

Interview: Paweł Mazur East Area Director, Accord Healthcare, Poland



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As east area director for the vast CEE market, Paweł Mazur explains how Accord Healthcare has gone from strength to strength in Poland, with the intention of becoming a top five generics company in the country by 2021. He also touches on the importance of a high-performing team, the exciting new changes within European operations and opportunities in the OTC market.

What is the scope of Accord Healthcare Poland’s operations?

Poland was the first market for Accord within Eastern Europe, and the Romanian and Czech entities were established later in 2015. The first operation began with five staff and the core of our business focused on providing hospital solutions and building a comprehensive portfolio in this sector.

Our success in the region is explained by our focus on portfolio optimisation and the commitment and dedication of our high-performing teams whose passion has achieved significant growth over the years. When I joined Accord in 2014, we had hit one million Euro revenues, and we have managed to maintain strong increase of at least 100% each year. This year we are delighted to announce we will exceed 22 million Euro and the financial year 2018/19 will bring more than 45 million Euro on current projections.

Accord Poland are the fastest-growing generic company based on IMS data, in the Polish pharmaceutical market for hospital and retail products. 2018 is an exciting time for Accord as we continue to add to our customer offering by the roll out of our new OTC products. I am exceptionally proud to be part of such a dynamic, fast-growing company that continues to outperform expectations by delivering significant growth.

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Fundamental to creating the growth of our company is the culture. Strong internal culture has enabled Accord to draw upon the talent that have made us the formidable company we are today in order to face the future. We believe in creating a culture that achieves with our behaviours of challenge, connect and commit, these behaviours underpin all our work; our people are at the very heart of what we do.

To what extent is Accord's global portfolio reflected in Poland?

In 2017, Accord delivered roughly 6,000 products across Europe and in Poland we have launched more than 100 molecules in the last three years and 340 SKUs. We pride ourselves on our success of Day 1 launches, and a large part of this success is reflected in the fact that we continue to deliver accessible and affordable medicines to people that need them across our region.

Each year, we launch a significant number of molecules to ensure that we offer the most extensive portfolio on the market and that we are the Partner of Choice for our customers. One of our core strengths is the launch of new products. We are now the fifth largest generic company in the Hospital market, and one of the most important players in the Retail market. Our portfolio comprises not only generic pharmaceuticals, but also Added Value Products (biopharmaceuticals) and specialty pharmaceuticals. We are proud to have launched in Poland the first biosimilar - Accofil - and since made significant inroads in our market share within the filgrastim market.

Our aim is to mirror Accord's mission of becoming by 2021 the 5th company in EMENA, by securing similar position in Poland. We are well on track to achieving this. This is also supported by our will to attract, grow and retain great people and continue to build a business where each and every person who works here feels engaged by the value of the work that we do. We all want to achieve the same thing in ensuring that patients across the Region get access to our medicines.

How strategically important is the Polish affiliate for the group?

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There are two views on this matter; firstly, the CEE perspective. I am responsible for 22 countries across Europe on boundaries stretching as far as Kazakhstan. These 22 countries include CIS, the Balkans and CEE. Poland is one of the most important markets given the phenomenal sales we make here, and the highly skilled team that support not only Poland but other countries in my region. From Poland, we also develop other CEE functions in marketing and business development, for example.

Secondly, from a European perspective, the Polish pharmaceutical market is the 6th largest in Europe, and Poland is the fourth market for the company in Europe. We believe that Poland is an excellent investment destination. Considering vast changes, such as Brexit, there is elevated potential to increase operational scope.

The first investment we carried out in Poland was with Neuca Group, where we intend to employ the geographical advantage and the manufacturing strength of Poland to act as a hub for distribution, and potential repackaging site, for example.

How do you successfully navigate the dynamic healthcare landscape in Poland and overcome the market challenges?

Given the extraordinary number of companies on the Polish market, Poland is the most challenging country in Europe, with more than 250 companies in retail, a similar number in the hospital sector and significant quantity of OTC & supplements retailers.

We have constructed the base of our business in the hospital sector, and so far, we are in the group of the largest suppliers of oncological injectables to hospitals in Poland. In Europe, Accord covers more than 30 percent of the oncological injectable market, and in Poland, the figure is similar. We always aim to be the first in bringing these new generics to market, which supported our success.

What is Accord Healthcare's competitive edge in Poland?

Accord in Poland centres on innovative thinking and fast decision-making processes to ensure we are first to bring efficient drugs to market quickly. We invest six percent of our revenues into R&D, more than the average for the Generics industry. This is our fuel for the future. We are innovative both as a company as a work-force, able to deliver products with added value, better stability, different pack sizes and doses that are more appropriate to the market needs. We do not copy and paste innovative products, but consider all options before bringing the generic to the market. For example, we launched the first biosimilar for filgrastim of Indian origin. In spite of all odds, our product has better stability data than the originator. This is valid proof of the quality of our products. We have several approaches where we see no other competitor engaging in similar activities.

The right people, the right products and pipeline, and our great entrepreneurial approach are together building the company's success. At Accord, we love challenges to address the needs of our patients, and it is very much what drives us forward.

How do you position the Accord brand within the Polish marketplace?

We position Accord as the Partner of Choice in all therapeutic areas in Poland and in all activities. We work hard at maintaining relationships with our customers and suppliers. Two years ago, we surveyed hospitals to investigate the awareness of the Accord brand, and we were delighted to see that 85 percent of people agreed that Accord provides the best service regarding price, quality, and availability in any given therapeutic area. Additionally, we aim to propose different solutions that include additional services and added value to our products, very well appreciated by the key stakeholders. Based on the survey, we found it enlightening to hear the insights from the hospital field and this also gave us the opportunity to improve specific areas. We learned a lot from this report and were grateful that we were able to build on and improve our customer offering even further.

Where do you intend to position Accord Poland in the next three years?

We will be the fifth generic company in Poland in the next three years, and as such, all of our activities are geared towards the achievement of this goal. First and foremost, we want to ensure that we are able to provide a sustainable supply of affordable medicines to patients in our region. We should not forget that. Secondly, we are committed to building a company that inspires a growth culture, where employees are engaged and truly live the behaviours at the heart of our culture: Challenge, Connect, Commit. Without a high-performing team that are dedicated and passionate we will not reach our long term goals.

From a commercial point of view, we are wholly focused on being a long-term leader in the generics market. We target hospitals, as well as the retail where we will enter new therapeutic areas and will position ourselves as the partner of choice for oncology, rheumatology, cardiology, Central Nervous System, transplantology and other specialty areas.

In the OTC market, where we are experiencing a relatively fresh outlook, we would like to take advantage of the Polish market's position whereby as much as 40 percent of the market is OTC. To continue growth here, we will invest more and launch new products.

This year we are thrilled that Accord Healthcare acquired the previous Sanofi owned manufacturing site in Fawdon, UK. Fawdon is a state of the art factory which will be our new manufacturing home for all effervescence products, further boosting our growth within the Polish market.

How would you describe your managerial style?

Personally, I find inspiring by knowledge and example to be a practical approach to leadership. If we introduce a new product, I try to demonstrate the knowledge to my team and ensure the high performance of our teams. I believe that whilst I might lead the company it is the dedication and passion of the colleagues around me that will take us to where we need to be.

I would like to be thought of as someone that has a forward-looking mindset. I am also passionate about continuously building, challenging and creating new added value.

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