

Interview: Patricia LÃ³pez â?? General Manager, seca Mexico



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Patricia LÃ³pez, general manager at seca Mexico, showcases the added value of secaâ??s product portfolio and explains that interconnectivity should be medical devicesâ?? path of development; generating benefits for patients, physicians and government.

Could you please update our international readers on the operations of seca in Mexico?

seca is a German company with more than 175 years of experience in the health sector and positioned as the worldâ??s market leader of measuring systems for weight and height since 1840. It is important to consider that all secaâ??s medical devices are developed and certified based on scientific validations.

One of our best assets is our long-term experience that enables us to predict the industry trends that may arise in the future. In this sense, we are continuously developing our product portfolio targeted to the current and future needs of the healthcare sector. Indeed, we are no longer only a hardware manufacturer but also a software provider. Most of our devices are connected between them exchanging patientâ??s data and transmit them directly to the EMR. Furthermore these connected

devices translate pure numbers into useful information that helps health practitioners to determine the better treatment considering the patient's metabolism.

In addition, we enjoy very close relationship with our customers and international health institutions such as WHO and Unicef in order gather all their insights to fully tailor our devices to their needs. For this reason, we are in constant contact with our different target groups in medical practice, clinics, nursing homes or rehabilitation centers. Since the needs of our target groups are very different accordingly to the objective pursued with the device, we have specialized colleagues in our team that can talk to these target groups on eye level.

Looking at your figures it seems that the results speak for themselves, being positioned as the leader in medical measurement systems and scales niche with a strong footprint in the Mexican public market. Furthermore, Mexico's positive results empowered seca to open Brazil and Colombia affiliates. What has been your strategy to ensure such success considering the dynamism of the industry?

Part of our success can be attributed to our long-standing global expertise that has been driving our local strategic decisions in Mexico. As aforesaid, our predictive and forward-looking attitude empowers us to develop medical products that offer support for handling the medical challenges of the 21st century. We do not only deal with the dynamism of the industry, we contribute to shape it. This is the main driver of our operations here and certainly has significantly contributed to our prosperity.

What is the role of the Mexican affiliate within the regional and global strategy?

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Latin America has drastically increased its demand for health products and Mexico is positively open to receive any innovation coming from other countries. This allows us to introduce state of the art medical devices and equipment that create competitive advantages in Mexico in terms of health quality in comparison to the rest of the countries within the region.

Thus, Mexico is considered as the country of reference in Latin America and, therefore, our affiliates in Brazil and Colombia implement the best practices developed in Mexico.

In addition, Mexico has a population of around 120 million and is the second most populous country in Latin America, after Brazil. It seems obvious to think about the big business potential ahead in terms of market. However, market access is a national burden and we are highly committed to bring the best solutions to the Mexican population helping the government to overcome such challenge.

One of the things that we are most proud of in seca Mexico is our strong researchers and scientists network and community. They use our products and they are the best prescribers when they go to regional conferences showcasing their latest discoveries based on seca's technology. Furthermore, we share the entire information that we gather through our devices with health professionals and public institutions such as Cofepris to help them understand the Mexican diseases' trends.

Hence, the Mexican affiliate is strongly contributing to the process of standardizing the patterns of measurement within all Latin America through generating the best practices and fostering the exchange of information between physicians, companies and public institutions.

seca's product portfolio can be used to target many different needs such as pediatric, general medicine, cardiology and internal medicine. What is your breakdown per business

line and where do you foresee more growth?

seca Mexico is quite focused on three huge national health subjects: prevention, cardiovascular and oncology.

Prevention is an enormous challenge here in Mexico and it could generate important benefits both for patients and government by increasing the quality of life of Mexicans as well as reducing the cost of treatment. Therefore, we consider that prevention is an interesting market to develop in this regard and we are strongly investing in promoting prevention through our devices.

In this sense, we are currently participating in all the health campaigns that the government is carrying out to promote prevention amongst the Mexican population. Through such events, we are educating the Mexican population about the importance of having a healthier lifestyle through providing the proper information supported by high-end technology.

Prevention practices would ensure the early detection of national epidemic diseases such as obesity, diabetes and cardio metabolic syndromes. The footprint of the aforementioned diseases is continuously growing and the government will not have enough resources to cope with the future patients' demands. Prevention looks to be the path of development to minimize the impact of such diseases thanks to the early identification and seca can contribute helping the doctors from the weight management point of view.

In the oncology area, we are helping the health professionals to predict the reaction of the patient's cells to the cancer treatments such as radiotherapy or chemotherapy by doing body composition analysis. Such contribution will ensure that patients will receive the best solution according to their metabolism.

With such approach, we are being more than just an equipment provider and I can say that 90 percent of public and private hospitals are using at least one of our products.

How do you approach the public and the private market with your products?

Our strategy is totally different when addressing the public or the private market. However, most of the doctors that work in the private hospitals are also working in public institutions. Public market represents the strongest portion of our mix of revenues and doctors that are working in both public and private institutions request our products when they are working in private hospitals. We are building up a standard across all different health institutions and doctors really appreciate our added value since we help them to undertake faster and better decisions.

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Considering that you are closely working with public institutions such as IMSS and ISSSTE; and the fact that the government has recently announced budget cuts in the healthcare expenditure for 2017. What is your action plan to overcome such challenge?

Our products really help the government to minimize the future cost of treatment and physicians should see our products as a standard across all the health institutions. Nevertheless, we have perceived that public institutions are leveraging on private companies to cover more patients and avoid large investments in equipment. We are fully aware of such trend and we are adapting our business model to cope with that. Indeed, we are starting to provide our medical devices to public hospitals through these outsourcing equipment companies.

We have perceived in the medtech industry that technology is breaking the boundaries in terms of market access through digitalization. As the leader in your niche, what are your conclusions on that and how is this translated into measurement systems and scales market?

We anticipated such trend and we already developed connectivity capabilities in our devices. Now, I am proud to confirm that nearly all our solutions are developed in this area.

We believe that connectivity is going to be turnkey in medical devices since it will save time, provide precision and ensure security of the data. Through our devices, we provide a functioning network of products with a wide variety of applications and automatic data transmission capabilities. Saving time and avoiding any error in measurements and documentation are top benefits that our products can offer to the health professionals.

In addition, we help doctors through digital capabilities in measurement and scale systems to have remote and continuous tracking that ensures the prevention as well as the early identification of any disease that may be suffering the patient.

We are already implementing connectivity solutions in some public institutions; we are highly satisfied of the results obtained so far. Nonetheless, there is a big challenge in the implementation of such solution in the mass public health institutions such as with Seguro Popular because of the lack of readiness in terms of technology infrastructure for such solutions in many clinics.

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

I want to continue strengthening our positioning in Mexico supporting the public health strategies to help the government to overcome the national diseases burdens such as obesity, cardio metabolic syndrome, diabetes and oncology. As leaders in the niche, seca is the best partner for developing and providing medical measurement systems, software, connectivity and services. We provide solutions for the needs of the present and the future.

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