

Ingrid Šmerdová - General Manager, Adamed Czech Republic and Slovakia



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Ingrid Šmerdová, General Manager of Adamed in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, shares her thoughts about the role their future product pipeline will have in continuing to build the company's growth within the Czech generics market. Moreover, Šmerdová portrays Adamed's family-oriented approach as a key differentiator within the pharmaceutical industry and shares how the difficulties she encounters in the health environment keep challenging and shaping her as a long-standing professional in the generics landscape.

Ingrid, can you start by introducing Adamed's position in the Czech Republic?

Let me start by introducing the Adamed company globally.

Adamed is an international company with global reach and more than 30 years of experience on the market and nearly 20 years of experience in managing its own scientific and research projects. Our company was founded and managed by medical doctors and we have been putting the patients' benefit and the highest quality of our products in the first place since the beginning. In 2016, Adamed opened its representative office in Czech and introduced its unique approach to the

Czech market.

Adamed currently employs more than 2,200 people. We produce over 500 products in 19 therapeutic areas, including cardiology, urology, pulmonology and gynecology, in two factories. Our products are available to patients on 6 continents, in 70 countries around the world, and are always associated with the highest quality and innovation. Adamed has nine foreign offices - in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Spain, Russia, Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine and Italy.

Is the development of innovativeness one of your biggest challenges?

Our mission is to respond to the key challenges of modern medicine. We started working on innovative medications as early as 2001 and, so far, we have spent almost 350 million euros on investments as well as scientific and research activities. At Adamed, we know that innovations can be not only in the form of new molecules, but also products that are improved compared to the original medication, for example by prolonging the effect time or by a new way of administration, such as chewable tablets or tablets that stick to the oral cavity. We currently have dozens of molecules in our drug development portfolio that are in the developmental phase. Most of them are medications with so-called added value. We are also working on original medications in two therapeutic areas: oncology and central nervous system diseases. They are entirely innovative medications, not biosimilar drugs, i.e. those that mimic the mechanism of effect of products that are already available on the market. To date, the company owns almost 200 registered patents all over the world.

What is your motivation behind joining Adamed and what do you hope to achieve as General Manager for the Czech Republic and Slovakia?

I have extensive knowledge in the generics segment, which I acquired whilst working for Teva, Valeant and Polpharma, companies that I managed to lead to success in terms of sales and pricing.

The idea is to sum up all those experiences and lessons to implement them here at Adamed, where an exciting challenge awaits considering how dynamic the company is, but also how young the Czech Republic and Slovakia markets are. There is a tight relationship between affiliates internationally, which gives me the chance to learn from my peers in the countries I mentioned.

I want to grow Adamed from both a branding and portfolio perspective. Those areas where we are already strong need to stay so and become even stronger to keep the market share high. The ultimate goal is to bring new possibilities of treatment to Czech patients and the whole healthcare environment, to cooperate with doctors and add value to their work.

You have extensive experience in the pharmaceutical industry and a deep understanding of the Czech healthcare landscape. What keeps you feeling challenged in your role as General Manager?

The health environment is complex and ever-changing, and much more so than 30 years ago when I first started in the industry. There are new laws, legislation and challenges every month that one needs to react and adjust to, keeping in mind the company's ethics: at Adamed, we are a socially responsible business. Every time we as a company faced challenges, what encouraged us to keep pushing was the added value we knew we could provide for the Czech Republic's patients and the healthcare system. For instance, we faced difficulties receiving approval for the reimbursement of one of our significant products for several years and through perseverance finally obtained it this year.

Our scientific ideas and research projects are aimed at making modern therapies available to patients. It is crucial to keep in mind that there is space for many drugs on the market, and that, if there is a possibility to treat patients for less money, this avenue needs to be pursued.

How would you describe Adamed's footprint in the country and what does the success of Adamed mainly rely on?

All Adamed's products belong to one family - they share a common origin, high quality and strictest safety standards. They arise out of a deep concern to meet the diverse needs of all family members and a sense of responsibility for their health. That is why they deserve the highest degree of trust.

Portfolio management, from my point of view, is the most important factor to build and move the company step by step to a higher ranking. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, we follow the same strategy: this is the road to success in both markets.

We are mainly present in the Rx segment, which accounts for 98 percent of the business in the Czech Republic. We have a broad portfolio in the therapeutic areas of urology, gynecology and cardiology. Moreover, our strongest growth driver is in the area of urology.

How does Adamed differentiate itself from the local players?

Adamed is run under strong values, similar to large family-owned businesses which have been successful for decades such as Fiat, Roche and L'Oréal.

This, I believe, makes a huge difference to differentiate yourself successfully among big pharmaceutical companies. The way forward is backed by an ethical strategy that takes people into consideration. Here in the Czech Republic, we want to follow the example of our headquarters in Poland by supporting our team, and giving them impactful projects to work on. In Adamed, family holds special significance. In the family, everyone is equally important, its members take care of each other and share responsibility - we do follow this principle.

Moving forward, our new pipeline will be a vital driver to differentiate the company locally and globally.

On a more personal note, how would you describe your management style and how has it shifted over the years?

While the experiences I have accumulated throughout my career have certainly influenced me, I am the same person I was when I first put foot in this industry that I love. I studied clinical pharmacology and truly enjoy my job.

I am goal-oriented and an expressive leader, which is clearly reflected in my management style. People usually perceive and receive my energy and my nature does not allow me to sit idle. When I believe in a cause and its viability, nothing can stop me. When speaking to the team I always try to make them feel my emotions. In this position, you have to be able to motivate yourself and others, and to know what you want to achieve.

My advice for all those who want to strive in this business is to remain passionate and to let your mistakes shape you. Experience is key!

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