# Philippe Lamoureux & Marc Honoré – President & Director, Institut de Formation des Industries de Santé



***IFIS operates as an interconnected ecosystem where training, consulting, and regulatory exchange converge to strengthen the long-term competitiveness of France's health industries.***

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*Founded in 1973, IFIS stands at the intersection of education, industry, and public policy, shaping the capabilities that underpin France's global health leadership. Evolving from its origins as a training fund manager into a multifaceted institution, IFIS today drives professional excellence across pharmaceuticals, medtech, and cosmetics, bridging technical expertise, digital innovation, and sustainable transformation. Through its integrated model combining training, consultancy, and regulatory dialogue, IFIS has become a cornerstone of the country's health-industries ecosystem.*

**How did IFIS come into being, and how has its mission evolved to strengthen the capabilities of France's health industries over the past five decades?**

**Marc Honoré:** IFIS was founded in 1973 by the *Syndicat national de l'Industrie Pharmaceutique* (SNIP, National Union of the Pharmaceutical Industry), the predecessor of LEEM, following the 1971 law on continuing professional training introduced under Prime Minister Jacques Chaban-Delmas with significant input from Jacques Delors. This legislation required companies to devote part of their payroll to employee development, and IFIS was created to coordinate these contributions within the pharmaceutical sector, ensuring that such investments translated into tangible skill-building across the workforce.

The institute soon moved beyond fund management to become a training provider in its own right. One of its earliest flagship initiatives centred on Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), known in France as *Bonnes Pratiques de Fabrication* (BPF). Following the 1985 and 1989 French Ministerial Orders that made GMP compliance a legal obligation, IFIS developed practical programmes to help *pharmaciens responsables* – the Qualified Persons legally accountable for manufacturing and quality compliance in France – and production teams interpret and implement these requirements. From the outset, the organisation trained professionals at every level, from line operators and technicians to regulatory and quality experts, gradually building one of the most comprehensive catalogues of courses in the French health industries.

Today, IFIS offers around 500 training programmes each year to over 10,000 professionals across pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and cosmetics. With nearly half of French pharmaceutical production destined for export, companies must comply with multiple international regulatory frameworks, including those of the FDA, EMA, and other authorities worldwide. Our role is to ensure that their teams possess the depth of technical and regulatory knowledge such standards demand.

In recent years, training needs have expanded beyond purely technical expertise to include soft skills such as adaptability, leadership, and change management. The growing prevalence of teleworking and the move toward shorter, more flexible workweeks have also transformed how learning is delivered. Virtual and hybrid formats are now essential, but they must be carefully designed to maintain engagement and pedagogical quality. At IFIS, we are continuously refining these models to ensure they remain both effective and accessible in an increasingly digital professional landscape.

**Philippe Lamoureux:** What truly differentiates IFIS is the breadth of its reach. We operate across the entire health-industries spectrum – pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and cosmetics – bringing together disciplines that are often treated separately but are increasingly interconnected. Over five decades, IFIS has evolved into a distinctive ecosystem that combines training, advisory, and knowledge exchange, dedicated to strengthening the competence, agility, and long-term competitiveness of France’s health-industries workforce.

**What shifts are you seeing in the skills and workforce needs across the pharmaceutical, medtech, and cosmetics sectors, and how is IFIS adapting to this evolving landscape?**

**Marc Honoré:** The training landscape across the health industries has become increasingly multifaceted, mirroring the complexity of the sectors we serve. In pharmaceuticals, for instance,

the expertise required in corporate functions differs profoundly from the technical knowledge demanded on production sites. In medtech, we now distinguish between traditional device manufacturing and the rapidly expanding digital segment, where software, data analytics, and connectivity have become integral to both innovation and compliance. Meanwhile, in cosmetics, the challenge lies in preserving the *Made in France* label, a hallmark of quality and authenticity that continues to define the industry's global reputation. Even when international partners have encouraged French manufacturers to relocate abroad, many have deliberately chosen to maintain production domestically to protect this unique mark of origin and excellence.

To keep pace with such transformation, IFIS continually reinvents itself. Every few years, we modernise our organisation, upgrade digital infrastructure, and refine our pedagogical methods to align with new industrial and regulatory realities. Change is now part of our DNA. While technical expertise is readily available, identifying professionals capable of transmitting knowledge effectively is far more complex. This is why we draw on experienced practitioners from across the sector, ensuring that our training remains grounded in lived experience rather than theory alone.

**Philippe Lamoureux:** Each year, around 250 external experts – drawn from pharmaceuticals, medtech, and cosmetics – contribute directly to IFIS programmes. Their involvement ensures that our content reflects real-world developments and that our learners gain insights shaped by current practice rather than retrospective analysis. This constant exchange with industry also helps us maintain agility and relevance as the boundaries between disciplines continue to blur.

