

Annie Tan - Country Manager & Regional Head of Distributor Markets, BMS Thailand



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BMS Thailand's country manager explains the organization's new business strategy in Thailand under her leadership, Thailand's potential to become a regional center and why BMS is here to stay.

What past experiences are you bringing to help push BMS Thailand to the next level of excellence?

Previous to working for BMS in Thailand I was with other pharmaceutical organizations in Malaysia and Singapore but decided to make the jump and join BMS' team in Thailand because the Thai market intrigues me and I see great potential for BMS to grow and flourish here. As country manager and regional head of distributor markets in Southeast Asia, I would like to think that my previous experiences prepare me for the different exposure in Thailand and the surrounding nations, and so far it has been a rewarding journey. Apart from Thailand, I am also responsible for BMS' Asian distributor markets: Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia.

How has the organization adapted the way in which it does business in Thailand?

BMS has always taken on new and bold moves by innovating and creating opportunities where others might see obstacles. Despite Thailand's pharmaceutical market becoming more restrictive we continue to transform the way that business is done here on a local level. We have adapted by innovating our business model. We keep more strategic functions in-house and outsource tactical functions to our partners. The strategic functions allow us to deep dive in driving the market access, branding and marketing. We are constantly innovating how to expand the product access to patients who need our products in a highly specialized market. We are transforming into a Specialty Care Biopharma as we focus more on specialized therapeutic areas, such as Hepatitis C, Oncology and even Immuno-Oncology, where there are high unmet medical needs.

What does Thailand represent for the organization as a whole?

At the beginning of this year, BMS Thailand took a bold move in transforming our business in order to better position our business dealings in Thailand and in the region. Thailand is an important part of a bigger BMS cluster. We believe Thailand has the potential to become an expertise hub for Southeast Asia in the near future. BMS is actively working towards positioning Thailand as the regional hub due to its strategic location and good talent pool of entrepreneurial mindset. Overall, we see Thailand as becoming a regional leader for Southeast Asia.

What is the motivation behind bringing new and exciting products to the Thai market?

One of BMS beliefs is that we work for the patients. We believe that all our patients should have access to quality innovative products out there and that is why the organization believes in remaining close to our patients in Thailand and building up our company's regional market access from Bangkok. We have a healthy product pipeline and we are moving towards specialty care in biopharmaceuticals, which requires us to build up the organization in medical capabilities, market access and marketing. BMS is close to launch three new innovative medicines in certain therapeutic areas of Hepatitis C, Rheumatoid Arthritis and Immuno-Oncology. We want to make sure the right patients have access to such products.

What potential do you see in Thailand becoming a regional center for clinical trials?

BMS has a specific department dedicated to clinical trials, which has conducted several clinical trials on various illnesses in Thailand, such as HIV/AIDS and oncology. Through clinical trials, we are able to give doctors access to medicine, which other medical professionals around the globe might not have. This also allows doctors to share their learnings and experiences with the other medical professionals on how to properly prescribe new and innovative medicine to patients. Clinical trials is mutually beneficial for many of the patients and we believe we are doing a societal good by promoting awareness and giving patients options they might not otherwise have. I believe Thailand is a nation where patients and healthcare professionals work together with the highest ethical conducts, which in turns promotes integrity in the way that data is composed. Overall, the portfolio of BMS' dealings with clinical trials in Thailand plays a large role for the organization, especially because Thai medical professionals are highly qualified and have great research backgrounds.

What are you doing to ensure other industry players and potential employees that BMS' new business strategy is actually a positive business endeavor?

BMS made the bold strategic decision at the corporate level to transform the way we conduct our business in the region. BMS Thailand is an agile and lean organization, which sometimes creates an extra obstacle in recruiting the most qualified candidates because some health professionals might opt to work for larger organizations. As the leader of the organization it is my job to attract and retain talents through the visions and beliefs of BMS. This means that we have fewer employees at the work place, but it does not mean that we are a less capable organization. On the contrary, the reorganization of the company has brought about positive changes for us and is leading to higher results. Moreover, we see better results for us in the near future and we have big plans for Thailand and Southeast Asia. We believe our changes have allowed us to be leaner, agile and adaptable, which translate into more value for the organization. Sometimes the smallest chili pepper is the spiciest—do not be fooled by our size!

Where would you like to see the organization in the next few years?

In the coming years I believe that our innovative model will work and flourish for Thailand and the region. I hope to continue influencing the way that other stakeholders view and perceive BMS by growing in market access and continuing to promote the organization's emphasis on corporate social responsibility to the societies which we serve. At BMS we continuously ask our employees "who they are working for" and I remind them that we always strive to work for our patients! We

are an innovative organization that is leading the industry into its next phase of excellence by bringing the best products to our patients.

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