

Interview: Dariusz Adamusinski - General Manager, A&D Pharma, Poland



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Dariusz Adamusiński, general manager of A&D Pharma's Polish operations has a busy year ahead. A new warehouse in Poland, partnerships across the pharmaceutical spectrum coupled with new regulations are all positive signs for the company.

Could you introduce A&D Pharma's scope of operations in Poland?

First of all, I would like to highlight that A&D Pharma is not a traditional pharmaceutical company. It is far more complex than it appears at first sight, offering an integrated service across several platforms such as distribution, marketing, sales, pharmaceutical retail and medical services. We do not manage home brands and neither act as a simple distributor but work to provide a vast range of services to our business partners within the pharmaceutical market.

The number of partners with whom we interact evolves every year; nowadays we cooperate with more than 15 business partners from different areas (RX, OTC, cosmetics) based on different cooperation models, including international companies seeking to introduce their brands to the Polish market using our expertise, or those who need support in rebuilding their brands' positioning, or maintaining growth of existing brands. We are proud that some of our partners are within the top 10 pharmaceutical brands in the world, and in many ways, this reflects the prestigious reputation that A&D Pharma has built over the years.

For instance, we work with UCB in a medical marketing capacity for two brands: Xyzal® and Zyrtec®. We have also begun to manage the internationally renowned Compeed® brand from

HRA/J&J company. Amongst others, we collaborate with BMS/UPSA for Fervex® – which is today the brand no 3 in C&F category – and we also started working with Pierre Fabre and P&G within the cosmetic and oral care segments.

I am delighted to announce that this year will mark the first year of our new state of the art warehouse complying to GDP standards, which will be located just outside of Warsaw and containing a huge storage space of 2,000 pallets and a special zone for psychotropic drugs. We intend to establish its daily running in the coming months, and it represents a huge development and a great opportunity to benefit from new EU guideline and local regulations coming into force shortly. Poland is becoming the biggest affiliate of the five that A&D Pharma is managing in the region. Thankfully we have already taken a significant number of steps to ensure that all new systems, such as our Integrated System of Monitoring of Medicinal Products, GDPR, will be in place well before the deadline and any problems are ironed out.

What are the key milestones you have observed in developing A&D Pharma?

The company was established more than 12 years ago, and at the time, the company was primarily present within the food supplements and cosmetics industries—as this was the norm for most pharmaceutical companies back then. We started from scratch and considered that was the easiest way of making an impact on the pharmaceutical market. We have built strongly from this position, narrowing our focus and increasing our expertise in several different fields.

In 2007, we settled with our first business partner, BMS. With BMS, we took over distribution in Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania, and we have been successful in the management of the sales and marketing operations of three key products within their OTC portfolio.

If we fast-forward to 2014-2015, just prior to my arrival, A&D was facing several challenges due to products being brought out of the market, and A&D needed to change its short and long-term strategy. In the first half of 2016, at the precipice of my entry into the company, A&D established a new business model of operations in Poland. I joined the company just before this time and decided to first focus on increasing the numbers of strong business partners, to prioritize the most influential partnerships we have in Poland, while increasing our competences in medical, RX services and dermo-cosmetic areas.

This has been a significant year in terms of expansion for the company. This business strategy was very successful, and as a result Enterol® went up from the sixth position to no.2 on the Probiotics market in only two years and leader in Prescriptions within the segment. We then also began cooperating with Pierre Fabre, B. Braun, and Skincode amongst others, and last year, we signed a substantial contract with Valeant. This clearly shows the success of our strategy.

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What is the strategic importance of A&D Poland to the global operations?

We have a specific niche in Poland for our activities, and our know how is coming directly from the Polish workforce, being our strongest asset. We loan out our expertise and our sales, medical and marketing staff to companies to help establish and promote their brands while helping them develop their brands in our markets. Poland is not an easy market: large multinational companies encounter problems relating to huge number of SKUs, and they may stumble at the prospect of choosing which brand within their large portfolios to promote the most—and what approach to employ. Smaller companies struggle for survival given the vast size of Poland, high costs of entering the pharmaceutical market, the scale of the company's economy—this all requires experience, manpower and investments. A&D Pharma offers all of the necessary elements for companies to succeed.

