Ronald Boueri, Regional Medical Systems Division Manager, MEA – Olympus Medical Systems



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Olympus is a 100-year-old technology company that has revolutionised the world of cameras since 1919, and recently underwent a transformation shifting its focus entirely to MedTech. Ronald Boueri,

Regional Division Manager for Middle East and Africa region sheds light on the company presence regionally, as well as efforts to position Olympus as a partner of choice. Further, he elaborates on his priorities for this new tenure, after 25 years of experience in the MedTech industry regionally, and outlines focus areas for Olympus in the coming years.

After almost two decades with Zimmer Biomet, what led you to take on your current role at Olympus Medical Systems and what are your goals in this new position?

Throughout these 18 years with Zimmer Biomet, I assumed various roles and responsibilities within the firm. I was able to successfully integrate Biomet in MENA and the Balkans region seven years ago. I also had the opportunity to work on different transformation projects namely an Agency Hybrid model in Greece and a one-of-a-kind Joint Venture in Saudi Arabia.

Leveraging on my knowledge and experience in the region, it was good time for me to move to a new challenge and advance my career to the next level. It has now been three months since I joined Olympus in Dubai as the head of the Medical Division. With a strong brand name, a unique differentiated portfolio, and a welcoming workplace culture, I am super excited to start my new

journey at Olympus. My primary goal is to contribute and add value to the organization's global transformation activities, with the overall objective to become a leading global medtech company. My utmost priority remains in elevating the standard of care for patients in the region, working with our partners to develop and grow our diagnostic and therapeutic business lines across Middle East and Africa.

Outside of the sector, Olympus is best known for its cameras, but since selling that section in 2021, the company has focused solely on its medical systems division, with the goal of becoming a global leader in the field of Medical Technology. How far along on this journey is Olympus in the MEA region?

True and as a matter of fact, Olympus initially launched its first microscope in late 1920 and has been for the past 70 years in the medical devices industry, since 1952.

The transformation journey has already started, as announced by our Global CEO, Yasuo Takeuchi, taking Olympus to a new level, from being a technology company to a business-oriented company: "transforming Olympus into a more agile and powerful company for sustainable growth".

Olympus is now completely focused on the medical side of the business, having carved out the scientific solutions division and sold the consumer sector. We lead in important medical disciplines such as Gastroenterology, Respiratory, and Urology as we focus on early diagnosis and minimally invasive therapy.

In MEA, we are also starting this new journey which I am excited to lead alongside a renowned and experienced team and enhance the quality of life for millions of patients.

This is a region known for its market specifics, diversity, unique dynamics mixed with many opportunities as well as challenges. In MEA, we cater for a population of $1.2B, consisting of 72 countries and 35 distributors covering Olympus business at this point of time. A region where the context is continuously changing by country or region which makes it compelling for us to revisit our priorities, navigate within those boundaries and tailor our strategies to the ever-changing market dynamics. In other words, there is no such thing as a "one-size-fits-all" approach; we should always be ready to adapt to a "New Normal" be it the pandemic or other.

Olympus has a global market share of over 70% in gastrointestinal endoscopic equipment, mostly reusable endoscopes, but newer companies are now entering this lucrative sector to compete with established big players such as Pentax or Fujifilm. What is the situation like in the MEA region?

The MEA region has a lot of potential, as we see big projects underway and investments in healthcare in major markets. We want to be in a space where we can add value and offer innovative capabilities and solutions to health care professionals (HCPs) with differentiated products offering and not just the flexible endoscopes, delivering diagnostics, therapeutics and minimally invasive technologies to improve clinical outcomes, reduce overall costs, elevate the standard of care and enhance quality of life for patients.

Over the last few years, there has been a trend towards a more therapeutic approach, with physicians wanting to do more with their flexible endoscopes, using them for both diagnostic and therapeutic purposes. What are the key concerns and needs of your customers in the MEA region?

Olympus has set its direction globally to “focus” on diseases states where we have a leading impact, “shape” the industry by investing in new ways to improve the standard of care and “enable” people and organization to deliver additional value to stakeholders. With a significant presence in Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, Respiratory, and Urology, there is a blend of Early Diagnosis with minimally invasive access through endoscopes and Device Therapy options where we can better respond to HCPs demands and expectations with more specialization and dedication from our salesforce and specialists, as well as the development and execution of the right go-to-market business models. Training and education are also fundamental, especially in our part of the world, as we aim to offer the best-in-class trained professional education programs for our diagnostic and therapeutic solutions.

There is a lot of discussion about value-based healthcare and looking beyond a treatment itself to the complete patient flow. However, a common critique of hospital tendering processes is that they focus on price or use new technologies for several years, even if innovations are launched meanwhile. How prepared is the MEA region for value-based healthcare, and what role will Olympus play in establishing a new model?

I believe all of us have learned a lot from Covid era and one major impact it has had in our industry is that it created the conditions for healthcare systems to deliver better value with the best possible outcomes for patients while being efficient in spending: the need to do more and better with less.

We see already that healthcare systems had to organize care differently to manage all the challenges faced during this period with a patient centered and data-driven model for delivering healthcare. Collaboration among stakeholders, including policymakers, providers, payers, and life science businesses, is critical to achieving these high-value patient outcomes. This will take time, depending on the markets and regions, but we can already see it occurring. Olympus is helping to shape the sector by offering a holistic approach and comprehensive solutions to HCPs, with the goal of elevating the standard of care across MEA.

What is your vision for the future at Olympus?

Wonderful and exciting times in this transformation journey at Olympus. I am proud to be a part of it and super energized to lead the way forward towards a sustainable growth, elevating the standard care, and ultimately the prevention and treatment of cancer for millions of people in the Middle East.

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