

Interview: Guillaume Corpart Founder & Managing Director, Global Health Intelligence, Mexico



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The founder and Managing Director of Global Health Intelligence (GHI), Guillaume Corpart highlights the value of competitive intelligence for medical device companies looking to either enter emerging healthcare markets in Latin America and Asia or identify new market opportunities.

As an introduction for our readers, Guillaume, could you elaborate on the factors that motivated you to establish Global Health Intelligence (GHI) in 2014?

I've been doing market intelligence for almost 20 years. I started my career here in Mexico in 2001 when I was working for a company called InfoAmericas. InfoAmericas was the first company to professionalize market and competitive intelligence on a regional basis. InfoAmericas was sold to the global risk mitigation company Kroll in 2007. During this time, I have always focused on the healthcare sector and noted the lack of information available to medical device and equipment manufacturers. I left Kroll in 2011 to found Americas Market Intelligence.

In 2013 a client approached me to build a database of all the hospitals in Brazil. After completing this database, we were then asked to do the same for Mexico, and then Colombia, and so on across the rest of the region; these databases effectively comprised the roots of GHI.

In 2014 we launched the unique healthcare division called Global Health Intelligence. We've dedicated our focus to both Latin America and Asia, with the former serving as the company's most advanced division in terms of healthcare and hospital demographics.

GHI divides its services portfolio into three main areas: hospital demographics, market size / market share, and tailored research. Could you expand on how GHI is helping its clients understand the competitive landscape and identify opportunities through such services?

It is important to note that we have created the largest hospital database in the world, focused on Latin America. As such, we are able to take detailed information and integrate it into our clients' CRMs. This enables clients to gain visibility beyond their key accounts and actually identify clear market opportunities that would've been otherwise ambiguous. For instance, companies such as GE Healthcare, Johnson&Johnson, and Olympus use our comprehensive hospital profiles to conduct propensity analyses, generate new business development leads, and ultimately expand their reach. To put things in perspective, there are approximately 18,000 hospitals in Latin America, and we've profiled just about 15,000 of them or 83 percent of the region. No one has more data on hospitals in Latin America than we do.

The second business line is market sizing and market share analysis. On the pharma side, there's a plethora of data available, particularly through players such as QuintilesIMS. On the device side, however, data is scarce. But with our repertoire of datasets, we're able to determine the market size, and by doing so, we're able to prospect the opportunities for our clients; this allows them to understand who has what share of the market and which segments are still relatively underpenetrated.

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The last segment is tailored research, in which we strive to obtain answers to complex questions that our clients may have. For instance, we can compile research that will help our clients understand if there's actually a need in the market for a certain product or how key opinion leaders might perceive it.

In terms of weight, our portfolio is balanced evenly across these three segments.

GHI provides groundbreaking and accurate information about healthcare infrastructure in developing countries. However, such territories are quite dynamic and, consequently, obtaining information in emerging markets is harder than in developed countries. What has been your strategy to overcome this challenge and ensure the success of the company?

There are roughly 100,000 hospitals in the world, of which, approximately 75 percent are located in emerging markets. There are two distinct challenges that few companies have managed to surmount when looking to collect data in emerging markets - the scarcity of elemental data and scale of the research efforts required. That's exactly where GHI comes in.

Aside from the time and resources that we've poured into compiling our databases, we've also implemented a multitude of quality assurance measures to ensure the completeness and accuracy of our data. In the case of Latin America, we started by gathering publicly available data - the little that there was and the poor shape that it was in. We then had to verify the data, validate it, and more importantly fill in the gaps. We learned that quality control measures were essential, but that even with these in place our database would remain far from perfect. Even with its imperfections, our database remains the principal reference for hospital infrastructure in Latin America. As the old adage goes: 80 percent of something is much better than 100 percent of nothing.

What significance does the Mexican market serve in the context of your Latin American operations?

The majority of our business in Latin America directly linked to Brazil and Mexico—the region’s first and second largest healthcare markets respectively.

Interestingly enough, with the addition of Colombia and Argentina, these four countries alone account for approximately 80 percent of the region’s hospitals. What makes Mexico unique is the fact that the country has plethora of public dependencies including the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS), the Government Workers’ Social Security and Services Institute (ISSSTE), the Mexican State-owned petroleum company (PEMEX), the Ministry of National Defense (SEDENA), and the Ministry of the Navy (SEMAR), amongst others.

