

## Rogério Peso - Head of Mexico & CCS, Viatris

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*Rogério Peso outlines how Viatris leverages collaborations to address critical healthcare needs in Mexico, combining its strengths with other stakeholders to improve patient outcomes. With a mission to offer high-quality, affordable medicines, Peso also points out how Viatris aligns its portfolio with the healthcare needs of Latin America, addressing gaps in access to costly treatments for diverse patient demographics. He emphasises the importance of a tailored approach to each of his managed markets, balancing Viatris' global vision with localised strategies to effectively meet distinct healthcare needs in Mexico and across the CCS region.*

**After 21 years at Pfizer, you moved to Viatris to lead its establishment in Mexico following the combination of Mylan and Upjohn. As the head of Mexico and the Caribbean, Central America and Spanish speaking South America (CCS region) for Viatris, what motivated you to join a new organization that needed building despite a billion-dollar portfolio and how challenging and rewarding has this been?**

After dedicating 21 years of my career to Pfizer, I embraced the opportunity to lead the establishment of Viatris in Mexico following the combination of Mylan and Upjohn. My professional journey began in 1999 in Brazil, where I've had the privilege of working in various positions across multiple countries within LATAM. This diverse experience has equipped me with a comprehensive understanding of the region's distinct market dynamics and healthcare needs.

Viatri's establishment gave us a unique synergy, allowing us to leverage the strengths of two established entities. Each brings distinct, yet complementary, market approaches that can effectively address the diverse and often unmet healthcare needs in Latin America. This integration positions Viatri's to play a pivotal role in transforming healthcare delivery across the region.

My decision to join Viatri's stemmed from recognizing the immense potential for the company to make a significant impact in healthcare. After years in a single corporate environment, the prospect of helping shape a new organization from scratch in a vibrant market like Mexico and Spanish-speaking LATAM was both challenging and exhilarating.

This collaborative ethos and co-creation environment are precisely what I was seeking in my transition. I am excited about the future we are building at Viatri's and look forward to continuing this journey of growth and innovation in Spanish-speaking LATAM.

**Latin America is often characterized by limitations in funding for innovative treatments. Given Viatri's focus on access and affordability, do you see an alignment between your company's portfolio and the healthcare needs of Mexico?**

Absolutely. Our mission is to empower people worldwide to live healthier at every stage of life, and we achieve that by combining the best of both worlds—innovation and high-quality generic medicines. In a complex healthcare system like Mexico's, with significant inequality to access to high-cost treatments, Viatri's can offer solutions that fit the needs of the population across different income levels. We provide high-quality medicines at scale, which allows us to serve both the people who can afford innovative treatments and those who rely on more affordable generic options. This ability to cater to a broad spectrum of patients is critical in regions like Latin America where the budget for health expenditure is more limited and Mexico is not an exception.

**In today's pharmaceutical landscape, some top companies advocate for reducing country-specific leadership roles, while others remain committed to the traditional model. How do you see this shift impacting your role that now encompasses Mexico and Spanish speaking countries in Latin America?**

In today's pharmaceutical landscape, the debate around reducing country-specific leadership roles versus maintaining traditional models is quite relevant. I view this shift as a delicate balancing act. Each country within my responsibility—Mexico and the Spanish-speaking nations in Latin

America—has its own unique market dynamics, regulatory environments, and patient needs.

While there are opportunities to streamline operations across the region, it is crucial to recognize that healthcare solutions cannot be one-size-fits-all, it's essential to respect the individuality of each market.

My role involves not only fostering a unified vision for healthcare delivery but also ensuring that our strategies are tailored to meet the specific needs of each country. By combining a collaborative approach with localized strategies, we can effectively address the diverse healthcare challenges in the region, ultimately enhancing patient outcomes and driving sustainable growth for Viatriis.

**What is the significance of Mexico and Spanish-speaking Latin America for Viatriis growth trajectory?**

A key driver for growth has been our ability to identify new business opportunities while effectively managing our legacy portfolio. Our unique go-to-market strategy has also played a significant role, especially in Mexico. We have a robust sales force in the country because we believe face-to-face engagement with customers is still crucial.

While other companies are scaling back on sales reps and focusing more on digital initiatives, our approach is a combination of both. In a market like Mexico, having a strong on-the-ground presence is essential for driving growth. This balance between traditional sales and digital strategies has been key to our success in the region.

