

Novartis Korea - Brian Gladsden, President



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Tags: [innovation](#), [Novartis](#), [doing business](#), [expat](#), [pricing](#), [regulation](#), [cooperation](#), [government](#)

Brian Gladsden was appointed president of Novartis Korea in January 2014. He relates his previous experience to the market situation in Korea and highlights the importance of commitment to innovation and working in tandem with the local ecosystem to provide the best access to Korean patients.

You have had the opportunity to work at a number of Novartis affiliates around the world. What have you brought from those experiences to your current position and what are some of the unique characteristics of the Korean pharmaceutical market?

I strive to bring a global perspective to Korea to drive growth and innovation using what I have learned from working in different markets. As an example, having been previously in Australia, I have been able to use my experience in a market highly focused on health technology assessment (HTA) and apply those learnings to a cost-effectiveness-focused country like Korea. Working in different markets provides a broad lens and allows for more unique ways of looking at the business and opportunities

From the perspective of people, Korea is quite interesting. I find that the more I work in new locations and organizations, the more I find a greater number of similarities, rather than differences. The culture - the "how" it gets done - can be quite different, however. Korean people are incredibly passionate, driven and hard-working; Korea has developed rapidly over the last few

decades and that permeates through the culture. People bring that strong work ethic and desire to drive forward here to work every day.

In terms of the environment itself, Korea is a very rewarding and challenging marketplace. With the explosive growth that Korea has experienced over the past decades, comes the need for an equally ambitious evolution of infrastructure and policies. It's up to all of us – pharmaceutical companies, government, researchers, clinicians and patients to work together to find the opportunities in this incredible growth to bring the most innovative drugs to patients in the most effective and efficient way

What are some of the strategies you have implemented this year to ensure that happens?

We have a laser focus on R&D and innovation to ensure that the drugs we are bringing to market are truly best in class and will improve or save lives. Partnerships and openness are also critical for success. No single entity or group alone can bring a drug to market. This means Novartis will collaborate very openly with the key stakeholders mentioned above to make sure we can impact patients' lives for the better.

Novartis has experienced a number of patent losses over the last few years. How have you managed to adapt to that in Korea?

The patent cliff has hit at different times for different countries and companies around the world. As such, Novartis Korea is currently undergoing a portfolio transformation. Some of the company's largest drugs have recently gone off patent, and it is up to us to maintain a clear focus on bringing our innovative pipeline to life in Korea. In this sense, patient access is of paramount importance. We place a lot of emphasis on our clinical trial footprint in Korea, so that Korean patients and clinicians can participate in Novartis' expansive global clinical trial programs. Secondly, engaging the right stakeholders to ensure their awareness of our benefit and value is crucial. We realize that there are budgetary constraints here like everywhere else; industry and government should work together towards a mutually beneficial solution to bring drugs to patients. We have to sit on the same side of the table, acknowledging both Korea's economic burden and the need to reward innovation.

How many clinical trials are currently underway here, and in which therapeutic areas?

In 2013, Novartis was the number one company in Korea in terms of registering new clinical trials with the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety at 28. We want to continue that trend moving forward. In

terms of therapeutic areas, Novartis has taken a truly disease-area-focused approach. Oncology is a strong focus for us, as well as cardiovascular, metabolics, respiratory, retina, neuroscience, dermatology and transplantation. The company structures its business and clinical development programs by disease area, which provides deeper expertise and allows us to get closer to the needs of clinicians and patients.

Given its size, Korea has historically punched above its weight in research and development and I expect it will continue to do so.. This is due to the very high quality of researchers and clinicians and a sizeable ageing population in need of new and innovative medicines. As the world is becoming increasingly more competitive, it's important that Korea continues to differentiate itself as a clinical trial leader and I am confident that Novartis will stay at the front of the pack.

Novartis recently announced collaborating with Hanmi Pharmaceuticals for the co-marketing of Galvus. What is there to gain on both sides from this partnership, and will we see similar partnerships from this affiliate in the future?

There are many levels at which we can collaborate with domestic companies in Korea. One way is through co-marketing and distribution partnerships, as we have done with Hanmi. In this way we can complement each others' skills and capabilities in the marketplace to offer more to our customers and reach more patients. In addition, potential R&D collaborations could provide huge opportunities for both partners in Korea. Many domestic companies are looking to increase their R&D capabilities and are investing significantly in this area. Through our Novartis Venture Fund, we have also been investing in smaller companies in Korea that show great promise for the future. As of today, we have invested in three local companies and hopefully there will be an opportunity for similar investments in the future. This provides a unique opportunity for knowledge-sharing, research and development capability-building, education and training. Ultimately, I believe that further collaboration between multinational and domestic companies, and investments in smaller Korean companies like we have been making through our Venture Fund, are very much aligned with the Ministry of Health and Welfare's Pharma 2020 vision to grow the Korean pharmaceutical industry. Novartis is proud to be a part of it.

Is there something particularly advantageous about Korean pharmaceutical companies for multinationals like Novartis compared to other countries?

Many Korean companies can be highly effective partners from the distribution and promotional perspective. Many of these businesses have long histories here, which provide in-depth local knowledge and expertise. Through mutually-beneficial partnerships we can benefit from the local

expertise and domestic partners can learn from the global experience of multinational companies as well. This is increasingly important as many domestic companies have aspirations to increase their presence worldwide. In addition, with the increased investment in R&D by many local players, multinationals have an excellent opportunity to partner on innovative new drug development that ultimately can benefit patients globally.

What is the strategic importance of Novartis Korea in the context of the global organization?

Korea has the 14th largest pharmaceutical market in the world, so this alone makes it a market of significant importance. The economy is growing and Korea is recognized as a leader in Asia both in size, as the third largest pharmaceutical market in Asia, behind Japan and China, and in sophistication and scientific expertise. Korea is a true center of R&D excellence for Novartis and there are ever-increasing opportunities to collaborate with other developing countries across Asia. I also believe there is something quite unique about Korea as a leader in smart technology, with an incredible opportunity to drive health technology innovation and become a global leader in digital health as well.

Given its strong presence in technology, what is your comparative assessment of Korea's healthcare system?

The quality of healthcare is very high, and the knowledge and training of physicians and healthcare providers is also high compared to other countries where I have lived and worked. The challenge before us is to take advantage of everything offered here, and ensure we bring the most innovative and effective medicines to patients in Korea. Korean citizens deserve the same access to medicines that are available in other developed countries in the world.

How have you adapted your management style to Korea?

I believe in being authentic and allowing people to see who I am as a person and what I stand for as a leader. This will always remain consistent no matter where I work. What I value – constant learning, finding joy in work, inspiring people, making a difference, and finding purpose in what we do every day – has not changed. As I mentioned, the “how” is very different from country to country. How I can connect with people in Korea is unique and it is important to recognize what people expect of a leader here. Understanding these two elements is fundamental to building relationships, and establishing trust and credibility. Investing time to get to know individual associates and spending time with customers and external stakeholders are vital to the life of the organization.

What are your ambitions for Novartis Korea over the next five years?

Improving access for patients in Korea to our most innovative life-changing medicines is critical. This is true not just for Novartis, but as an industry, we must work together with government, clinicians, patients and caregivers to improve policies and ultimately access. Internally, we have a vision to make Novartis the best pharmaceutical company in Korea. This means that we will develop the best, most innovative medicines and solutions for patients, be the best place to work, the best partner to external stakeholders, and have the best commercial success so we can continually reinvest in R&D.

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