

Interview: Peter Wimmer - Country Manager, Angelini Austria and Germany



"The private market still has a great potential to grow, thus for us this sector has still a large growth potential in the already well developed Austrian healthcare system."

03.11.2017

Tags: [Austria](#), [Angelini](#), [Pharma](#), [Innovation](#), [Strategy](#), [Market Access](#)

Peter Wimmer, country manager of Angelini Austria and Germany, discusses the tailored long-term strategy that this exciting Italian pharmaceutical company is implementing to establish a boutique portfolio and the importance of scientific data in constructing positive relationships throughout the healthcare community. Furthermore, he highlights the reasons Austria is being addressed as Angelini's home to move into the German market and points-out the future growth potential of the company.

What was your goal when taking over the country manager role in 2010?

After working for ten years at Pfizer, I reflected on my career and felt it was a good time to move forward. At that moment, in 2010, I received an offer from Angelini for the position of Country Manager and I took this great opportunity to be able to make decisions quickly. Angelini is a diverse, family owned business that promotes the power to make your own decisions and our team is full of capable and knowledgeable people.

During the transition period, the company gave me the chance to design a long-term business model for the future strategy that we are constantly following and Adjusting to the environmental needs in the healthcare system. Over the last seven years Angelini Austria has grown extremely well in staff and sales numbers. We have undertaken a portfolio harmonization, focusing Angelini core products and licencing in products that fit into our portfolio approach.

The aim of the company is to have a boutique portfolio that does not cover every single therapeutic area, but specialises in our sectors of care.

Our objective was to be the top-three mid-long-term in each of our 5 areas we are present, and we have achieved this!

Which areas have given you the largest growth?

[Featured_in]

The greatest growth has come in general from our recent product launches and in detail from our new therapeutic area gynaecology in which we have extended our portfolio to five products. Within gynaecology we have launched a product in the contraceptive market, which is a huge market in Austria, that fits to our business model of product diversification in different sectors which means we do invest not only into prescription drugs but also in the OTC and private sector to diversify our risk. This is important mainly due to the fact that the Rx market is very dependent on negotiations with reimbursement authorities. The private sector allows us to determine our own prices; therefore, the establishment of a good relationship with our customers ensures that our business capabilities have great room to expand.

What is the importance of Austria within Angelini's global operations?

Austria, as a country, is not that important in terms of sales, due to our smaller size in comparison to the other countries covered by Angelini. The company has a great coverage over eastern and southern Europe, and now the objective is to set a footprint throughout central Europe, and this is where Austria takes over a crucial part. Our role is too exploit the Austrian market, and drive growth in Germany, and hopefully we are also able to move into other countries in Central Europe in the future.

Austria was chosen in the past as the hub to start the expansion in central Europe since it was previously also successful as Angelini regional hub for central and eastern Europe. Many companies see the advantages of positioning larger operations in Austria as we have great cultural and business knowledge of many regions of Europe, and this aspects Angelini was following. The company, after covering Eastern Europe, understands that the next step is to enter into new markets for Angelini in Central Europe with a good social security system.

What are the advantages for companies to bring innovation to the Austrian market?

[related_story]

The private market still has a great potential to grow, thus for us this sector has still a large growth potential in the already well developed Austrian healthcare system. The challenge in the Rx market is the reimbursement system that is not allowing great market access to innovative products due to pricing restrictions which results very often in low prices of the products.

Therefore, our strategy is to have a three-pillar system; Rx, OTC and private business. We are able to manage the dynamics between the areas by establishing partnerships, which is a real strength of Angelini's global approach. We collaborate with physicians, pharmacists and the healthcare system stakeholders thus we can understand their way of thinking to adapt the situation to their needs. We understand that it is a difficult task for the NHI to manage the cost of drugs; therefore, it is all about finding a balance that allows the systems to afford our innovative products.

Angelini prides itself on providing excellent scientific data for all its products. How does this help you in your operations?

We appreciate the great work our global R&D team conducts in Italy, especially the fact we have scientific evidence supporting our OTC products, an important differentiating factor in this huge market. Furthermore, Angelini allowed us to have a tailored approach in Austria; therefore, we do not promote generics and only push innovative products, always with the support coming from the scientific team.

A survey was conducted by the University of Graz indicating Tantum Verde® should be a part of every Austrian household. How important is this form of information when gaining trust within the domestic healthcare community?

For negotiations with the NHI it was not that important as we decided to take Tantum Verde® out of the reimbursement list and make it available in pharmacies. Austrian pharmacists are educated in advising the consumers about this product, and the data we provided from the University of Graz has been of great assistance in building an excellent relationship within the healthcare community. Tantum Verde® currently holds a 41 percent market share within its treatment sector.

Overall, the relationship with Austrian pharmacists and physicians is extremely important, especially for a product like Tantum Verde® which deals in situations of painful inflammation and swelling in the mouth and throat also in peculiar situations, such as pregnancy. We conduct educational workshops, providing all the relevant information, as we believe it will result in a better collaboration in the long-term. This ensures that customers are able to understand the full picture of the product, thus they can use the product effectively.

The German healthcare market is very different to Austria, especially the pharmacy ecosystem. What is your approach now as you manage German operations?

We analysed a lot the German market before creating a business plan, especially on the pharmacy environment in Germany as it is further developed compared to Austria. In Germany, there is a huge amount of pharmacies; but, the sales in each pharmacy are relatively low and more dependent on the wholesalers. Many companies fail because they have a large OTC team that requires large operational costs in comparison to the sales level.

We decided to have a small, dedicated OTC team working in the regions that have the greatest potential and pushing a four-vector model based on the investment in four key areas; physicians, wholesale, ATL and field force. Our operation in Germany have only just begun – although – so far, we have been successful and the objective is to expand our product portfolio. Our second product, beside Tantum Verde®, will be launched in February 2018 and another product launch is planned still in 2018. This ensures to have a larger portfolio to maintain a continuous growth in the German market.

What can Angelini Austria do more to set a footprint as a company integrated in the Austrian healthcare ecosystem?

We have already built up good relationships with our main products and we are still working to strengthen our image that helps us to launch also new treatment options. We are following a strategy beside the classical marketing approaches to involve all partners in the entire healthcare system: physicians, pharmacists, wholesalers, universities, patients supported by media. Our objective is to collaborate with the stakeholders involved in the healthcare system and to ensure to place the right information at the appropriate collaboration partner.

What are your ambitions for Angelini Austria in the future?

We have launched five products over the last three years and as mentioned before we want to achieve a top-three ranking in each of these therapeutic areas. This year we are launching another two OTC products. Our challenge is to plan, prepare and produce a tailored approach to our operations thus the Austrian healthcare community and Austrian population understand that Angelini is a rising star and company that they can trust.

[See more interviews](#)