

A marketer and a doctor provide evidence of demand: the market study

‘I’m not doing it!’ she shouted, her voice echoing over the functional wood partitions in the low-key unpretentious office that separated them from the rest of the Telectronics staff in their equally basic workspaces. Before coming to Australia Maria Yetton had worked in market research in the UK and the USA. She was the first woman in the UK to be awarded an MBA, way back in 1967. When she came to Australia in 1976 she had made up her mind that she was going into senior line management. She couldn’t have chosen a worse time or place to make such a career decision, but the decision had been made and she moved quickly up the corporate ladder. After a couple of job switches, she eventually joined Telectronics in 1978, employed by Jim Loughman. It was not an easy start, with Paul Trainor walking in and out of the interview saying, ‘You know that I don’t agree with this appointment.’

Despite Trainor’s disapproval, Yetton got the job. Loughman was older than her and treated her like a clever but naughty daughter. Colleagues at Telectronics were used to hearing the two arguing. They were always fighting. He would shout at her, often using very colourful language, and she always shouted back. It was an odd relationship but it worked. There was respect on each side and the arguments were about professional issues, never personal. It was that kind of culture in the whole of the Nucleus organisation under Trainor. When Trainor decided to restructure the organisation, making Loughman CEO of the Nucleus Group, Loughman promoted Yetton to his job. Just months before the Cochlear tender, Yetton had secured a job that she thought was worthy of her – head of international marketing in a company that was recognised as a leader in the world of pacemakers. She was responsible for the