

Anna Maria Braun - President, B. Braun Asia Pacific



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Dedicated Vice-President of APACMed and President of B. Braun's Asia Pacific operations, Anna Maria Braun, shares the importance of establishing a unifying platform for the industry, the company's Vision 2020 for "Systems Partnership", as well as the overarching vision for the company moving forward.

In addition to your current role overseeing B. Braun's business and operations in APAC, you're also a founding board member of APACMed. Why have you decided to participate in the establishment of this organization?

B. Braun has been in Asia Pacific for over 40 years and is very established in the many countries that we cover, providing me with deep insights on the characteristics of the region as a whole. As an industry, there is an increasing need for collaboration among the different players in order to give the industry a united voice. As regulatory conditions change on a consistent basis, it is imperative to sustain a dialogue with governments and regulatory authorities to address requirements and conduct operations with greater efficiency. In essence, the industry has a common overarching goal of driving innovation in the region and ensuring that access is available to a greater number of people over time. I strongly believe that a joint platform which promotes unity and neutrality of interest will foster interaction and generate better results with stakeholders. Moreover, engaging with doctors and nurses' associations through APACMed can help elevate patient safety and actualizes the industry's vision to deliver healthcare in the best way possible.

Fredrik Nyberg had depicted the association as a unifying platform for MedTech companies in APAC. Compared to the pharmaceutical industry, why is it relevant for MedTech companies to consolidate their presence when it comes to advocacy? Additionally, why has the organization found its origins in Singapore?

There is a need for a collaborative dynamic given that most of the players in this space face the same challenges. One major commonality is the regulatory environment, which we are all subject to, which necessitates greater unity to garner strength as a regional industry. APACMed does not only aim to cater to the archetypal MNCs present in Asia, but we also place an emphasis on the regional Asian MNCs to help develop the local players. It is in our best interest to provide an equitable playing field while elevating the standards of the industry as a whole. Recently, we published a Code of Ethical Conduct, and are now collaborating on a consensus statement on the future of medical device registries. Furthermore, being based in Singapore is ideal for the organization because most of the companies' regional headquarters are based here, therefore it is where the collaborative dialogue started.

During your time as Vice Chairman of APACMed, have you been able to extract any added insights that have applied to your role with B. Braun?

As a Board Member and the Vice Chairman of APACMed, I am able to get a larger perspective on the pertinent topics and trends that are emerging both at the industry and regional scales. As APACMed strongly encourages a level of exchange amongst the various players in this space, I have a good understanding of the competitive landscape. Additionally, I have gained a stronger grasp of how the company is perceived by peers across the industry. The main focus of my responsibilities as Vice-Chairman is to ensure that there is alignment with other board members to solidify the presence of the organization in the region and continually create value for our members. We highlight the core, relevant issues to be addressed and aim for solutions to be successfully realized. At the crux of many of our initiatives is to build expertise for regulatory affairs and create harmonization among authorities. Shaping the face of the organization is one of our key priorities, which provides many transferrable benefits for B. Braun as a company.

With regard to B. Braun's Asia Pacific business, my priorities are to ensure that we are on par with the fast pace of change in the region and meet its growing demands. Asia Pacific is a key growth driver for the company as it is one of the most dynamic regions of the world. It is vital that we

remain cognizant of the realities in the markets and ensure that our business continues to grow, given the high level of diversity in the Asia Pacific environment. Congruent to these priorities is also the focus on developing talent and ensuring a breadth of understanding of the market to remain agile in a fast-paced environment.

Since you have undertaken the role, how would you evaluate the current state of B. Braun in the region, as well as how it has evolved?

It is important to note that B. Braun has been active in the region for over 40 years. B. Braun operates nine production sites in the region, while a 10th one is currently underway. Given the solid foundation which we have established, our focus today is anchored on how to evolve strongly in the region, and convey B. Braun's distinct value proposition.

The company recently unveiled its Vision 2020, which, among other themes, aims to position B. Braun as a "System Partner." What does this mean in concrete terms? Moreover, is the notion of providing services beyond the product helps with B Braun's commercial positioning in the region?

Being a "system partner" signifies being a holistic solutions provider for our customers, which typically includes hospitals and healthcare institutions. We look into the entire patient pathway for our products and services, from entering to leaving the hospital, as well as providing care at home. We work closely with our partners to untangle inefficiencies together and develop and intense dialogue throughout the continuum. Our aim is not to simply have a snapshot of the process, but be intimately engaged with the patients' healthcare journey. This is not limited to therapies but also includes secondary processes in the hospital, for example, Central Sterilization, with the hospitals. The ultimate aim of the healthcare business is to provide what the patients need.

Penang serves great importance for B. Braun as it hosts the regional headquarters, as well the largest production facility outside of Germany, with over 7,000 employees. What was the rationale for not consolidating these activities in Singapore as many of your peers in the industry have done?

We have been established in Penang since 1972 and this was the first manufacturing site in the region. We have built a strong foundation here and our operations have grown organically. It was not a decision against Singapore, nor for Penang, but where the opportunity has presented itself. Singapore is an interesting market which drives new solutions and a plethora of technology at the forefront of innovation, which is why we built partnerships with an incubator there. However, the main advantage of being in Penang is the proximity to a big production site, which creates a multitude of synergies amongst the different departments. It has been incredibly beneficial for our R&D, marketing and scientific team to have a daily tangible reminder of what we are producing. It facilitates an exchange of ideas and ensure that departments do not work in silos. Personally, for me, seeing the production lines as I walk from my car to my office every morning is a powerful reminder of the heart of our operations.

When you consider Singapore and Malaysia, there's a clear disparity in the level of wealth, market maturity and development. How do you mitigate across these challenges to serve both markets?

The bottom line for us is to create products that add value, regardless of the market context. For example, we need to ensure that an IV catheter is safe for anyone in the healthcare system, regardless of price point. All our products carry the B. Braun name and therefore need to reflect the high quality standard regardless if they were produced in Malaysia, Germany, Switzerland or Latin America.

During the last fiscal year, B. Braun Asia Pacific revenues grew by 23.4 percent, and now surpasses EUR 1 billion or 16 percent of the company's business. How would you project the sustainability of this growth in the next 3 to 5 years?

The objective is to maintain double digit growth in the upcoming years. With 4 billion people in the region, we are very optimistic about this growth and have built strategic initiatives accordingly. At the backbone of our initiative is to ensure that we have a competent and motivated workforce that can stay agile amidst changes. Our key focus is to build our talent and provide effective talent development programmes. We also place an emphasis on ensuring that we have local talent, who truly understand the market.

You have recently been appointed as the Deputy Member of the B. Braun Management Board in Melsungen in April 2016. With a background in Law, had it always been your intention to join the family business?

Having grown up with the business, joining the family business has always been in my mind. However, I wanted to study law and work in that profession first. Nonetheless as I progressed in my career, the drive to contribute to the family business grew bigger. After looking into different opportunities and possibilities, I had the opportunity to move to the US and afterwards moved to Asia, working first as a Regional Product Head before assuming the role as Regional President. I truly enjoy the dynamics in this region where challenges are met head first and we constantly look into new business models to foster growth. As diverse as the region may be, the need for the best quality healthcare is a primary need that we at B. Braun aim to deliver at the highest capacity.

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