

Wenchi Liu - General Manager, Moderna Taiwan



Taiwan is almost always the first launch market in Asia... we need to be the pioneers

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Promoted to General Manager of Moderna Taiwan in 2024, Wenchi Liu brings over 20 years of pharmaceutical industry experience spanning commercial strategy and operations. Since joining Moderna in 2023, she has helped position Taiwan as a priority market within the company's Asia-Pacific region. In this interview, she discusses the rollout and expanded indications of its vaccines, collaboration with government and medical societies to raise adult vaccination rates, and Taiwan's growing role in clinical development - highlighting Moderna's ambition to become a long-term public health partner.

Please introduce yourself to our international readers.

After graduating from university where I studied Pharmacy, I worked for around 20 years in several multinational pharmaceutical companies. The majority of my experience is in marketing, sales and business operations. I joined Moderna in 2023 and was promoted to General Manager last year. My experience in the pharmaceutical market has given me the ambition to provide the most innovative science and drugs to clinics to help more patients.

Early in my career, I focused primarily on therapeutic drugs where I saw first-hand how innovative treatments can improve quality of life, extend survival, and help patients recover after diagnosis. The pandemic, however, highlighted the unique impact vaccines can have. Unlike therapeutics, which support individuals already facing illness, vaccines operate at a population level. They

protect entire communities, prevent disease before it starts, and ultimately save more lives. That shift in perspective is what drew me to Moderna. Today, we are advancing our mRNA platform, which opens up new opportunities to develop both innovative medicines and vaccines. With this technology, we can deliver broader public health impact.

Tell us about how Taiwan fits into the structure of Moderna.

Taiwan belongs to the emerging markets region. Our Senior Vice President covers the Asia Pacific and Latin American markets as well. In Asia, Moderna has a footprint in Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore. Taiwan plays a critical role for Moderna. We work closely and globally, to make Taiwan a high priority market. We try to file all the new products as soon as possible, close to the US launch timeline, and invite global colleagues to support us in Taiwan. In terms of clinical studies, we always position Taiwan as a key site for our upcoming pipeline or any clinical study plans. Taiwan plays a critical role at Moderna within our Asia regional strategy.

Asia accounts for less than 25% of Moderna's global revenue. It seems there is untapped potential. What are your priorities in Taiwan in terms of driving growth?

Currently we have two respiratory vaccine products on the market in Taiwan. Compared with other markets such as the US or South Korea, the current vaccination rate is relatively low, meaning that Moderna – as a vaccine company – has plenty of opportunities as well as responsibilities here in Taiwan.

Vaccines alone cannot save lives; vaccination can. So even having the best vaccines on the market, thinking about how to get those vaccines to help the high-risk population is the most important concern. We have the responsibility to work closely with the government and medical societies to increase disease awareness and reach high risk populations, making driving up vaccination rates our key focus.

RSV vaccines were initially approved in Taiwan for the 60+ population and for some maternal indications. Is that enough? How is Moderna differentiating itself to become the vaccination partner of choice?

In January this year, our vaccine was approved to cover the 18-59 high risk population. This includes the COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) population and some of the immunocompromised population.

In terms of differentiation, we are focused on our messenger RNA (mRNA) platform which is a platform which brings the benefit of speed and scalability. Every year the World Health Organisation, along with regulators in the European Union and the United States, announce their vaccine strain updates, which recommend which viral strains manufacturers include in the upcoming season's vaccines, between May and June. We need to deliver the vaccines in October, so it is a challenge for any organization to reach this goal in four months from production to delivery. With mRNA we work tirelessly against time to achieve this quick turnaround to delivery. We work closely with the Taiwanese government to ensure we have the most up to date vaccines and deliver in time for their seasonal campaign.

mRNA technology enables rapid vaccine design and manufacturing once the target sequence identified. We continue to support education on the science behind mRNA and its real-world public health impact.

What is the perception of mRNA technology in Taiwan, both from physicians and patients?

Despite our ten years in the market, mRNA technology is still new to the consumer and to HCPs (Healthcare Professionals). We work closely with medical societies to address their queries and to provide lectures and education concerning the unique benefits of mRNA. For example, last year, we invited two Moderna chief scientific officers to educate on the science to the CDE (Centre for Food Evaluation) and NHRI (National Health Research Institution). Additionally, through the Taiwan mRNA Innovation Awards, now in its third year, Moderna and Academia Sinica collaborate to strengthen Taiwan's mRNA innovation ecosystem. The program supports Taiwanese startups and research teams to accelerate mRNA development and cultivate next generation biomedical talent in Taiwan. Moderna further advances mRNA development by facilitating technology exchanges between our global scientific leaders and key stakeholders such as NHRI, as well as hosting mRNA Day to share the latest scientific advancements and insights to HCPs.