**In terms of portfolio, which therapeutic areas do you expect to be the primary commercial drivers for Viatriis in Mexico? How is the portfolio tailored to address the specific needs of local patients?**

In terms of our portfolio, cardiovascular health is a major focus where we are market leaders, and we have a best-in-class portfolio. Another important area is pain and metabolic diseases; these therapeutic areas are closely linked because diabetic patients often experience complications, including pain and other comorbidities. Our portfolio is designed not only to treat diabetes itself but also to address the broader consequences it may bring to a patient's life. This holistic approach to managing diabetes is a significant part of our strategy, emphasizing both the condition and its associated challenges.

Mental health is another critical area for Viatris that requires attention—not just from us as a company, but from society as a whole. Since the pandemic, we have seen a surge in mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, which we aim to address through our Central Nervous System (CNS) portfolio and several initiatives to support disease awareness.

Our portfolio is diverse, designed to tackle a range of diseases and conditions. Although we have 10+ therapeutic areas overall, we are concentrating our efforts primarily on three key areas: cardiovascular health, CNS, and pain-metabolic diseases. We are also seeking partnerships to support products that may not fit directly into our current promotional strategy.

Viatris is unique in that we have a global healthcare gateway enabling us to partner with other companies. If a company has a product that we can help support patient access for, we have the opportunity to form a partnership to ensure patients have access to the best possible treatments.

When it comes to partnerships, cultural fit is essential. It's not just about the commercial footprint or alignment in portfolios; we need to share similar values. I prioritize working with companies that uphold the same foundational principles as we do. We may refer to this as a “partnership” or “partnering for success,” but ultimately, aligned core values are crucial for a partnership to truly thrive.

**Can you share examples of strategic partnerships Viatris has developed in Mexico and across the region?**

One example of a strategic partnership we have in Mexico is with Novartis. We are collaborating to incorporate some of their cardio-metabolic products into our portfolio, as our strengths complement each other perfectly in this area. This collaboration allows us to offer the medical community the best available options to treat dyslipidemia, hypertension, and heart failure.

This partnership enables both companies to leverage each other's strengths, and importantly, our shared values enhance the effectiveness of our collaboration. Partnerships like this allow us to support physicians quickly and efficiently. Additionally, we have more resources to invest in high-quality continuing medical education (CME) events, to further bring the most relevant global trends to the LATAM medical community.

**How does Viatris maintain momentum with your established portfolio among healthcare providers in areas like diabetes and central nervous system (CNS), despite competition from larger companies that are currently launching incredible breakthroughs?**

While there is significant attention on new therapies, it's crucial to remember that every drug serves a specific patient need. In areas like diabetes, mental health and many others, one size does not fit all. Physicians, in areas such as mental health, work to make a precise diagnosis and determine which drug best support a patient's profile and comorbidities. This underscores the necessity of maintaining a diverse array of treatment options to address various patient needs.

At Viatris, we pursue innovation and continuously seek new assets to bring to market. We celebrate advancements in healthcare, but we also recognize the enduring value of established products – those emblematic treatments that made a significant impact upon their introduction. Their differentiation remains strong, and they continue to play an essential role in patient care.

When examining Mexico's health landscape, particularly in comparison to other OECD countries, the situation is concerning. Mexico leads in obesity and diabetes rates and ranks among the top three for mental health diseases. While innovations are important, the bigger challenge lies in improving access to treatments for the populations that need them most. Addressing this critical issue is paramount, as we have much work ahead of us in these areas.

**To alleviate the burden of certain diseases, some governments allocate special budgets to programs designed to align with public policy priorities. Are there similar initiatives here in Mexico where companies can partner with the government?**

In Mexico, there are ongoing discussions about the potential for partnerships between the healthcare industry and the government to address public health priorities. Through the statements of the president and the Minister of Health, Dr David Kershenovich, it is clear they are keen on advancing a focus on prevention and primary care to have a healthier population and to mitigate future healthcare costs associated with more severe illnesses, such as heart disease and other critical conditions.

Investing in prevention and primary care can lead to significant savings on future hospitalizations and critical treatments. However, if public investment in these areas is not prioritized, the responsibility often shifts to the private sector to support medical education and awareness to foster prevention of these critical conditions. Companies like Viatris have embraced this

responsibility and look forward to further collaboration with the new administration.

At Viatris, we are heavily invested in primary care medical education. We have supported numerous seminars, conferences, and forums featuring leading experts from around the world, focusing on key therapeutic areas. To date, we have engaged over 5,000 doctors in Mexico and the CCS region through these initiatives, continuously bringing top-tier experts to provide valuable insights.

