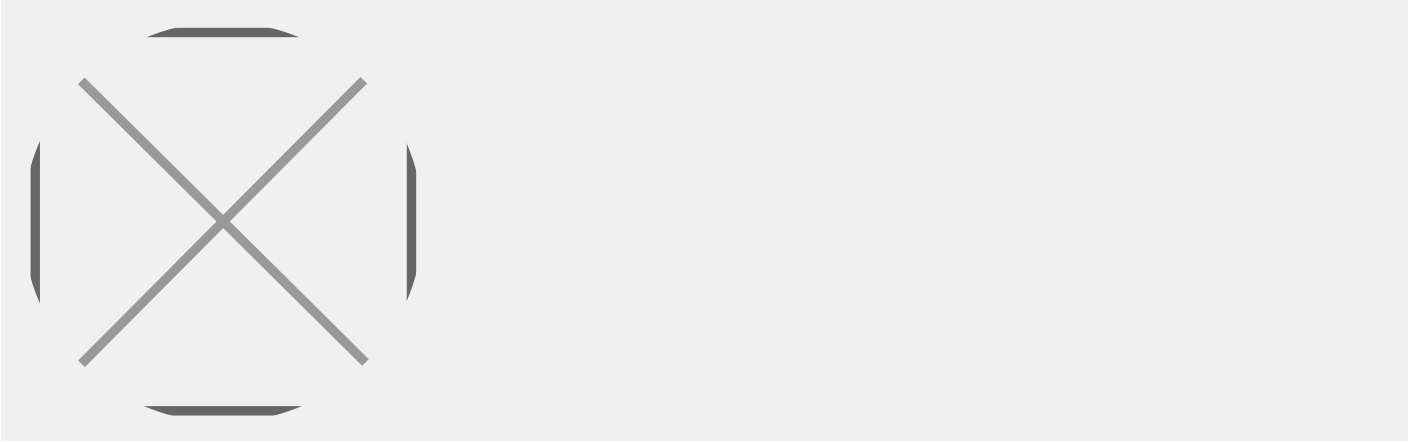
Interview with Robert Zemla, Country Manager, Bausch & Lomb Poland



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BAUSCH + LOMB has over 150 years of heritage and has always been associated with optics and ophthalmology. Therefore the company has been able to build a very strong brand image throughout the years and is today recognized as the best in eye health. Would you say it is an advantage to operate under this name rather than under the name Dr. Mann, which was the case until recently?

Founded in 1853, Bausch + Lomb is indeed one of the oldest companies in the health care industry. Throughout its history, the company acquired a number of companies, including Dr. Mann, to create a global portfolio of innovative products. In the ophthalmology industry, Bausch + Lomb is one of the most iconic brands, and the recognition of the company within the industry is very strong asset on which Bausch + Lomb Poland is able to capitalize to operate in the country.

The company is currently driving a transformational turn around intended to make Bausch + Lomb the best, as opposed to the biggest, in the global eye health industry. The organization is strongly dedicated to eye health, and is actually the only company solely focused on this segment, since Alcon was acquired by Novartis. The company has also a big legacy of innovation, investing strongly in research and development. Bausch + Lomb launched last year in Poland excellent products such as PureVision® 2 HD contact lenses and Biotrue™ contact lens solution.

The company operates in Poland in three major areas: vision care, eye surgery and eye pharma. In vision care, Bausch + Lomb was the first company to bring contact lenses to the Polish market, and is also today offering lens care solutions to patients. There are more products in the pipeline, which

I call game changers. Vision Care is not the only area where Bausch + Lomb expects to grow. The company is developing new compounds for eye pharma to treat eye inflammation and other conditions, adding to our existing portfolio. Lastly, in eye surgery, the company is developing a new platform that will change totally the way surgery is performed – complementing our already strong equipment, instruments and intraocular lens offerings.

Gaëlle Waltinger told Focus Reports in Germany last year that the company's priority was to think internationally and launch international products. Poland is the leading market in Eastern and Central Europe: is the importance of Poland today for Bausch + Lomb operations in Europe reflecting this?

The group is committed to geographic expansion in Central and Eastern Europe, where Poland is obviously a key market for growth. Considering what is available in Poland in terms of products and services, we can say that the country is up-to-date with the latest innovations and trends of the ophthalmology industry. I have seen a lot of practices mainly in Central and Eastern Europe but also in Western Europe. I can say that Polish patients get the same level of services as what French or German patients can have. Ophthalmology is a very well understood and established business.

On the other hand, ophthalmology companies represented worldwide are all present in Poland, which means that Bausch + Lomb is not the only company to have acknowledged the importance of the Polish market. Our leadership team believes that Poland will be an engine for growth and consider Poland as a key country, not only to have an established presence in Central and Eastern Europe, but for our global development strategy.

What have been the latest investments from the company in the country?

In 2010, the most significant investment made in Poland from the company was to enlarge our surgical business. The structure needed to be adapted to local needs, and therefore the surgical team has been reinforced.