Poland is a crucial facet of A&D Pharma's global operations, although, the Romanian market remains the most important given its status as the founding country over 20 years ago coupled with the scale of their activities, with our regional headquarters based there. The Polish affiliate will however eventually take the number one spot given the striking potential existing in the market. I can say that exciting time lie ahead. Many other pharma companies are drawn to the potential they see in the Polish market, and we intend to be the premier pharmaceutical and consumer healthcare solution provider in Poland, offering a complete range of services for our current and future partners.

How do you communicate the brand value of A&D Pharma in Poland?

A&D is well-known on the Polish pharmaceutical market as a reliable partner not only in pharmaceuticals including pharmacies, drug stores and pharma wholesalers, but also in the medical environment across the country. One of our strongest points is our ability to deliver what we promised and to be loyal in our cooperation. If we agree to deliver market share to such a level, we then will deliver. This is one of our competitive edge. We are results driven, and strongly based on transparency and effective communication, clearly defined KPIs and we always commit to act with ambition and accountability for creating significant value to our partners. This positioning led us to the successful partnerships we currently have.

What are the advantages to using a sales and marketing organization instead of establishing an affiliate in Poland?

Every company has their specific P&Ls, and if the P&L is in the red, the situation is very simple: the company must either close or slim down the subsidiary, abandon the expansion on the Polish market or withdraw the products from the market, and find other solutions to keep the business afloat.

We have a very experienced sales& marketing team in Poland who can promote various products to the market and deliver results at an affordable service price.

We have established three separate lines of operations to further specialize our offering, providing products in the OTC, Cosmetic and Rx landscapes. In Rx products, we have a few separate lines for gynecology/urology, ophthalmology, dermatology, pediatrics/GPs, and these lines are responsible for the mixture of the products from separate companies. As a result, the salesperson is completely in tune with market trends and analysis.

OTC and Rx products differ wildly in their handling in the Polish market. OTC, with a strong, multifunctional sales force and the right trade marketing tools in pharmacies, it is more straightforward in achieving sales. Whereas in Rx products require high skilled professionals medical staff with strong relationships with healthcare environment.

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What was it that helped you lead the success of the affiliate over the last two years?

I have lots of experience in different markets which assists me in navigating in challenges I see. I used to work in the mass market, which is why I organized our OTC unit here to take on a hybrid model. I came up with solutions in all areas: category management, merchandising, KPI of sales/distribution with day by day monitoring as well as some elements from the pharmaceutical business and the excellent substantive medical preparation of sales representatives – to create successful relationships between both parties, sales representative and client. Right targeting of the client, a deep analysis of IQVIA data and other key learnings from my previous job in medical teams means I was able to manage the sales team effectively.

What are the strategic priorities for A&D Pharma over the next three years?

We are currently reacting to the market challenges we are facing and will strengthen our brand position across all markets, notably Poland.

Lately, we are navigating a turbulent time, with the arrival of new regulations and new operational strategies.

Our ambition is to strengthen our position in the RX market in other therapeutic areas such as CNS and cardiology, while looking to enter new areas, and we strongly attempt to enhance our offer aimed to lucrative but demanding drug store market with players as Rossmann, HEBE, and Super-Pharm.

Finally, for me, the staff and their behavior at work are the most important aspects of longer-term growth strategies. Their knowledge to efficiently manage brands for our partners and the effective human resources represent our strong know how and assets. Financially, speaking, it is unwise to have a high turnover of staff, although I take pride in ensuring that the teams working up and down the country are consistently challenged, motivated and inspired to work in a fast-paced, dynamic and exciting sales and marketing company.

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