their core product. However, their assumptions were incorrect. Muhammad's team found, through primary market research with multiple hospital stakeholders, that for large capital expenditures, it is so onerous and time consuming to get budget approvals, that it is better to have a more comprehensive product that provides the features needed to last as long as possible and justify return on investment. Because the client didn't conduct any pre-launch research, it missed a core market need and their customers opted for more expensive equipment from competitors instead. This project was poignant for Muhammad as it illustrated to him the power

and value of market research when conducted at the right time, with the right audience, and utilizing the right methodology.

Another project that resonated with Muhammad was working with a small biotech client on a rare disease compound with several possible indications. After strategy work focused on indication analysis, the client settled on a rare blood disorder for the primary indication. This disease, with early onset, can often be confused and misdiagnosed with more common infections. If not diagnosed properly, with quick treatment initiation, the disease can progress quickly and be fatal. He found that project—and most research focused on rare diseases—to be particularly rewarding as there is such a limited understanding of these diseases and few tools to diagnose and treat patients correctly or quickly enough. Muhammad finds it refreshing to work in areas that genuinely help improve lives by contributing to the development of more comprehensive, widely used and understood treatment options to enhance patient outcomes.

Why Healthcare Market Research?

One of the things Muhammad enjoys most about his work is developing close relationships with clients, and he looks forward to the end of the pandemic and a return to meeting with clients in person. He's always thrived on moderating in-person, discussions in the backroom or over meals discussing research results. He has found that those conversations ultimately result in better understanding of the client's business issues and help to generate insights that provide the greatest impact.

Muhammad also enjoys that healthcare market research is a constantly evolving field with numerous clinical, therapeutic, and product categories. He enjoys that he's always learning and it is that intellectual intrigue that has kept him engaged.

Muhammad has learned that he enjoys how healthcare market research satisfies both his intellectual curiosity and his interest in working internationally. If he wasn't working in this field, he muses that he may have been drawn to another career that satisfies those two things, such as international relations or journalism—opportunities that would still entail researching and reporting and presenting findings and insights.

When he's not working, Muhammad's can be found chasing his toddler around town. As the pandemic is coming to an end and things are opening, Muhammad is looking forward to getting back to travel, live music and participating in sports activities. Muhammad—an avid sports fan—can often be found with friends cheering on his favorite teams.