How are you attempting to move beyond being seen as a one-product company?

It is true that globally and in Taiwan we are known for COVID vaccines, but this also has positive aspects. COVID was many people's first exposure to Moderna, and that experience helped establish trust in our platform, which now supports uptake of our newer vaccines.

For future planning, we are still focusing on respiratory disease. While the acute phase has evolved, COVID-19 continues to pose risks to vulnerable population. We still have the responsibility to advocate against the disease burden and emphasise the importance of the vaccination for protection. In our commitment to addressing respiratory diseases, this year we launched vaccines in the RSV market, and we plan to continue to improve our new COVID vaccine . Our technology and profile will continue to improve year by year. Our broader research portfolio includes programs in areas such as influenza and combination respiratory vaccines, which are currently under development.

At the same time, the Moderna global team has just released the five-year data of Phase II study for our oncology immunotherapies programme in partnership with MSD. We also have the second checkpoint under development and some indications for rare disease. Currently we only have the two products on hand, but since we started in Taiwan in 2022, we have had a new product launch every year indicating our commitment to the Taiwan market. With the momentum of our global clinical development efforts, we see strong potential globally to broaden our portfolio into areas beyond vaccines.

How is Moderna acting as a partner for President Lai's 'Healthy Taiwan' vision?

President Lai's "Healthy Taiwan" as a National Vision: Vaccination and disease prevention are positioned as core pillars of a sustainable NHI system and long-term national health security. Moderna's contribution will centre on respiratory disease. If, for example, diseases occur like the pandemic in 2020, our response will be: How fast can we manage the disease? How can we provide the vaccines to more of the population? We can work closely with the government in preparation. In the last two years, for example, sometimes there is a flu outbreak, but sometimes it is stabilised. We do not know when and how it will happen. So our role is always being ready and prepared to work with government, and providing education and advocating the importance of vaccination.

Taiwan is attempting to attract more innovation investments, especially around clinical trials. What do you see as the opportunities for a company like Moderna?

In Taiwan we have the best talent and a high-quality healthcare system. In internal meetings, we always advocate this strength to the global team. We see strong potential for Taiwan to play a greater role in global clinical research, and we continue to evaluate opportunities accordingly.

We work closely with the national health research institution to understand their needs, and we invite global visitors to discuss future opportunities for collaboration. We continue to explore new opportunities and, once we have new information and initiatives from the global organisation, we try to bridge to Taiwan through feasibility studies as well as consult with Taiwanese stakeholders to assess opportunities. For example, for the highly infectious Norovirus, we are currently working with the government to understand the epidemiology data for Taiwan so that we can consider the ability to develop more selective, targeted vaccines to help the population.

How are you ensuring Moderna attracts the best talent in Taiwan?

Moderna has a strong reputation, and our mRNA platform represents a bright future. More importantly though, is how the Moderna team works together. I am very proud of how collective we are, especially with the cross-functional teams. We are a compact but highly committed team dedicated to advancing Moderna's mission in Taiwan. This means we work really closely, and each employee takes strong ownership. We also work very closely with the global team. We take responsibility for other markets, covering Hong Kong, Singapore and even the Seoul team in South Korea is developed to cover Taiwan. This means we have several success cases where our employees have expanded their role to cover other markets, to help them have a broader view and more diverse experience.

We are also almost always the first launch market in Asia. This is great but it means we cannot follow other market experience; we need to be the pioneers. This is very exciting for the team, allowing them to bring their innovation and work with the global team and developing it into tailor-made projects and proposals for Taiwan.

What are your key goals for the next five years?

We are working hard to be the long-term strategic partner of the government and academic institutions. We are not only educating physicians, but we need to have a greater impact on the whole public health environment. That is the goal for us. We expect our vaccines to launch and be well accepted by consumers and healthcare providers due to their quality and efficacy. Currently,

we have room to improve the perception of mRNA and I expect with five more years of experience, people will be fully aware of the benefits.

Personally, what motivates you to do this job?

When I joined Moderna and began working in vaccines, I was struck by the scale of impact – the ability to protect entire populations, not just individual patients. That is the key driver for me. It is also quite different to my other experience. It also represents an important evolution from my earlier experience, where I worked closely with hospital accounts, healthcare providers, and medical societies. In vaccines and public health, the scope of collaboration broadens significantly to include government and industry stakeholders. Working across this wider ecosystem has been a valuable learning experience and continues to deepen my perspective on how science can translate into meaningful health outcomes at scale.

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