It's important to recognize that even though healthcare professionals are incredibly busy, they participate in these sessions to benefit from access to leading experts and the latest medical advancements. Our events offer learning opportunities and also foster a sense of community among physicians. While many companies scaled back their educational efforts during the pandemic, Viatris has remained committed to this important work. We have seen strong interest from physicians, and we are proud to play a leading role in enhancing education within the healthcare landscape.

**Beyond the current scope of operations, how can Mexico contribute more to Viatris' global vision given its proximity to the US, its talent pool, and its competitive cost structure?**

I do believe Mexico has significant potential to contribute more to Viatris' global vision, though we are not quite there yet. Currently, we are focused on establishing and refining our go-to-market model, making good progress.

Already leveraging on Mexico's competitive environment, as you describe it, our commercial headquarters for the cluster (Mexico + CCS) is already based here, and it serves as the nerve centre for this region. While all countries in our region operate with full autonomy in their commercial and client-facing departments, we are clustering certain key functions in Mexico, to name a few: corporate affairs, business development, business operations, and communications, are all being centralized here, solidifying Mexico's importance within the organization.

Additionally, Mexico is always a top consideration for further investments in clinical trials. If we aim to scale operations, Mexico is an ideal location due to its advantages and we are actively working toward untangling new opportunities.

**Looking ahead, with Claudia Sheinbaum recently taking office as Mexico's President, what are your expectations regarding healthcare under this new administration? How might these changes impact Viatris' strategies in the country?**

First, I want to congratulate Claudia Sheinbaum on her historic achievement as Mexico's first female president. This milestone is a significant step forward for the country.

At Viatris, we are hopeful about the opportunities for collaboration under this new administration. We believe that our quality, scale, and capabilities position us to make meaningful contributions to healthcare. We look forward to supporting a new chapter for Mexico, and exploring ways we can align with the government's vision to enhance healthcare access and outcomes for all.

**As you envision the next three years, what will define success for Viatris in Mexico? What key milestones do you hope to achieve?**

As I envision the next three years, success for Viatris in Mexico will be defined by our ability to effectively cluster our operations while maintaining a strong focus on local markets. Clustering will allow us to streamline administrative and staff functions, yet we remain committed to engaging with local events and understanding market dynamics to ensure we stay connected with community needs. Striking this balance will be crucial to our success, and we are diligently working toward it.

A major priority for us is to define the optimal go-to-market strategy for each country we serve. This involves tailoring our approach to each market, with a strong emphasis on supporting patients by providing high-quality, accessible medicines. Our strategy aligns with Viatris' global vision, and we aim to build on the milestone of supplying high-quality medicines to approximately one billion patients annually worldwide. We have three strategic pillars to accelerate growth: our diversified and growing base business; our financial strength and significant cash flow; and, our expanding innovative portfolio

Bringing innovation to Mexico is a key priority. We are exploring new therapeutic areas, following recent acquisitions and partnership announcements. Our goal is to expedite regulatory approval for these innovative products so they can benefit the Mexican population as soon as possible. Therefore, our focus will remain on growing the base business, clustering operations where it makes sense, and introducing new portfolios to advance healthcare in the countries we serve.

## **How would you describe your leadership strategy in driving Viatris Mexico and the CCS region toward these ambitious goals?**

My leadership strategy for driving Viatris Mexico and the CCS region is centered on empowerment, innovation, and adaptability. I have learned that true leadership lies in enabling my team to leverage their immense talent and diverse experiences. By fostering an environment of trust and collaboration, we unlock greater creativity and ownership, which are essential as we pursue our ambitious goals.

We have a talented and diverse team which has been key to our success. Mexico has been ranked as one of the top companies to work for over the last two years and we are also certified as a Great Place to Work with a special recognition for being a great workplace for women. More than 60% of my senior executive team are women which reflects our commitment to diversity not just in gender but across all aspects of our workforce. Diversity is a strength we actively cultivate and are proud of—it helps us to approach problems from different perspectives and find better solutions.

Innovation is at the core of my leadership philosophy. I believe that innovation extends beyond R&D; it should permeate every aspect of our operations. I encourage my team to think creatively about how we can drive value through new partnerships, tailored go-to-market strategies, and community engagement. For example, considering how can we adapt our portfolio to meet the specific needs of physicians and their patients. This patient-centric approach is a key differentiator for us and a crucial aspect of our success.

Finally, I deeply believe in the concept of “one size doesn’t fit all” While we share best practices across regions, each market requires a customized strategy. My leadership fosters an environment where cross-pollination of ideas thrives, yet each local market receives the tailored approach it needs to succeed. Ultimately, my role is to create a culture where empowered talent, innovative thinking, and agility converge to meet the unique challenges of our diverse markets.

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