

Ana Ferreira – General Manager, STADA Portugal



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Ana Ferreira highlights how the twin factors of people and time have shaped her leadership approach, how she is navigating the challenging generic medicines landscape in Portugal, and why STADA has chosen to put a strategic focus on biosimilars and sustainability.

Can you begin by outlining your professional journey and the pivotal moments that led you to your current role as the General Manager of STADA Portugal?

I began my journey in the pharmaceutical industry with Generis, where I dedicated 19 years of my professional life. The pharmaceutical landscape is continuously changing, and this offers constant challenges and opportunities. During my journey with Generis, I found myself from time to time, developing into new responsibilities and new roles, which not only kept things interesting but also contributed to my personal and professional growth.

Starting as a family-owned company, Generis was founded in 2002 yet underwent significant transformations during my tenure. Later on, it transitioned into a private entity, leading to a substantial shift in its dynamics. Further changes occurred in 2017 when Generis was acquired by the Aurobindo group. These shifts, from family-owned to private equity and then acquisition,

provided me with a wealth of experiences without changing my professional settings.

In April 2022, a new chapter began as I embraced the role of General Manager at STADA. The shift brought with it a fresh set of challenges and responsibilities, starting a new and exciting stage in my career journey and also personal growth.

Upon discovering STADA, what prompted your decision to join the company, and what role did you assume upon entering the organization?

I had been aware of STADA's presence in the market since 2005. The turning point came around 2017 when Peter Goldschmidt took charge as CEO, bringing a new dynamic growth culture and an entrepreneurial mindset to STADA, shaping its trends and DNA. This was when I heard about the new brands entering STADA's portfolio, which was gaining visibility in the Portuguese market.

In 2005 STADA acquired Ciclum Farma, a purely generics company with a small market share in Portugal. Down the line, around 2018, STADA started acquiring new brands through M&A, breathing new life into those that were declining in the Portuguese market. Witnessing this transformation sparked my interest in the company.

When STADA contacted me, I was curious about their plans for Portugal. After discussing with the company, my decision to join the team was an easy one, especially considering STADA's diverse portfolio across three pillars: generics, specialty medicines, and consumer healthcare products. In 2022, many people were unaware of STADA's specialty portfolio. As I entered the organization, my priority was to lead the alignment of STADA in Portugal with the broader culture of the STADA group. Furthermore, across the affiliate, we aimed to continue building on STADA's purpose – caring for people's health as a trusted partner.

Today, STADA continues to grow across all three portfolios with sustainability at our core. We have a long-term strategy focused on maintaining a robust pipeline for generics, specialty medicines, and consumer healthcare products. Ensuring that all our relevant stakeholders are aware of our mission and future ambition for each pillar, is crucial for us. This commitment reflects our dedication to being a trusted and sustainable presence in the Portuguese market.

As the newly appointed General Manager of STADA Portugal in 2022, what specific objectives or directives were handed to you, and how have you steered the company in light of this mandate?

The emphasis was on embodying the values of being a trusted partner for patients and prioritizing people's health. Our mission, supported by core values of agility, entrepreneurship, integrity, and the principle of One STADA, underscored the collective commitment to the company's overarching purpose. The notion of One STADA emphasizes that the company's interests supersede individual or affiliate interests, uniting us in a common purpose focused on the company, the group, the patients, and our corporate mission.

The full integration into STADA's dynamic and entrepreneurial culture, particularly marked by agility, was a process that gained momentum at the group level in 2017. Portugal, in comparison, needed to catch up with these mindsets. The strategic focus and priorities handed to me were clear – aligning the regional operations and the affiliate's mindset with the broader STADA culture, ensuring a harmonious integration of Portugal into the group's ethos. This alignment extended

across various aspects, including results, strategies, and, critically, the cultural mindset of the Portuguese affiliate.

Reflecting on your first year in role, could you highlight some of the leadership lessons that have shaped your approach within the organization?

The most crucial lesson that shaped my approach is centred around people. From day one, I realized the paramount importance of individuals, not just externally with patients but equally within our team. It's an understanding that extends beyond the workplace to the families of our team members because, in caring for our team, we are inherently responsible for the well-being of their families. I firmly believe that personal and professional lives are intertwined – we don't leave our personal concerns outside the office, just as we don't leave work concerns behind when we go home. This realization made me accountable for the entire cluster of responsibilities that each person carries in their lives.

