

Interview: Mariella Soto Country Manager, QuintilesIMS Colombia



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Mariella Soto, QuintilesIMS's country manager for Colombia, has been working in the pharmaceutical-related industry for over 25 years. She explains how her previous experience as a pharmaceutical executive is helping her to develop customer-focused services with QuintilesIMS and the company's latest innovations in data mining and analysis.

You have a long working history at Eli Lilly. What was your assigned mission when joining QuintilesIMS and what priorities have you set out to address?

Coming from the pharmaceutical industry, I was familiar with being a QuintilesIMS customer. I was very keen on improving IMS's services drawing from my experience as a customer. When I arrived, the company was in a transition phase. Indeed, in 2015 IMS acquired CEGEDIM (service provider company) and merged a year later, in 2016, with Quintiles. I was very enthusiastic discovering the whole range of services and the development such changes could bring to the companies. It was only when joining QuintilesIMS that I realised how broad the range of services offered was. As Country manager for Colombia, my mission was to transform the affiliate and strengthen its position within the region. Colombia is now the third most important market for QuintilesIMS in the region after Mexico and Brazil and offers many strategic opportunities. The country's environment is a good match for highly specialised medical products and in addition, it provides good healthcare for citizens. There's no doubt, QuintilesIMS can offer many tools to clients in this market for two reasons. First, the market is changing, and evolving towards a developed market. Second, the Government is constructing a framework to make the system financially sustainable and requires companies to move with this direction in mind.

What was the impact of Quintiles and IMS's merger for the Colombian affiliate?

This match should help our companies have a better local impact. From the commercial point of view, Quintiles and IMS are a good fit. Both are in a position to share insights, which will improve each other's businesses. We will now proactively work closely with local or international companies to solve local problems. For example, Quintiles will benefit from market data to improve the efficiency of its clinical trials. IMS's consulting services on the other hand will benefit from Quintiles's real-world facts. In the case of Colombia, Quintiles was a corporately driven organisation and will now operate in a local manner. We were a company aiming to help develop their clinical plan, and this clinical plan required a number of patients to be included in their clinical trials in each country including Colombia. The reason finding the right places, the investigators and patients was challenging and therefore, with IMS's data, Quintiles is now able to accelerate its processes, hence helping patients and systems to get clinical solutions faster.

Could you give us an introduction into QuintilesIMS Colombia? Which solutions and services do you see driving growth in future?

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We have five major areas of services. Information used to be the main revenue generator and still represents around 55 percent of our business. Consumer health is a new area that we started in 2015 thanks to an agreement with Nielsen. This segment along with consulting is expected to be a growth driver. Our consulting team is highly skilled and offers its clients a chance to be very successful in Colombia. The fourth area is technology, which is focused on providing technologic platforms, to allow companies to access and understand data in a more efficient way. Indeed, the data available is so important nowadays, it's necessary to have a clear view on information to draw the right conclusions. The last area is also part of technology but can be considered separately. It offers similar services directed to Omni-channel market data. The CRM, digital market strategy support offered can help companies be more efficient. We've also made sure that Quintiles's real-world insights have been integrated to the channel.

What products have you launched recently, are there any you intend to launch in the coming months?

This year we're launching a prescription data channel. This product complies with all Habeas data law requirements (fundamental rights to privacy) while giving precise insights to our clients. This has been available in most of the Latin American countries since this year. Many customers using the service have already expressed their satisfaction. I think this product is pretty unique. With help of our technology area, you can gather everything together on the dashboard, which gives you an edge over competition. If you don't measure it, it's challenging to improve.

We have developed a non-retail channel tool, which is about to be launched; in terms of value for our customers it's very important since institutional represents 55% of the market. This is a solution based on the institutional level which can provide detailed regional or local data. This granularity will give companies more depth to make the right strategic decisions. We are also doing a stakeholder mapping to help decision makers and business developers find the right path to do business with.

QuintileIMS has achieved more than two million USD in revenues this quarter, aiming to reach above ten million USD this year. How has the Colombian affiliate been performing and what is your growth target for 2017?

We expect to grow nine percent this year, compared to 19 percent in 2016. Last year, QuintilesIMS entered the consumer health business, which drove phenomenal growth. Nonetheless, this was not

the only performance factor. We are confident the year will end with positive results.

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What kind of partners are you looking for to position yourself as a leading healthcare technology service provider?

We obviously want to develop our digital scope of activities and the management is heavily focusing on training. This will affect the approach we have towards our customers on the digital side.

What is your action plan to ensure the strong performance of the company moving forward?

Execution is key. We are closely following-up on our offering of integrated solutions. We review periodically what is coming in the future and make plans to understand what customers are expecting. I'm very passionate about customer service because most of the decisions are based on the type of service that you offer rather than on economic decisions. In the past, we were alone in the market, now that competition is coming we have to readjust our services, but I'm confident competition will be beneficial. Our customer will have better service, and QuintilesIMS will drive innovation faster.

Looking forward, what will be the next steps in terms of growing the business? What type of opportunities are you looking for and what is your vision for the future of QuintileIMS?

On the institutional side, there are still a lot of needs, especially as new requirements will come into place for the registration of new drugs. IETS will improve the registration process for more efficiency in the system. Undoubtedly, our customers will need real world insights for local research. This is the area that will heavily develop moving forward. QuintilesIMS is also looking forward to further develop solutions for our consumer healthcare business, where I see a lot of growth coming from.

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