As for international mobility, we do not regard it as a loss of talent but as a natural expression of an increasingly globalised profession. Many of those trained in France work for multinational organisations, and their movement across borders reflects the strength, not the weakness, of our system. The expertise developed here contributes to the global reputation of France's health industries, underscoring both the rigour of our training ecosystem and the international value it creates.

**In the context of France 2030 and the digital and sustainability transitions reshaping the sector, how is IFIS positioning itself to support these transformations?**

**Marc Honoré:** The ambitions of *France 2030*, particularly the reshoring of essential medicines and the digitalisation of healthcare, have naturally shaped our strategic direction. In the field of e-health, we work in close partnership with the *Académie du Digital en Santé* (ADS), an initiative created by LEEM to help the sector navigate its digital transition. This is an area evolving at great

speed, demanding new competencies in data governance, cybersecurity, and digital integration across clinical, manufacturing, and regulatory functions. Many organisations are still developing these skillsets, and our role is to help accelerate that process.

Alongside digital transformation, sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) have become essential pillars of our activity. It is no longer sufficient to train executives alone; every employee must understand how their actions contribute to a more sustainable organisation. Our programmes, therefore, address concrete issues such as energy and water conservation, resource efficiency, and the adoption of environmentally responsible practices in daily operations, topics of particular relevance to the pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries.

The shift in France's regulatory framework has also changed how companies perceive training. Until 2019, continuous training was a legal requirement; now it is a voluntary investment. This evolution has heightened expectations for tangible outcomes. When companies fund training today, they expect measurable results that directly reinforce their performance and competitiveness. Our task is to ensure that every programme delivers that impact, balancing pedagogical excellence with practical relevance.

**Philippe Lamoureux:** In response to these new dynamics, IFIS has broadened its mission beyond education to serve as a forum for dialogue between public authorities and industry. Each year, we organise seminars and professional meetings bringing together around 2,500 participants, including representatives from institutions such as the *Agence nationale de sécurité du médicament et des produits de santé* (ANSM), the *Haute Autorité de Santé* (HAS), and the *Comité économique des produits de santé* (CEPS). Because IFIS operates independently of trade associations, it offers a neutral environment conducive to open discussion on the regulatory, scientific, and economic forces shaping the sector.

Complementing this convening role, *IFIS Conseil* provides tailored advisory services in areas such as audits, compliance, and process optimisation, while *IFIS Interactive* focuses on virtual learning. Recognising that digital and in-person formats require distinct pedagogical approaches, we have created a dedicated innovation unit to continually evolve our teaching methodologies. Through this integrated structure, IFIS has become a cornerstone of the ecosystem, driving the transformation and long-term resilience of France's health industries.

**Looking beyond national borders, how do you view France's competitiveness in professional training, and what distinguishes IFIS's approach within this international environment?**

**Marc Honoré:** Competitiveness in training goes well beyond cost or productivity; it is deeply shaped by language, culture, and the way knowledge is absorbed. Training must speak the learner's language, both literally and figuratively. We once had a major client who decided to send their teams to the UK for a similar programme, assuming that an English-language version would offer an advantage. Two years later, they came back to us, realising that even with excellent content, comprehension suffered when training wasn't delivered in the participants' native tongue. In technical subjects, precision and nuance matter, and true understanding depends on mastering the details, which is only possible in one's own language.

This linguistic reality explains why no single training organisation dominates across Europe. Each country has its own industrial culture, regulations, and linguistic specificities, which make harmonisation extremely complex. We encountered this first-hand when attempting to expand in Italy, where regional differences made standardisation nearly impossible. The same challenge exists in Spain and elsewhere. Ultimately, training is most effective when it is culturally and linguistically aligned with those it serves, a dimension of competitiveness that is often underestimated but absolutely fundamental.

**Philippe Lamoureux:** Having served within the French public administration, including at the *Agence nationale de sécurité du médicament et des produits de santé* (ANSM), I have seen how closely language and regulatory precision are linked. In France, audits and compliance inspections are conducted in French, and companies must maintain their documentation, procedures, quality guidelines, or manufacturing records in the national language. I have personally required full translations of materials that were initially in English, as this is essential to ensure full regulatory clarity and accountability.

This insistence on linguistic precision and contextual understanding is at the core of IFIS's philosophy. Our model integrates professional training, consulting through *IFIS Conseil*, digital learning via *IFIS Interactive*, and high-level industry dialogues with public authorities. Rather than functioning as a conventional training body, IFIS operates as an interconnected ecosystem – what I often describe as a "galaxy" – where education, advisory services, and regulatory exchange reinforce one another. This structure, unique in Europe, allows us to serve the entire health industry, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and cosmetics, through a cohesive and adaptive framework that reflects both the complexity and the excellence of France's industrial landscape.

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