

# Cost-effective versus cheap



## By Leslie Morgan

Managing Director Durbin PLC. Morgan is a member of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

I can't quite believe it's that time of year again, but this month sees the return of the Arab Health show in Dubai. Durbin PLC makes it a priority to exhibit annually because not only is it the biggest medical show in the Middle East, it is so very well organised. Many senior medical buyers, procurement specialists, distributors, wholesalers, importers and freelance agents from the Middle East attend over the four days, so it's a good opportunity for us to 'meet and greet' both our existing and potential customers. It's always so good to put a face to a name.

There is one particular type of delegate who visits our stand regularly, the 'tender specialist' – those who bulk buy for government agencies, hospitals and international aid agencies. They're always looking for good deals and tend to be skilled in negotiating and bargaining. What we try to get across, though, is that the deal they secure shouldn't only be about price. The price is extremely important, of course, but it's

always worth considering the whole package. 'Cheap' doesn't necessarily mean 'good value'. Let me explain...

If you're looking overseas for a product, it's common to face language barriers so it's worth asking, does my cheap price include translations of the patient information leaflet and the summary of the product characteristics? Also, does my cheap price cover the customs paperwork? (Don't forget that if paperwork is filled out incorrectly, products can be held for several days, if not weeks, by customs officials). Another question worth posing is, has my supplier chosen the best-value and speediest method of transportation – courier, scheduled airline, haulage, shipping company, or a combination of the above that takes all factors into account? And, does my cheap price include product tracking if the package gets lost in transit? Does it ensure my supplier has all the relevant wholesaler dealer licenses in place, such as the regular

checks by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) legally required in the UK? Does it include checks for authenticity, provenance and shelf-life on arrival? Is the supplier's warehouse a highly controlled environment with appropriate conditions for each product on order? Is the entire supply chain secure? For example, is a cold chain product kept within the desired temperature range at all times?

Yes, we all like a bargain. Nobody wants to pay over the odds. But, sometimes going for the cheapest option simply isn't the best decision overall. That's why Durbin PLC promises a cost-effective, never a cheap, service. There's a world of difference between the two. ■

Durbin PLC is a British company based in South Harrow, London. Established in 1963, the company specialises in supplying quality assured pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and consumable supplies to healthcare professionals and aid agencies in over 140 countries. As well as reacting rapidly to emergency situations, Durbin PLC responds to healthcare supply needs from local project level to national scale programmes. Web address: [www.durbin.co.uk](http://www.durbin.co.uk) Email: [L.morgan@durbin.co.uk](mailto:L.morgan@durbin.co.uk)