Interview: Suryo Suwignjo – President Director, Philips Indonesia



"Our overall healthcare strategy is to develop an integral solution that enables a treatment continuum between patients and doctors"

20.07.2017

Tags: Indonesia, Philips, Healthcare, Medtech,

Suryo Suwignjo, President Director at Philips Indonesia, highlights the strong commitment and contribution of Philips to the development of the Indonesian healthcare system and how medical education is a crucial element in bringing high quality care to Indonesian citizens.

Mr. Suryo, you were appointed as President Director in April 2014. What are your main priorities as the head of the operations here in Indonesia?

Back in 2014, Philips hired me to lead the company's three business units: lighting, consumer lifestyle, and healthcare. However, last February 2016 was a decisive time for Philips: our headquarters decided to spin off our lighting business while the consumer electronics and healthcare business units were combined in order to focus entirely on healthcare, offering an end-to-end solution covering the entire health continuum – from hospital to home. As a consequence, my priorities totally changed when this corporate operation was completed. Since then I have been mainly focused on the development of our healthcare portfolio. Our overall healthcare strategy is to develop an integral solution that enables a treatment continuum between patients and doctors and as president director of the Indonesian affiliate my main duty is to ensure that we pursue this strategy on a daily basis.

How has the Indonesian affiliate performed since you took the reigns of the operations?

Philips Indonesia has been growing at a solid, sustainable and healthy double-digit rate over the last three years. Furthermore, this growth has been consistent across our entire portfolio in Indonesia. This great performance is the result of a solid investment plan dedicated to developing our processes, teams and the medical device market overall. The latter includes medical education activities as well as other initiatives targeted at preparing Indonesia to embrace the latest technologies in urban areas and more remote locations.

What would you highlight as the most salient opportunities impacting the healthcare system from a medical devices standpoint?

The implementation of the universal healthcare coverage program of Indonesia (JKN) is actually driving the growth of the overall healthcare industry due to the growing demand of health services, which only increase once JKN is fully implemented by 2019. Speaking about medical devices specifically, it will increase the demand by hospitals to offer better quality of care and equally, more efficient healthcare equipment. On this note, medical education plays an important role in the medical equipment industry since we, as an industry, have the duty to not just bring high quality medical technology to the market but also ensure that our end-users are properly utilizing our devices to its full potential.

Considering the strong potential of the Indonesian healthcare market, how do you ensure that Philips remains at the forefront of this development?

Asia Pacific is one of the fastest growing regions globally. The strong potential of the Indonesian healthcare market is a key growth driver within the region now as well as in the future. I am very thankful to the support from our regional headquarters in supporting our activities, whether that is through financial investments or other means. At the same time, I am proud that Philips Indonesia has always delivered outstanding results following the aforementioned investments.

[Featured_in]

The deep understanding of the customers’ needs and requirements is one of the main factors to create value within the medical equipment arena. How is this client centricity reflected in your portfolio strategy?

It is crucial to adapt your product portfolio to the local needs or capacities, which is quite challenging in emerging markets. In fact, Indonesia by itself has more than 5,000 kilometers of coastline and approximately 17,000 islands in which healthcare infrastructures as well as professionals are highly scarce. This means that patient access is inherent to Indonesia and one of

the most important challenges to tackle.

Therefore, technologies such as digitalization and telehealth can create important healthcare breakthroughs in emerging countries – and even more in Indonesia. The challenge constitutes finding the best way to transfer and implement not only our corporate know-how but also our technologies, especially considering the aforementioned limiting factors of the country's ecosystem.

Thus, we have to listen intently to our clients to be able to provide them exactly with what they need and shape our portfolio accordingly to the country specifications. While most of our clients are currently demanding basic medical equipment solutions, we have also perceived a growing demand amongst our principals for intermediate or even top-notch devices. Consequently, most of our solutions are within the basic medical equipment classification but we are increasingly introducing more innovative and technologically advanced solutions based on the demand evolution.

BPJS' [Social Security Institution of Indonesia] resource constraints has sparked a debate between curing existing patients and investing in prevention / early diagnosis practices that ultimately reduce the cost of treatment. As one of the global leaders in medical devices, what is your assessment on this matter?

The current government predominantly focuses on curing patients, which is understandable due to the huge need for immediate treatment of Indonesian patients that are already sick.

Having said that, I truly believe that government should start investing in prevention capabilities, which are highly under-developed at this moment. I am a firm advocate of adopting a long-term vision, as prevention practices will ultimately reduce the cost of treatment. Whereas this is a well-known fact among industry leaders, the financial constraints at this moment in time are too high of a burden to allow for this approach to be implemented.

[related_story]

As you mentioned, the government does not have enough resources to fulfill the national healthcare demands. Therefore, Public and Private Partnerships (PPPs) seem to be the path of development, leveraging private resources to enlarge government reach. Concretely, how is Philips collaborating with public institutions?

We are closely collaborating with the government through different initiatives in teaching hospitals to provide them with not only the best equipment but also the best medical education. We are

concentrating our efforts on this type of hospitals because they are the ones that have higher capacity levels and higher quality level of healthcare practitioners.

By doing so, Philips is raising the bar of services and know-how by not only enhancing healthcare infrastructure but also contributing to the development of human capital. Through this type of initiatives we aim to create not just a sole impact to the healthcare eco-system but rather a systemic one.

Philips has made significant strides in pioneering innovative technologies, specifically within the realm of telehealth. Indeed, Philips' telehealth plans in Indonesia have been implemented through a program called Mobile Obstetrics Monitoring (MOM), which aims to reduce the alarmingly high mortality rates among pregnant woman. Can you elaborate on the success of this program that was implemented in collaboration with the Indonesian Ministry of Health?

MOM started in Indonesia three years ago with a one-year pilot project in West Sumatera. The mortality rate for pregnant women and babies is actually very high in Indonesia. Through MOM, we are developing a software and cloud technology for midwives to monitor pregnant woman and take necessary actions if needed. Specifically, midwives are able to track the data by means of their cell phones and upload this data into the cloud to which gynecologists that are based in more populated areas have full access and are able to give guidance. As a result, this initiative enhances early detection of risk factors during pregnancy.

In terms of results, we have covered around 1200 pregnant women in three regencies in Indonesia for the last three years and I am personally really proud that we have not had any fatalities so far.

What are your strongest motivations in your current role at Philips?

Firstly, even though Philips has been in Indonesia for more than a century, I am the first Indonesian president director. This allows me and motivates me to showcase the existing local professional capabilities in Indonesia: being able to lead of leading multinational companies and bringing their business to the next level.

Secondly, the fact that by doing business we are also contributing to the better life quality of people is something that makes me feel proud of and motivates me every day.

With nearly 14 years of management experience at IBM, how has your previous career path enabled you to succeed in Philips?

Philips is moving from being product- to being solution-oriented. IBM passed through a similar change in the past when it switched its business from hardware to software. Hence, my prior experience in IBM is certainly helping me to better understand as well as implement this strategic move, allowing me to apply my previously acquired knowledge to the current context.

See more interviews