

Interview: Sandra Ramirez – General Manager, Bristol-Myers Squibb Colombia and Mexico



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Sandra Ramirez, General Manager of Bristol-Myers Squibb Colombia & Mexico, reveals valuable insights into the long-standing presence of BMS in Colombia, marked by a continuous dedication to increase access to medicine, the gradual development of their immuno-oncology pipeline and the creation of an inclusive culture formed by satisfied employees.

Ms. Ramirez, you are in charge of BMS operations in both Colombia and Mexico. What are some of the main differences that you have observed between these two markets?

They are exceedingly different; Mexico is a much larger market than Colombia. My personal observation is that the Mexican market is very fragmented, while Colombia is a more integrated market featuring a universal healthcare system with 97 percent coverage. Not all markets can boast this exceptional achievement. Mexico and Colombia have economic and political stability; due to these factors, both markets have indeed become attractive for potential newcomers and new investments. In the case of Colombia, there are a lot of new opportunities that are continuing to arise, representing an ideal environment for entrepreneurs and new players in the industry.

Can you provide an overview of the BMS operations in Colombia?

BMS has a long-standing footprint in Colombia, having been present in the market for 69 years. The Colombian affiliate is part of BMS’s Latin America operations, along with Mexico. In our 69 years in this market, we have managed to establish a leading position in the areas of cancer treatment,

immunology, hepatitis C and virology. We've also positioned ourselves as pioneers in Immuno-Oncology. Immuno-Oncology is the area of particular significance for BMS Colombia, as it was first introduced in 2012; we are continuously looking to advance our technology, research and development in this therapeutic line. Furthermore, our commitment to biopharmaceutical medicine remains at the core of our business, with the ultimate objective of increasing access to medicine and improving the quality of life of all patients.

Are you looking to introduce any new products to the market?

We have a strong capacity for launching new products and we aim to do it while embracing the high-speed approach. As already mentioned, our efforts are invested in new indications for unmet medical needs in the Immuno-Oncology area. We are expecting to launch two to four new indications by 2018, while launching 20 new indications in the next five years.

BMS was ranked as 16th most successful company in the pharmaceutical industry with 62 million dollars in sales. What has led to this exceptional achievement?

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The visionary decision to achieve business growth has been aligned with our corporate values through four different focal points: innovation, patient-centricity, people and ethical performance. We are a company led by innovative principles in constant exploration of new indications for unmet medical needs, leveraging our know-how to deliver medicines for patients with life-threatening diseases. Secondly, patient-centricity is the core philosophy of BMS worldwide. The patient is at the center of everything we do and it is what drives our evolution and keeps our motivation consistent. The third reason pertains to our people. Continuously, we have been working with top talented teams. Not only are they exceptional employees delivering results, but they also understand our corporate values which are aligned with their personal principles. It is my personal commitment to support ever-better corporate culture to cater to the needs of all of our employees. At the end of the day satisfied people are excellent employees. Finally, we maintain our commitment to ethical performance as it represents the honor and integrity of BMS. This is essential to our success. We act on our belief that the priceless ingredient of every product we make is the integrity of its maker.

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What is your growth target for 2017?

We expect double-digit growth this year. We focus on several imperatives that involve increasing access to medicine, particularly in the cancer therapeutic line. It is of great significance to create more opportunities for patients. Therefore, we are pursuing viable collaborations with healthcare professionals to advance the medical education level in Colombia. In addition, we are working with authorities on projects involving the improvement of medical science that will eventually benefit patients in our country. Our target is to work on all aspects of our Colombian operations, leveraging our organizational, scientific, and collaborative efforts.

BMS is known for having an innovative approach to reinforce their research, resulting from the same increase in products under development, through a series of acquisitions, alliances, collaborations and agreements. How have you been fostering this business model in Colombia?

Research is the foundation of our evolution. Driving much of the growth in the research area will help us stimulate innovation. Therefore, BMS Colombia is currently involved in 16 research protocols, and roughly, starts five to eight new protocols per year. We aspire to cooperate on the simplification of

local processes, making trials and innovations even more accessible to Colombians.

What does BMS want to be known for in Colombia?

We want to be known for something that is instilled in our corporate values from the inception of BMS: scientific innovation. I personally believe that Colombia has the potential to continue to boost its scientific level, and BMS is working towards achieving this goal. Additionally, we want to position ourselves as a leading company aligned with our values. We have energized, committed and creative people, world-class talent that is regularly investing efforts into the reason of our existence: the quality of life of patients.

What is your vision for the company in the next three years?

BMS Colombia is a company that is at the forefront of science in Colombia, featuring continuous development in the Immuno-Oncology pipeline that has been created based on unmet medical needs. I will continue aiming for the improvement of access to medicine and also creating a diverse, inclusive and high-performing culture within the company with satisfied employees. This is my personal commitment.

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