Another significant lesson revolves around time. While the concept of work-life balance is often considered a cliché, the essence of balance, particularly regarding time for ourselves and others, became profoundly important. It goes beyond just a division of hours; it's about understanding that we all operate at different paces. Some individuals require more time to establish trust. Acknowledging and respecting these differences became one of my most valuable lessons. Time has become a central element in fostering a work environment where everyone can thrive at their own pace.

How would you characterize the current landscape for generic medicines in Portugal?

The current landscape for generic medicines in Portugal is notably challenging. On one hand, as patents expire, there is the potential for increased access to patients with the launch of new generic medicines. This provides equilibrium in the market due to the pipeline of generic medicines that will launch in the current year. However, on the flip side, Portugal poses significant challenges related to pricing, reimbursement, legislation, and intense competition. This creates substantial pressure in terms of operational costs and supplies.

Navigating this landscape requires substantial investments. These investments become crucial not only for meeting market demand, patients, and authorities but also for complying with the regulatory landscape and, at the same time, sustaining competitiveness in the pharmaceutical industry.

In essence, the landscape is challenging and places considerable pressure on all stakeholders, particularly within the pharmaceutical industry. The dynamics of pricing, competition, and regulatory demands make it imperative for companies to strategically invest and adapt to the evolving market scenario.

Given the rising significance of biosimilars in the generic pharmaceutical arena, does STADA incorporate these medicines into its current strategic framework?

Biosimilars hold substantial importance in the industry and offer enhanced access to complex treatments and improve the quality of life for patients. They not only provide better access but also contribute to savings in the national health system. Therefore, they are a crucial focus for STADA,

both as a group and specifically for our affiliate.

Over the past few years, STADA has demonstrated ambition in the biosimilar space through launches and a robust pipeline. This aligns directly with our purpose, emphasizing equal access for patients and substantial savings for the National Health System. Along with therapeutic access being a primary focus area, it's paramount for the industry to operate in a sustainable ecosystem. Looking ahead to 2024, financial and environmental challenges represent a significant impact in the rising costs of production, that will highly compromise areas such as biosimilars.

Historically, Iberian operations have been centralized in Spain. With the recent trend of establishing local affiliates in Portugal, could you shed light on the progress of STADA's local operations here and how it compares to the broader European landscape within the company?

I am proud to say we are experiencing a strong performance. Our strategy from 2020 to 2023 was centred on enhancing STADA's visibility among stakeholders, showcasing our long-term pipeline and the culture that defines both STADA as a group and its affiliates, including here in Portugal. The recognition we've been receiving from our stakeholders has helped catalyze this success and indicates that STADA is establishing itself as a reliable partner committed to staying in the market.

Moreover, we're expanding as a team, making strategic investments to foster internal growth. Currently, we have around 40 team members, and we're further increasing our commercial team for 2024. Our ambition is to draw closer to our partners, ensuring a more responsive and superior service for our customers.

In comparison to other markets, we acknowledge that we're a relatively small affiliate within the broader group. However, our growth trajectory is robust, consistently reaching double digits. Despite our size, we're proud of our healthy and steady growth, and this remains a key ambition for us as we move forward into 2024.

As we approach the end of 2023, what are the key objectives you aim to achieve in the coming year for STADA Portugal?

Our primary goal for the upcoming year is to continue driving sustainable growth while maintaining our entrepreneurial strategy while not losing sight of our other objectives. This includes our commitment to advancing health literacy, a focus area since 2022. We've actively contributed through initiatives like the STADA health report and tools provided to the market.

Importantly, we remain aligned with the World Health Organization's objectives, particularly in the realm of promoting good health and well-being. Furthermore, our dedication to ESG targets is evident in the publication of our ESG reports for the third year.

It is our ambition to give visibility to these efforts, not just to patients but to all stakeholders. Additionally, we recognize the value of this qualitative work, a legacy carried forward from STADA's efforts even before my tenure, which has garnered significant recognition from our stakeholders.

Looking ahead over the next five years, what is your vision for leading the affiliate, and what milestones do you hope to accomplish in further advancing STADA's presence and impact in Portugal?

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