Interview: Maciej Kuźmierkiewicz – General Manager, IQVIA Poland and Baltics



"Our "next generation" service for clinical trials is a unique value proposition of IQVIA and is an area that many of our competitors are now attempting to follow and replicate."

05.12.2017

Tags: Poland, IQVIA, Healthcare, QuintilesIMS, Market Intelligence

Maciej Kuźmierkiewicz, general manager of IQVIA Poland and the Baltics, discusses the implications of global changes on the Polish affiliate (which now employs 1000 staff) and the challenges of promoting an abundance of services to the marketplace. Additionally, he highlights the potential of healthcare services in Poland to deliver clinical trials and how this will be further enabled by IQVIA – the new brand of the merged company of IMS Health and Quintiles.

The company has experienced many changes at the global level. What impact has this had on the operations of the Polish affiliate?

The company I joined ten years ago, IMS Health, was the data market leader in Poland, and our mission was to measure sales of prescription and non-prescription health products and help pharmaceutical companies optimize their performance. In Poland, as in many other countries worldwide, IMS Health established itself as the partner of choice in this specific field of market measurement.

Since then, we have made a number of global acquisitions, of which two recent ones have had substantial impact locally in Poland: first, in 2015 the acquisition of Cegedim; then in 2016 the merger with Quintiles. Most recently last November, a year after merging with Quintiles, we introduced the new company brand IQVIA – to support the promotion of our combined capabilities that will help clients drive healthcare forward. These large changes, along with the acquisitions of

many smaller companies, have greatly enlarged the abundance of services we offer. Furthermore, arising with these two M&A moves, our staff numbers in Poland have doubled each time. From our staff of roughly 50 people at IMS Health Poland in 2008 when I joined, we now have round 1000 people at IQVIA Poland.

From a helicopter view, IQVIA in Poland has three distinct business pillars, each being home to about a third of the team. First, we have the “original” IMS and Cegedim portfolios of services that are focused on our unparalleled data, analytics, consulting, and integrated technology solutions for our local clients to provide market measurement solutions and to optimize commercial performance.

The second pillar arises from the services of Quintiles, and in particular those associated with a Contract Research Organisation (CRO).

And lastly in Poland, due to the nation´s unique characteristics and skillsets, the company has chosen to install a technology hub in Warsaw. This hub does not service solely Poland, but is an international centre that provides key technological developments and global advancements, such as our new Orchestrated Customer Engagement platform, for all markets worldwide.

What are the key factors that are driving the growth of the Polish pharmaceutical industry?

[Featured_in]

The Polish pharmaceutical market is the sixth largest in Europe in general terms, though per capita it is one of the lowest, and in that regard, we play well below our potential. Of the ‘volume x prices’ equation we have significantly lower prices with a consumption that is on the European average, but the mix of products is very much different, reflecting a lower penetration of new innovative drugs. In many cases Polish pricing drives parallel exporting, which in turn leads to serious concerns around product availability.

Looking ahead, prospects for growth are strong. The Rx segment definitely has unmet patient needs to satisfy. If GDP continues to grow, and the planned increase of its share devoted to healthcare ensues, then we could be looking at doubling the value of this segment by 2025. The hospital market is likely to continue its dynamic development through drug programs whereby the national payer also achieves good cost controls. And finally, our OTC market is among the largest in Europe, and we forecast it to continue expanding with new products and new sales models.

What has been the challenge in displaying to the market the message that IQVIA is more than just a data company, and can offer the entire range of services?

[related_story]

Following several dozen acquisitions and a transformational merger of IMS Health and Quintiles, we have gone through a rigorous exercise to define who exactly IQVIA is and what we offer to the market. Our clients' view of us depends a lot on the kind of past relationships they had with us. If they worked with IMS Health, they see us as a data or consulting company; if they operated with Cegedim, they would see us as a technology player; and if they employed Quintiles, we are mainly a CRO in their eyes. But, today, we are so much more than the sum of the merged parts.

So what difference does IQVIA make? Well, in thousands of small ways really but also, in truth, in one fundamental way: we connect people across healthcare – healthcare providers, payers, life science companies, patients, distributors – everyone – all working together to improve health. IQVIA doesn't cure cancer; our clients do. But we are making their path to success as short and easy as possible: from molecule to market.

