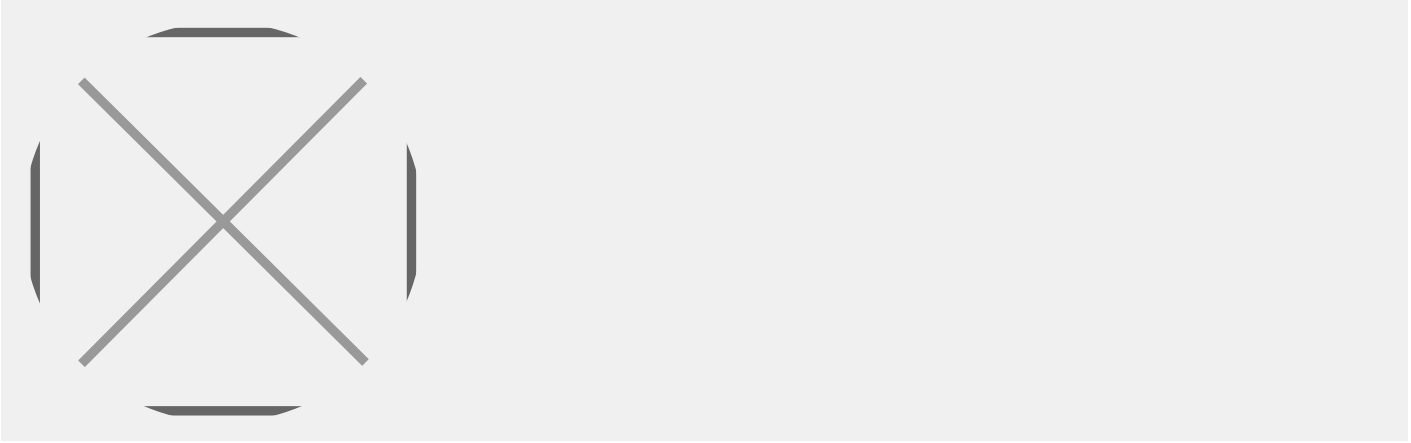
Interview with Rosa Maria Scavarelli, President, Theraskin Brazil



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When we met you in 2007, as the head of the former Igefarma, the company was undergoing a transition – from branded generics into dermocosmetics and women's health. But since that period of transition, there has been quite a transition again! Could you bring our readers up to speed?

Since 2007, Theraskin has become even more focused on our market. Since the beginning, the brand Theraskin itself has had the idea of being focused on dermatology, and now we simply don't have anything else. We are 100% focused in the dermatology market. The idea from the beginning was multifold: we have to be much more specialized if we are to be innovative, and thus we have to focus on a niche we know best, and how to act in. It's not possible to be innovative in all areas! This was the main evolution.

Over this evolution, what have been some of the most important recent milestones and achievements?

Theraskin has just finished the process of launching a new acne product in Brazil. Acne is among the major concerns for dermatologists, and our product is the first product that has been developed here in Brazil. We also continue to work in the areas of anti-aging and melanoma. We have, and are in the process of developing products, in these areas, and will continue to do so, because acne, anti-aging, and pigmentation problems are common for Brazilian women, who love the sunshine and spend too much time under it!

The socioeconomic story of Brazil over the past decade has been the expansion of the Class C, which has indeed been a main driver of the rapid growth at many pharmaceutical companies. But looking at some of your products, like Amilia or Clareador, with prices of 37 reais, 95 reais, even class C, according to the IMS data, spends a fraction of that per month across all medication.
The profile of Theraskin's target consumer is clearly Class A and B. I don't think our profile is for volume, but rather high aggregated value products. That's our focus, and realistically there is not much for Class C. Theraskin works with dermatologists, and dermatologists are, simply, expensive. Therefore, we really focus on the clients who can afford to go to the dermatologist and use our products by a dermatologist's prescription.

Does that create a sort of Catch-22 for a company like Theraskin? Because logically it seems like these very elite consumers, wanting cutting edge products and very high R&D investments, might look to a French, a German, or an American company. How is Theraskin positioned in the minds of dermatologists and end-consumers?

It's a work in progress, and Theraskin has positioned itself more and more vis-a-vis dermatologists, trying to identify what their main needs are. The needs of the dermatologist are ultimately the needs of the patients. Our strategy is to have products with innovation, so we can realize a sufficient value for our products, so we can continue to innovate. Our R&D has developed, and we plan to develop even more, bringing more innovation either with what we do here ourselves, or through alliances and partnerships with German, French, and American companies, or what have you. That's our goal, and as a result we have established our plant with room for third party and outsourcing opportunities, in the area of semi-solids and liquids, which are the primary forms used in dermatology. We have capacity, and we plan to expand this even more. If a company wants to be in this market, and needs the profile Theraskin has – not necessarily products with big volume, but ones with high degrees of innovation – we are the ones.

You completed your post-graduate studies at the University of Michigan, and have spent many years on the cutting edge of research. What's the next frontier in dermatology?

Diseases such as skin cancer remain the biggest areas of research. Protection against solar damage and acne also continue to be priorities, because they are problems that refuse to go away! Currently, there are targets in delivery system innovation. Most products remain topical, but are now enhancing penetration mechanisms to make the delivery more effective.

Theraskin is a top 8 dermatology company, and you want to be top 5. How are you going to get there?

Through innovation: by targeting the markets I have mentioned, where we have the most potential to make a difference. That's the recipe!

But what's the biggest challenge?

The timelines of ANVISA are no laughing matter. It's a very lengthy process surrounding pharmaceuticals, which changes from one year to the next, and nothing goes into the market without first passing through many steps. Time quickly adds up, and it can be one, two, three years – goodness knows when. That's one of the things that at the end of the day means added cost. It's difficult to plan in Brazil, but the fact remains that you need to have plans. You need to know that in 2015 you will have certain products, and by 2016 you will have others, etc. – but this kind of long-term view is hard to achieve.

If we were to come back to Theraskin in 2015 or 2016, what would you hope we would see in that time frame?

Our ambition is to come up with even more products which would bring value to the company, and really strengthen the image of Theraskin as a pharmaceutical company that works to improve the skin of Brazilians. Not just disease, but also skincare. And that's our goal, to achieve a major position in this area. Furthermore, we have ambitions to expand outside of Brazil, to other markets, and at the moment, we are studying other possibilities throughout Latin America and overseas.

What is your final message to Pharmaceutical Executive readers, about the Brazilian market and Theraskin's commitment to it?

I foresee growth in the markets Theraskin is active in. Speaking about Brazilians, I can't say that they take more care of their skin than people from other countries, but they certainly do pay attention! Taking care of one's skin is not vanity – it's health. Skin is our contact with the outside world, it's what protects our body. Brazilians like to take care of their body and their skin in general, and for this reason I see it as a solid market with strong long-term prospects.
As for our commitment, our history is what shows it. My father, Basílio Scavarelli, the founder of the company, is 101 years old. He began in the pharmaceutical industry in 1930, and is still alive, in the office every day, and making plans for the next 20 years! Our history is the best proof of what we are – so Theraskin is here to stay.

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