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Consequently, Mexico’s healthcare system is extremely fragmented, with no standardization or uniformity. We’re only starting to talk about patient interoperability—a huge area of opportunity for Mexico.

What would you identify as the most pervasive trends in Mexico’s healthcare sector?

One of the major trends that we’re seeing is how private healthcare coverage is changing in Mexico. Currently, approximately seven percent of the population’s socio-economic segments A and B is privately insured. The remaining 93 percent are covered under public sector insurance. With a growing middle class, however, we’re starting to see people actually get fed up with the extended wait times for medical consultations, thus prompting a gradual migration towards private insurance. Consequently, there’s now a huge expansion of small, private, highly specialized clinics, as well as diagnostic centers appearing throughout the country.

Another impressive trend in Mexico is the degree of medical tourism; we’re talking about 1.4 million people that cross the border from the US to get treatment. In doing so, these patients save an average of 50 percent on their treatment and receive a comparable level of quality.

Looking at your product portfolio it seems your biggest footprint is within the medical devices segment. Are you considering expanding to other healthcare segments such as pharma?

Probably not. We don’t want to rub shoulders with the giants in an industry segment that’s already well covered. We don’t really have any direct competitors in our space, so we want to continue capitalizing on our first-mover advantage and maintain our dominance in this area.

How is GHI applying technology in order to improve the firm’s service in terms of response times and more accurate data?

There are two fronts on that: how technology improves our internal processes and how technology improves our deliverables to our clients.

On the process side, technology certainly helps us when it comes to data gathering, quality control, validation, and getting better estimates of entire market potential.

Clients see that indirectly through the quality and accuracy of our data. But where technology directly impacts them is when it comes to delivery times. We now have an online portal where customers can access data 24/7, apply filters on our pre-set dashboard, and also download datasets for offline use. This makes their life considerably easier.

How does your strategy differ when shifting the focus from Latin America to Asia?

In Asia, our business is a lot more research driven, as opposed to the equally weighted portfolio that we have here in Latin America. The reason for that is because there are so many hospitals in Asia. For example, in India alone, there are roughly 10,000 hospitals that's almost equivalent to doing another database for both Mexico and Brazil. And in China, there are approximately 23,000 hospitals! So, the risks are tremendous, specifically given the sheer volume of Asia.

What are the key competitive advantages that truly differentiate GHI from any of its global and regional competitors?

Firstly, we have data that nobody else has, giving us a natural competitive advantage over some of the companies that may operate in our field.

Secondly, our methodologies are very robust, which our clients have been continually impressed by.

Thirdly, we're extremely responsive and timely. Even though I'm the founder of the company, I will always respond quickly to the people that write to me. And that's just how we do business—a mindset that permeates through all of our staff members.

How has your strategic partnership with ATOM fueled the company's growth?

ATOM is part of Florida International University (FIU), and they've been instrumental in designing the entire technological workflow behind what we do. On top of that foundation, we then were able to incorporate both a data input module and data visualization module.

What would you highlight as the company's biggest milestone to date?

I would consider our biggest accomplishment to be our database, and how we've managed to turn the database into a whole process encompassing a call center here in Mexico, data validation, quality control and dashboard publications for online viewing. Clients can leverage this data to identify market opportunities and grow their businesses.

Our ultimate aim is to have companies use our data as a tool to make better decisions, effectively changing the very core of how medtech companies work and operate; I believe we've made steadfast progress in this regard.

What are the main objectives that you would like to achieve in the upcoming three years?

The main objective for us is taking our database and generating more value out of it. Right now, our commercial strategies have been very data driven, which is essential in such a data-scarce market. But, I'd like to see ourselves push the bar even further and become a strategic partner for our clients and their success.

Another big objective would be to increase our penetration of the medical device space. We have a lot of good clients in that space, but I'm sure we can double or even triple that customer base without facing any real competitive pressures. All the while, we will continue to encourage all of our clients to truly integrate the data into their own processes whether that's a CRM or any other internal reporting tool.

Leveraging your experience covering the region's healthcare systems thus far, how do you see the healthcare ecosystem in both Mexico and Latin America evolving from this point forward?

Spanning the healthcare space, I see a lot of nascent processes being put in place, mostly within the growing implementation of electronic medical records and presence of integrated medical data.

Improving the overall efficiency of hospital systemsâ??instead of building more hospitalsâ??is where I believe we need to go in the region, especially here in Mexico where hospitals have on average 25 beds, compared to 74 in Europe.

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