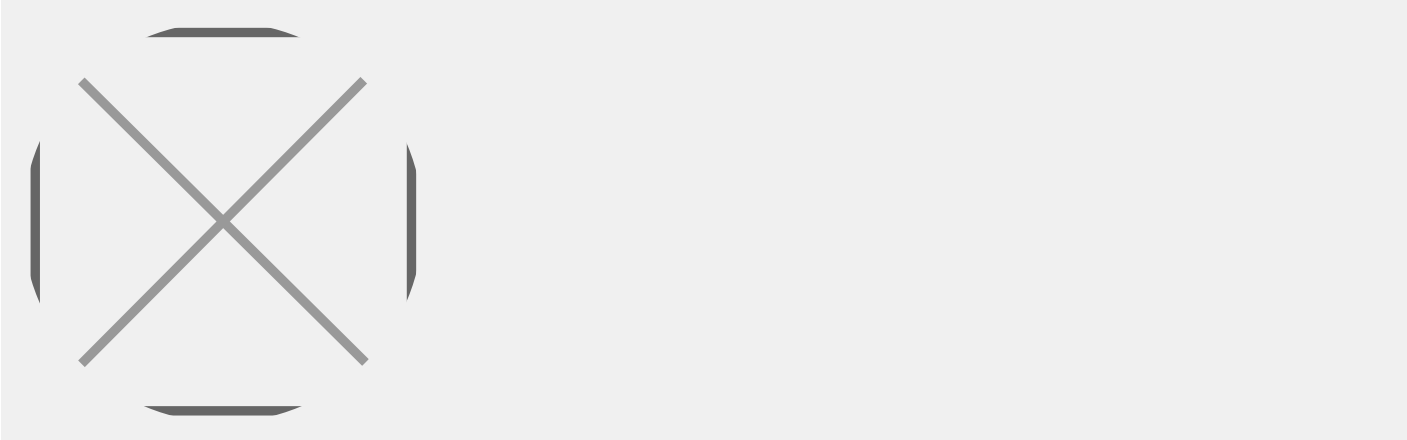
Interview with Brian Daniel, CEO & Country Manager, Pfizer South Africa



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Mr. Daniel, after working with Pfizer Australia, working in Hong Kong as Regional Marketing Director for the Asian operation and in Japan, you have been the first South African appointed as a country head for Pfizer's local operations. What were the good and challenging issues you had to contend with since your arrival?

Good question. I had not been in the industry when I left South Africa many years before and so, I came back knowing that I had to adjust my expectations accordingly. What I had heard about the working environment was based on the information provided to me from a number of different colleagues in the market, before having applied for this position.

I must admit, that the South African working environment is a lot more complex than it is made out to be- a very interesting challenge nonetheless. When you look at the Australian healthcare system, you basically have a National Health Insurance (NHI) already in place, with government as the main player with a small private sector. Then I moved to Hong Kong, where I covered 14 different countries from the Philippines, where patients pay for everything themselves, to other very diverse situations, so it was a bit of a mixed bag of health care systems. Eventually, I covered Japan- a very rigid market, so coming here to South Africa, was a very interesting challenge, given my experiences in other markets.

In South Africa, there is definitely a need for our current healthcare system to be overhauled and therefore, the strides being made by our current Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, is very encouraging. The priority should be on how best to fix the healthcare system. Given this, the

Minister has committed to focusing on a number of necessary interventions- like Human Resources, and upgrading infrastructure- before fully rolling out South Africa's NHI. Once this framework is firmly embedded, the principle intent for the introduction of NHI remains to provide access to the 42 million people in the country, who currently do not have access to medicines. On this score, the pharmaceutical industry is geared to make a meaningful contribution to this process. A pragmatic example of this would be re-looking at medicines from a volumes perspective, thereby potentially being in a position to adjust prices with the changing of volumes.