The company has in fact identified growth potential in all areas in which Bausch + Lomb operates. In Vision Care, the growth will come from established lens care solutions brands like Renu® and new launches such as Biotrue™, as well as from the likes of PureVision® 2 HD, a major breakthrough product in contact lens. In the surgical area, Bausch + Lomb launched new products dedicated to total eye surgery – including interior and posterior segments, for instance the Stellaris® PC Vision Enhancement System. The company has also high growth expectations in the Pharma division in three areas: proprietary prescription products, generics, and nutraceuticals.

How has the Polish market evolved for eye care in the recent years and what do you identify as the new trends of the business?

In Poland, there is still a low penetration of the newest kind of contact lens vision correction compared to Western Europe. These markets are meant to grow along with penetration rate. Even though I do not have firm data to provide, the level of penetration in Poland is around 2% whereas in France it is close to 10%.

In Surgical, Bausch + Lomb mainly works in the cataract and vitroretinal sectors. Considering the Polish population is ageing, just like in most developed countries worldwide, the market will grow.

In Pharma, the biggest therapeutic area is glaucoma, dry eye and inflammation, areas where the growth will come from the companies' capacity to innovate and launch new molecules.

Overall, the outlooks for growth are very promising.

What would you say are Bausch + Lomb 's main comparative advantages to be the partner of choice for the industry and eye care practitioners?

The environment is very competitive in Poland. Bausch + Lomb focuses on customers, actively listening to them in order to identify and fulfil their needs, both in terms of products and services. The company offers mainly innovative products and the 'best in class' services, and is therefore recommended for eye health.

Employees are also a very important factor to success in Poland. Thanks to our high performance team, Bausch + Lomb is able to analyze and invest in the right areas and at the right time.

A long history in the country and a market leadership give special responsibilities: what are Bausch + Lomb's main Coporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies in Poland?

The company's primary philanthropic focus is the Pediatric Cataract Initiative (www.PediatricCataract.org) – a new program aimed at conquering this debilitating childhood eye condition that's responsible for severe vision loss and blindness.

Locally, Bausch + Lomb Poland carries out one very important initiative every year, called 'Day of Caring'. Within this action, the company cooperates with local communities and organizations and helps them. Last year, Bausch + Lomb assisted the local associations for blind people. Bausch + Lomb's employees cleaned their offices, and I obtained a grant from the group to renovate them. This type of initiative is a good way for the company to give back to the community.

They are not many expatriates at the head of multinationals in Poland. Why is it important to be a Polish citizen leading a health care company in Poland, and on the other hand how challenging is it for you to deal with the corporate culture of an international company?

From my personal perspective, I have been dealing a lot with Russian peers in my career path. Obviously, the language has been the first barrier, even though I am fluent in Russian, as there are

some language nuances that are difficult to master. Therefore, I can understand the strategy behind appointing a Polish national at the head of the company.

Bausch + Lomb is growing in many different countries. Although the business dynamics are very similar regardless of the countries, culture differences, such as those between Poland and Russia, can be an issue. The biggest challenge is to adapt the way you deal with people taking into account culture differences, but still aligning the business dynamics in every country.

How have you personally picked up on different cultures and how has this influenced your management style?

Working in different countries has definitely increased my self awareness, which in the end strongly influenced my management style. With such experiences, you might be well aware of your strengths, but also of your weaknesses. Experiences abroad are always good, no matter if you learn something positive or negative about yourself, and it helps on a day to day basis, to take wise and well balanced decisions.

You mentioned that people make the company, and proved that the company is very attractive when we consider your career path within the group. What makes Bausch + Lomb the recruiter of choice in Poland?

Bausch + Lomb does not have a big structure. This gives advantages such as a quicker decision making process and the ability to maintain an entrepreneurial spirit in the company. Also, people are required to do a little bit more than their actual job description, which is a development and growth opportunity.

Bausch + Lomb offers a broad view. People working in each division have the possibility to see all business dynamics, actively cooperating with one another, which also creates valuable synergies. We also want to be perceived by the customers as ‘one’ Bausch + Lomb.

Moreover, Bausch + Lomb strives to create a feeling of trust within the company, offering an open environment, where people can ask all questions that come to mind. All employees without exception treat each other with respect.

After over two years at the head of the affiliate, would you say that you have led the company to where you wanted? What would be left to achieve?

The desired state that I want the company to achieve is the following: Bausch + Lomb should be perceived by the community and patients as the company of choice for eye health.

Would is your final message to the readers of Pharmaceutical Executive?

It is exciting to be part of transforming the iconic global brand of Bausch + Lomb into the world leader in eye health. Sight is the most precious sense we have. By serving and improving vision, Bausch + Lomb enriches people’s lives. The company is building a special dynamic patient centred and high performance culture, and expects managers like me to lead by example, which is challenging but also extremely rewarding.

Poland is an extremely important market for the group. BAUSCH & LOMB feels a strong sense of responsibility to improve eye health in this country. By doing this, we’ll also grow and succeed as a company.

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