

Amr Kenawi - General Manager, Zimmer Biomet Saudi Arabia



Saudi Arabia can serve as a blueprint for healthcare innovation, advanced products, and effective services in an emerging market setting

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Amr Kenawi, General Manager at Zimmer Biomet in Saudi Arabia, shares his perspective on the country's evolving healthcare landscape and the company's role in supporting Vision 2030. Kenawi discusses Zimmer Biomet's strategic shift from product distribution to offering integrated musculoskeletal solutions, the introduction of cutting-edge technologies like robotics, and the importance of nurturing local talent and medical education. He goes on to also highlights how patient-centric innovation, regulatory alignment, and strong partnerships are shaping Zimmer Biomet's ongoing contribution to Saudi Arabia's healthcare transformation.

Could you briefly introduce yourself and share your career journey as General Manager of Zimmer Biomet?

I joined Zimmer Biomet in March 2022 to serve as the General Manager of Saudi Arabia. Before that, I worked as a Business Director at another multinational company in the medical technology field—Medtronic. I started my career in 2001 in sales and marketing roles, beginning as a sales representative and progressing until I eventually reached a general manager position.

I am Egyptian by nationality, and over the years I have worked in Egypt, several North African countries, and many African markets. In 2011, I moved to Saudi Arabia with my family to focus on the medical field here, and I am thoroughly enjoying living in Saudi Arabia.

What are the key trends & opportunities you are currently observing in Saudi Arabia?

Saudi Arabia is undergoing a significant transformation in healthcare. The country is moving toward more decentralized, efficient processes and procedures. It is important for us to align our strategies with this national direction. The government is funding healthcare and aims to provide the highest standards of care to patients. We must deliver solutions that meet these goals.

As a global leader in the musculoskeletal field, we focus on bringing the latest innovations and technologies to support Saudi Arabia's vision for healthcare. The country's Vision 2030 plan places the patient at the centre—ensuring they receive the best possible care.

In terms of challenges, there is some fragmentation in the healthcare system. To address this, the authorities are clustering healthcare segments and promoting public-private partnerships to streamline services. We are committed to supporting these efforts. We do not only provide premium products, but we strive to be a full solution provider, ensuring long-term sustainability and integration with Saudi Arabia's evolving healthcare landscape.

As a leader in the musculoskeletal space, how does Zimmer Biomet approach innovation and product development? What specific offerings are currently available in the market?

Zimmer Biomet focuses on continuous innovation in the musculoskeletal field. Our product range extends from cranial, maxillofacial, and thoracic implants to large joint replacements, including hips and knees. We also cover extremities such as shoulders, elbows, feet, and ankles. One of our most recent advancements involves robotic technology.

In Saudi Arabia, we have introduced our ROSA® Robotic solution. We have more than 10 ROSA® systems in the country, deployed across private and public healthcare facilities. These systems are our latest technology, and part of our ZBEdge® ecosystem, which aims to assist surgeons and care teams with planning, and to support patients before surgery, during the procedure, and after their operation.

We plan to launch an application called mymobility®, which supports patients from pre-operative planning through post-operative recovery. It is already present in the United States, and Saudi Arabia will be among the first countries where we introduce it by 2025. During surgery, the ROSA®

system provides the surgeon with precise guidance, helping them make informed decisions. After surgery, mymobility® continues to support the patient's recovery journey.

We are also working on programs like ROSA® Efficient Care to optimize the entire patient experience, starting from hospital admission until discharge. We want to ensure that patients benefit from these integrated solutions, which align with the country's Vision 2030 goals for enhancing healthcare services.

Could you provide an overview of Zimmer Biomet's operations in Saudi Arabia, including the company's footprint and operating model in the region?

Zimmer Biomet established a direct entity in Saudi Arabia in 2018. We recognized the importance of having a strong local presence early on. Although COVID impacted elective procedures, we have maintained and expanded our operations. Today, we have about 50 employees in Saudi Arabia, covering a full range of functions, including clinical, sales, operations, and warehousing. Our team is based in the country, ready to support physicians and bring them the latest technologies.

In addition, we recently opened our regional headquarters with licensing set for early 2024. Through this headquarters, we plan to strengthen medical education and support safe, effective use of our products. The headquarters is not focused on commercial activities, but instead, it centres on education, training, and sharing knowledge with Saudi physicians.

We are also exploring ways to improve logistics through the regional headquarters to ensure a reliable supply chain. Currently, we serve approximately 160 hospitals across all healthcare sectors in Saudi Arabia. We have one main distribution centre and three satellite warehouses. Our goal is to maintain a strong logistics network to meet the needs of patients and healthcare providers throughout the country.

How do you define the strategic importance of Saudi Arabia to Zimmer Biomet? What role does the country play in the company's broader regional goals?

Saudi Arabia is a strategic pillar for Zimmer Biomet's growth in the region. It is not only about numbers; it is about how the country is transforming its healthcare system. Saudi Arabia aims to create an ideal healthcare model, and we align our business model with local needs and strategies. While the population size may not rival that of other markets, Saudi Arabia can serve as a blueprint

for healthcare innovation, advanced products, and effective services in an emerging market setting.

From our perspective, Saudi Arabia can be the centre of our Middle East operations, where we demonstrate how to build a strong healthcare model. This involves introducing recent innovations, delivering excellent patient care, ensuring financial and regulatory compliance, and contributing to an ecosystem that we can all be proud of. Although revenue might be higher in more developed countries, Saudi Arabia allows us to create a model that can inspire and be replicated elsewhere.