The perception currently exists that lowering medicine prices improves access. However when medicine prices were cut in 1994, by around 20% with the introduction of the Single Exit Price (SEP), the data shows that this did not lead to a significant increase in access to medicines- especially for the poorest of the poor. The reason for this is that the underlying reasons for poor access to medicines is much broader than just price alone. It is therefore very pleasing to have the government recognize this and to see how they are approaching the introduction of an NHI in a phased approach starting with pilot programmes in selected districts.

Is the introduction of International Benchmark Pricing (IBP) your main issue of focus over the next few years?

IBP forms part of the industry focus for the next while. We believe that this is an industry issue, so we are working collectively, through IMSA and PIASA (both industry bodies) regarding how best to manage our response on this issue. We are striving to find a solution that will be best for South Africa's Health Care System. And I am convinced that over time, we will arrive at the best way forward for both government and the private sector players.

You have been managing the South African operation since June 2008. Over the past three years, what are you most proud of? What have been the main developments and achievements of the Pfizer South Africa team?

Thanks for the question, as I am very passionate about our people. So to begin to answer you, I have worked diligently on retaining key talent in the organisation. My ultimate goal was to have people come to work every day, excited to be a part of the Pfizer family. We needed to make Pfizer a great place to work. Ironically enough and although an important factor, it is not always money that contributes to retaining people. We have done the surveys and it reflects this reality. We have therefore looked at a full range of retention strategies to ensure that our people are happy to come to work, make a meaningful contribution and feel respected in the process.

At Pfizer we also promote a winning culture, and therefore all strategies geared at recognizing and retaining talent is aligned to the ultimate objective of promoting and firmly embedding a winning culture within the organisation.

I am must also add, that my leadership team leads from the front on this score and this contributes to the employee buy-in, in support of this approach, at all levels of the organisation. Further to this, we have won a number of prestigious awards amongst which the Deloitte award for the 'Best Company to Work For Survey' as Best Employer in the pharmaceutical industry, as well as being awarded the SA Leading Managers Excellence Seal for 2011/12, awarded by the CRF Institute; and last but by no means least, being awarded the Diamond Arrow Award for our outstanding contribution towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the pharmaceutical/manufacturing sector, medium sized sector.

I would also like to make mention of a regional survey which was conducted by our Regional team based in Dubai and the results indicated that among internal employees, doctors and pharmacists, Pfizer come out really well – from a reputation stand-point, compared to other leading companies in the market. This result is extremely pleasing, as we place a huge emphasis on internal and external stakeholder management within the company.

How will you be integrating the NHI into the company's development and growth? How are you preparing for it?

I chair the IMSA NHI sub-committee and we have just completed a document responding to the NHI Green Paper. We consider it our responsibility to start formulating our own thinking on this, in terms of where we will fit into such an initiative, the contribution we could potentially make to the successful implementation of such a programme; and to play a proactive role in the outcome of the medicines component of the overall system.

Considering that you were the country head during the integration of Wyeth, just over 2 years ago already, what were the implications of the acquisition for the South African affiliate, its impact on the business and the synergies created?

The integration of Wyeth was a real eye-opener for me. It was one of the best experiences I have had with Pfizer in my 20 year career with the company. Though I have witnessed from a junior level other acquisitions and mergers (e.g. Pharmacia), it was a completely different experience to go through this process as the Country Manager. When we became aware of the integration, that is, the actual deal being finalized, I began to co-ordinate the integration with the CEO of Wyeth in South Africa, and took a decision to freeze all non-critical positions when they became vacant, in order to safeguard both the company and employees. Because this process was managed effectively, only two employees chose early retirement and six others who were offered various positions within the company, chose alternatives. I am happy to add that this integration yielded no dismissals of any kind- an incredible achievement for the company.

The integration also expanded the therapeutic areas we could service as well as complemented some of the others, like the women's health portfolio or vaccines which we did not have before the

integration, which brought considerable value to our substantial brand offering.

Christian Holmer in Pfizer Russia was targeting the top position with the integration of Wyeth. Is it the same in South Africa? How will this change the dynamic in the South African market?

