Ángel Navarro – President, Azierta, Spain



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Dr. Ángel Navarro, president of Azierta discusses how the company's strategy of linking science and business has created a consultancy space through which to offer a wide range of healthcare-related services to the worldwide science environment. Additionally, he emphasizes the importance of retaining strong talent in the industry and having a commitment to the society as the backbone of the company and discussed the next footsteps in Azierta's expansion.

What led you to create your own company?

Throughout my entire professional career, I have dedicated my time to the healthcare and life sciences sector. I am unsure as to what the catalyst was that led me to leave the public sector, having trained as a cardiology specialist for 12 years, but it has always been clear to me that life is long and change is good. Following my departure from the hospital, I worked for pharmaceutical companies, in most cases as their scientific or medical director. This engagement in clinical research and medical affairs spanned 18 years. However, after 30 years of significant experience in the healthcare sector, it was time for a new challenge. In 2011, together with my partner Almudena del Castillo, I created Azierta, a consultancy company which offers experience and advice in health and science.

What is the role that Azierta plays in Spain's healthcare sector?

Azierta is a science and health consultancy firm, focused on and committed to building the bridge between science and business, two very important environments in the healthcare sector. We provide services in the field of both medicinal and non-medicinal products, offering end-to-end and all-encompassing support to our clients throughout the entire lifecycle of their products and across the whole value chain.

The company provides a unique offering of expert knowledge in three key areas. Firstly, we offer global scientific solutions throughout the entire life cycle of products, from their development to their placing on the market. Then, there is the industrial scope, giving support to manufacturing and industrial processes, in areas such as toxicology, quality systems and safety. And, last but not least, we are also exploring health management, a new area in which we offer expert consultancy in model designs, optimizing access to innovative products and technologies, whilst at the same time working to design new infrastructures related to health, such as dynamic hospitals and monographic units for patients.

Although the company headquarters are based in Madrid, we also have offices in Barcelona and Bogota, in addition to more than 20 collaborations in the main markets throughout the world, such as Latin America, Asia and most importantly for the company, Europe. In fact, we have over 350 clients worldwide who consider us as consultants of reference, and this highlights our increasingly profound presence in the global industry.

How significant has the growth of Azierta been since its creation seven years ago?

Amazingly, Azierta has undergone an impressive rate of growth over the past three years consecutively, with 2017 seeing more than a 50 percent increase. It is extremely difficult for consultancy companies to continuously maintain high rates of growth, but Azierta has clearly found its place of reference in the Spanish healthcare system. We have experienced considerable growth in the scientific and industrial areas of our business model, and we are now focusing our efforts on strengthening our health management division so that it becomes one of the most important areas for the company in the future.

This exceptional growth is a testament to our commitment to our clients and ultimately to society. We offer quality, an adequate pricing model, and we comply with deadlines. Our clients want and need this. At Azierta, we maintain close relationships with our clients and keep in regular contact with them, and through doing this we continue to demonstrate the value of our talent and expertise.

Furthermore, it is important to train our employees on how they can promote our services and deliver expert all-encompassing solutions, so we can continue to successfully grow and reach new highs. We stand out as a company through our people management, which is key in consulting companies and of course in the healthcare sector. This core company principle has not and will not change throughout our course of business, and so we capitalize on this certainty and engage in hiring and training strong talent.

How do you ensure Azierta retains the best talent in the industry?

Over the past few years, we have seen significant employment growth and we now boast a team of almost 90 professionals. Through our recent establishment of a department solely dedicated to HR, which responds to the need to give support to a multidisciplinary team, we are able to ensure we retain the strong talent we have, mainly through the offering of exceptional financial and professional conditions. It is essential that we reinforce a positive corporate structure and implement different activities and processes to keep our employees happy. In the end, when you have a strong workforce, you have better and more profitable results! Our capital is our people, who are thus essential for our clients.

What do you think have been the main changes in the healthcare sector since the creation of Azierta?

The healthcare and pharmaceutical sector is undergoing significant consolidation and it is generating stable and qualified workers. We are striving to integrate more technology into the services we provide, which is imperative if we are to continue delivering strong results. We have been working on digital and technological initiatives specifically, but not exclusively, in order to give added value to traditional pharmacovigilance services. We are one of the first consultancy companies in Europe to offer the recent necessary shift to new guidelines on adverse reactions reporting put in place by the EMA. The digital transformation of the healthcare sector is a trend we need to pay attention to, as this will revolutionise the whole value chain of the healthcare sector.

Looking towards expansion, what is Azierta’s long-term internationalization strategy?

Although Azierta is well grounded in Spain, and almost 20 percent of our business is coming from Europe, we are in the initial stages of expansion, and we are in the process of setting up our own structure in main European markets. Additionally, we are already working closely with our partners in the area of healthcare management in Latin America. These countries are providing Azierta with good opportunities to increase our visibility on an international scale.

It is essential to consolidate the business through innovation and link our international business plans with short-term opportunities in the industry, amplifying our scientific presence. To successfully expand our international territory, we need to continue to offer added value for money, mainly through the innovative services we offer.

Furthermore, we need to explore the long-term opportunities that the company can capitalize on and increase the value of the services that we can offer whilst incorporating our social responsibilities. If we are successful in navigating all the avenues available, this will enhance our strong company value, attracting the best professionals from different countries that will join us in our venture.

How can you ensure the same quality will be provided to your clients when you are a much bigger global company?

As always, companies need to be open to change to succeed in the future. We will continue to listen closely to our clients and their needs, whilst remaining flexible. Successful companies need to proactively move with emerging market trends and be ready to incorporate innovation into their strategy and services. Azierta will always be prepared for change and for new legal guideline changes.

How has the Azierta foundation helped with your commitment to society?

Our commitment to linking science and business together means the exploration of multiple directions. We want to give scientists a platform from which to present their idea alongside a business plan, and we are now doing this through the foundation. Furthermore, we want to support new and exciting initiatives and projects related to health, sport and wellness. The Azierta Foundation is dedicated to developing these concepts.

The foundation helps remarkably with our commitment to society, which was the fundamental reason behind its creation. It has four core commitments: the generation of knowledge, the dissemination of information to the general public, to train young professionals, and to create a channel through which we can promote our science to business concept. Now is the time for companies to give back to society and create a more sustainable environment.

What makes Azierta the Spanish consulting partner of choice?

Not only in Spain, but also in Europe, we are a unique company, offering end-to-end and all-encompassing support to our clients throughout the entire lifecycle of their products. We are the partner of choice in healthcare management and the life sciences sector because we are flexible and offer outstanding quality and knowledge in the international services that we provide. We aspire to become a worldwide benchmark firm and world-renowned consultants, and we will maintain our commitments to the client and society in order to achieve this goal.

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