How has Zimmer Biomet adapted to meet local market needs and align with Saudi Arabia's government initiatives and Vision 2030? What unique strategies have you implemented to ensure that Zimmer's global approach is effective in Saudi Arabia?

We have multiple ongoing approaches to adapting to the local market. First, we ensure a compliant business model that follows our corporate guidelines. Second, we focus on recent innovations to enhance the customer experience. We achieve this by optimizing our product portfolio to simplify choices for healthcare providers, reducing complexity in areas like orthopaedics where multiple systems exist for shoulders, hips, and more. This helps deliver better service and ease of use.

Additionally, we are bringing our latest innovations into the country, and we have established a dedicated department for medical education that is separate from sales and marketing. This department is devoted to increasing surgeons' skills and ensuring the safe and effective use of our products. By improving customer experience, optimizing the portfolio, and investing in medical education, we align with Saudi Arabia's goals for high-quality, patient-centred healthcare.

Digitalization is a key component of healthcare transformation and a major part of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. What trends in digital health do you foresee as shaping the future of the healthcare sector, and how is Zimmer Biomet responding to these trends?

Digitalization and personalized care are becoming increasingly important, especially as healthcare moves toward value-based models. In orthopaedics, this shift may take a bit longer compared to other specialties, but we are already adapting to it. Each patient has unique requirements for implants and treatment approaches, and our aim is to offer customized solutions that enhance the overall care experience.

Orthopaedics is a capital-intensive field that demands substantial investment in instruments, equipment, and a wide range of product sizes and varieties. At Zimmer Biomet, we draw on our global expertise to meet these challenges and provide tailored solutions for patients in Saudi Arabia. Instead of simply shipping products, we maintain a local presence to ensure healthcare providers have the best-fit options for their patients' needs. This approach reflects our commitment to value-based care and improving patient outcomes.

Looking ahead, we will introduce digital platforms that further personalize and streamline care. We just launched mymobility® in Saudi Arabia. This digital platform connects patients, surgeons, and robotic systems, supporting the entire journey—from pre-operative planning through post-operative recovery. We also anticipate introducing ROSA ONE® Brain, a neurosurgery-focused robot that represents the next step in our digital and robotic ecosystem.

What has your experience in bringing Zimmer Biomet's innovations and solutions to the market and hospitals in Saudi Arabia been? How would you describe the regulatory process in the country for introducing new healthcare technologies?

Our approach to introducing new innovations in Saudi Arabia is of course founded on strong collaboration and adherence to local regulations. We have a dedicated quality and regulatory team that works closely with the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA). By strictly following local and international standards, as well as conducting any required preclinical studies, we ensure that our products meet all regulatory requirements before market entry.

This proactive strategy helps us achieve timely product registrations and qualifications. Our presence in Saudi Arabia also extends beyond compliance as we also invest in developing local talent. By hiring and training Saudi professionals, we nurture a pipeline of skilled individuals who will help sustain our operations and strengthen our understanding of the local market. We emphasize diversity and inclusion, bringing together multiple nationalities and increasing gender diversity, which contributes to a more dynamic and culturally sensitive team.

Overall, the market access experience in Saudi Arabia has been positive. The regulatory framework, combined with our careful planning and local engagement, supports a successful introduction of advanced healthcare technologies. This approach aligns perfectly with our goal of being a truly global company, fully integrated into the Saudi market.

As a leader responsible for shaping the culture at Zimmer Biomet in Saudi Arabia, what is your approach to fostering a unified culture across the team?

My number one consideration is transparency. I ensure that everyone is aligned on our goals and objectives, and I maintain an open-door policy. Although we respect our organizational hierarchy, I encourage team members to speak with me directly if they have any concerns or suggestions. We have several initiatives in place—such as our monthly team lounge sessions and skip-the-line meetings—that give employees the chance to share feedback openly.

I believe that listening to the team is essential. Whether an employee is new or has been here for years, their input matters. When I receive feedback, I consider it carefully and adjust my leadership approach as needed. It is important for me to know how I am performing as a leader, and I value the team's perspective in helping me improve and adapt.

Looking ahead to the next two years, what are the biggest objectives you have for Zimmer Biomet in Saudi Arabia?

My biggest objective is to make Zimmer Biomet the leading orthopaedic company in Saudi Arabia. This is not just about financial figures—it is about our mission to alleviate pain and improve the quality of life for patients in the Kingdom. We want to ensure that our work has a direct, positive impact on patients' well-being.

Another key goal is to become a top employer for our team members. People are the driving force behind our products and services, and having the right talent in place is crucial. I want Zimmer Biomet to be a place where our employees feel motivated, engaged, and proud to contribute. By fostering a supportive environment and ensuring that we have the right people in the right roles, we can create a workplace that benefits both our patients and our team.

How would you like the healthcare community to perceive Zimmer Biomet's position within Saudi Arabia today?

I would like the healthcare community to view Zimmer Biomet as a trusted partner in Saudi Arabia's healthcare transformation. Our mission is to alleviate pain and improve quality of life, and we are proud to support the Kingdom's Vision 2030 by delivering world-class, innovative solutions—such as robotic technologies—that address patient needs. We will continue to expand our presence, empower healthcare providers, and contribute to advancing patient care. I am

excited about the opportunities ahead as we work together to lead in healthcare innovation and drive meaningful change in the region.

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