And we have the power to do that by bringing together our capabilities in human science and data science; for example, powering clinical expertise and real-world experience with some of the worlds' best analytics and technologies to unleash a new way for our clients to solve healthcare's toughest problems.

What services are most in demand within Poland?

In Poland, we cover nearly the full spectrum of IQVIA´s services that are offered globally. Clinical research is an important area of ours and one that supports the Polish market but one, I believe, that the nation is not exploiting to its full potential. Poland is not the richest country in terms healthcare spend; therefore, clinical trials are a great way to give market access to innovative treatments to patients in a sustainable manner. Around 35,000 Polish patients are in trials each year, which is a high number in absolute terms, although – per capita – we have a space to catch up with leading countries of Europe, including East Europe.

As the market is complex, many global and local companies turn to us for advisory support to help define their strategies and run market operations effectively. Our market measurement data continues to be the 'gold standard' that most of the market stakeholders turn to in their daily work and in dialogue among them.

How is IQVIA able to utilize its CRO and data arms to showcase the potential of Poland as a clinical trials destination?

Our “next generation” service for clinical trials is a unique value proposition of IQVIA and is an area that many of our competitors are now attempting to follow and replicate. We have an incredibly deep understanding of the market thanks to our relations with our data partners including Polish wholesalers, pharmacies and hospitals. We are therefore able to cover the entire patient pathway through the system of care.

Our data allows us to explore the sites and hospitals where trials can be conducted. As a result, trials can be launched more quickly and more effectively, and in-turn they are generating more accurate results. For companies this means they can bring medications more quickly to the market and meet patient needs earlier on the one hand and, on the other, realise the commercial success of a product over a longer timeframe. In this sense, the combination of our CRO business from Quintiles, coupled with the data from IMS Health, gives IQVIA a unique market position.

Healthcare budgets are feeling the strain due to rising costs of innovative drugs. How are you able to help your clients prove the economic value of their products to the Polish healthcare system?

Once the product is on the market and there is real live practice of its use, we are able through our data analysis capabilities to capture the so called “real-world evidence” of how the product is being utilized and what kind of effect and outcomes it is subsequently generating in the Polish healthcare ecosystem.

We are able to see this financial impact of the product for the entire length of the therapy, not just the initial costs. The full calculation will also include indirect factors such as the time the patient is out work, the length of stay in hospital, and the effect and cost of therapy-X compared with therapy-Y. Our data gives our clients a great opportunity to make such comparisons; and thus, allows them to take real-world evidence to key stakeholders and have a meaningful dialogue around market access and outcomes.

What are the differentiating factors that defines IQVIA over the competition?

The first aspect is the unparalleled data that is by far the richest and deepest globally and also in Polish healthcare. Second, advanced analytics capability we bring to derive insights from the data, as the data is only worth as much as the conclusions you can generate from it. Third, transformative technology, that allows the analytics to be available in many user-friendly forms.

And a fourth factor is our domain expertise. This relates to IQVIA’s closeness to the market in more than 100 countries worldwide; it also results from our deep expertise in therapeutic areas through our CRO activities and having a consulting team that truly understands the ins and outs of local markets.

We have defined this unique set of four capabilities as The IQVIA CORE and are now of course, continuing to strive to be best in class with each. But what truly sets us apart is the way we integrate them to create a portfolio of highly differentiated solutions within each of the clinical and commercial markets we operate in.

Moving forward, what are the aspirations of IQVIA Poland?

We will lead the market development and adapt to our clients’ evolving concerns and needs, especially in the areas of bringing innovation to the Polish market and meeting the demands of Polish patients. We will be an active player in assisting our clients conduct clinical trials and help them with their key decisions when launching products and in day-to-day operational excellence. This involves supporting them with effective communication with their relevant stakeholders as well as defining clear strategies for their success based on deep market insight. Clients’ messaging is not only through their own medical representatives but can equally be via our own call centre, our rented field force as well as alternative channels that we orchestrate for our clients’ multichannel strategies.

All in all, this will ensure IQVIA remains the partner of choice in Polish healthcare.

See more interviews