I have a slightly different view on how to approach in striving to become number 1. When I arrived back in South Africa in 2008, the people in the organization wanted Pfizer to become the number one pharmaceutical company in the country by 2010. We then realized, that our vision needed to be revisited and after several workshops and having everyone involved in this process, we came up with a vision which stated: 'Living our full potential in striving for a healthier Southern Africa.' By 'full potential', we refer to scaling our people, training them, and having them create a healthy work environment. Then we ensure to pay attention to creating a good work-life balance for all employees. And lastly, 'in striving for a healthier Southern Africa', means that we need to work more closely with the government and key stakeholders in order to shape the external environment and improve the access of the population to healthcare.

Then when you have taken all of the above into account and made it part and parcel of your overall delivery, soon enough, without much effort, you find yourself in the number one spot. It is process and by living our values, entrenching the right culture and driving the business, the business prevails.

Could you share with our readers some insights into future Pfizer plans both in South Africa and other African markets?

Part of the World Health Organization's (WHO) millennium goals and one of Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi's priorities in South Africa, is to reduce childhood mortality rates among children- consequently, we have started to be included in the National Immunisation Programme (NIP).

Our commitment to the Department of Health (DoH) is to become part of the solution and this is demonstrated largely by our pneumococcal conjugate vaccine being included on the NIP in South Africa. We have recently (the past seven months) launched PCV13 in South Africa, thirteen being the number of serotypes it covers in the disease. Subsequently, it is now being launched in Namibia, Botswana and Mauritius. So to your point, yes we do place a considerable focus on South African and other African markets going forward.

How have you integrated the transformation process into the company's development?

Broad-Based-Black-Economic-Empowerment (BBBEE), is of huge significance to our business as well as its impact on the socio-economic development of the country. As soon as we finalized the merger with Wyeth, we decided to put together a plan of action in order to achieve an improved position as part of the BBBEE scorecard. We have just designated ZAR 1.6 million (Rand) for

internal training programmes and for the on-boarding of several learners (mobile and disabled learners) as part of a credible learnership programme, to be implemented over the next 12 months.

This journey is a process, which can only strengthen our business resolve and furthermore, see our commitment to a process of transformation as a moral obligation. As an American company, we are privileged to be here and do business and therefore we need to play a meaningful role in the development of both people and country. Consequently, our commitment to local communities by way of our relevant corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes, paves the way for us to touch all aspects of the South African market.

What is it that motivates you in this market?

I am motivated seeing people happy and satisfied. When we have our executive management (leadership) meetings, we see colleagues coming into these meetings with confidence and excitement. Pfizer South Africa employees are in the main, company proud. Even criticism is done in a way that respects the other, and this atmosphere motivates me very much. So, our philosophy at Pfizer in South Africa is simple; you show people you care, recognize their value and they will do everything in their power to go the extra mile in all they do. I try to stay connected at all levels of the business, as it is important to 'stay in touch' with all goings on.

I also enjoy spending time in the field with the sales representatives and even tag along on occasion with them on their doctor calls. At Pfizer the need to recognize talent is highly rewarded in the sense that people are for the most part as committed as I am, to ensuring that Pfizer is a great place to work.

What is your final message for the international readers of Pharmaceutical Executive, regarding the pharmaceutical industry in South Africa and Pfizer's commitment to it?

The most important thing is to look after your people. Then you need to keep your eye on the external environment and look ahead to future prospects and opportunities. Furthermore, in order to not only survive this industry but be successful in it, you need to be adaptable, agile and appropriately geared for the future. This you can only do by surrounding yourself with key talent, who are committed to making a difference. It's an evolving industry and there are lots of pressures brought upon your business, so it is of paramount importance that you are well-informed of what is going on in the external environment. In one sentence, you need to be engaged and then people will recognize you for who you are and what you are attempting to do.

This is my commitment to not only my employees, but to South Africa as a whole.

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