

Interview: Stéphane Bouchard President, BD France



08.03.2016

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Stéphane Bouchard reveals why BD's pharmaceutical systems centre of excellence is based in France; BD's increased strength in medical devices following the acquisition of CareFusion in 2015; and why cooperation and transparency between medical device and pharmaceutical companies is crucial.

What role can BD, as one of the world's leading companies specializing in medical devices, play in proving cost effective alternatives to patients today in France?

At BD our mission is to help all people live healthy lives. We look to put in place innovative devices that benefit patients across both the developed and emerging worlds. Our focus is on patient-friendly and cost-effective devices, particularly when it comes to diagnostics. With the 12-billion-dollar acquisition of CareFusion in 2015 we have repositioned BD as a global leader in medication management and healthcare safety solutions. Our ambition is to be more effective when it comes to dispensing. Traditionally we have been strong in the field of medical devices, and with this deal we are now better integrated when it comes to our hospital dispensing activities. Patient safety is key, prescribing the correct drug dosage for the patient. Affordability is also an important topic, and players such as BD can contribute by providing more cost-effective alternatives. When it comes to our pharmaceutical systems division, as an illustration, we are developing a number of self-injection devices in France that provide significant savings to the community by removing the necessity for the patient to visit a hospital.

You have been president of BD France since September 2013, after a new management team was put in place following the departure of Christian Seux who had led BD France for over 30 years. What has been the focus of your attention these past few years?

Since France is an extremely large BD subsidiary, with 1,600 employees and almost 1 billion dollars in revenue, we decided to split the role of managing the business in two following the departure of Christian Seux. Sebastian Dias, Managing Director of BD France, focuses on the French healthcare

and medical devices market. My focus is more a representation and a coordination role mostly related to communication, and the social and legal standing of our business in the country. I have also kept my previous position as worldwide controller of our pharmaceutical systems business unit. We have an important social role in France and in particular in the Grenoble region. We are an important affiliate when it comes to innovation, R&D and the export of our products globally. While directly employing 1,600 people, indirectly we provide jobs to over 4,000 people in France.

To what extent does France serve as a model for other BD affiliates across the world?

Particularly when it comes to our pharmaceutical systems business unit, France is one among numerous BD centres of excellence. We have a pharmaceutical status, being audited by the FDA, and have skills that are unique to the Group. Other BD entities come to us for projects where they know we have this particular expertise.

How has BD France managed to acquire this specific area of expertise?

Over the years, we have built a specific expertise in the medical devices field for the pharmaceutical industry. Apart from some specific situations, we are not required to follow cGMP regulations, given that we do not manufacture drugs, but since our customers are audited and have to follow such regulations, they look to us to be as compliant as possible. From an R&D perspective, we help our pharmaceutical clients with the formulation of their drugs. We have developed a particular expertise by working with such customers. A few years ago, when the BD Group wanted to develop generic injectable products for the US market, they turned to France. From a technical standpoint the project was a great success but unfortunately due to market conditions at that time in the US, that particular project has been recently stopped. However, our expertise is recognised by the Group and as such we have been given responsibility for a number of other projects.

You referred earlier to the CareFusion acquisition in 2015. What role can this deal play in taking business in France to the next level?

BD is a global company, extremely diversified from a geographical standpoint. CareFusion, on the other hand, was predominantly based in the US. This acquisition has benefited France particularly regarding our product portfolio. It has allowed us to leverage products from the CareFusion offering, primarily when it comes to hospital dispensing activities, generating synergies at the revenues level. It has also allowed us to offer hospitals a complete range of products. Combining with CareFusion advances our strategy to deliver end-to-end solutions that increase efficiency, reduce medication errors and improve both healthcare worker and patient safety across all healthcare settings. We see this deal as being at the heart of what we call the "new BD" that will be stronger and more relevant than ever before.

What are the focus areas when it comes to BD's pharmaceutical systems business unit?

BD's pharmaceutical systems business unit has three key stakeholders: first, pharmaceutical companies, helping them to diversify their product range; second, the patient, we conduct human factor studies to help simplify the lives of patients with chronic diseases such as MS or rheumatoid arthritis; and lastly the prescribers, people who understand the market needs. When I worked with Jean-Luc Belingard at Pierre Fabre prior to joining BD in 2003, he would refer to the concept of unmet market needs, and how companies could provide added-value to the patient through alliances. This is something to which we at BD attach a great deal of importance.

In France, we have heard a lot about the importance of breaking down silos between the pharmaceutical and medical devices companies. Given that France acts as your pharmaceutical systems business unit centre of excellence, what importance do you

personally attach to breaking down silos between these two sectors?

Full cooperation and transparency between medical device and pharmaceutical companies is crucial given that we are all part of the same supply chain. My impression is that silos have, to a large extent, already been broken down. At BD we employ a number of people who had previously worked at pharma companies, and vice versa, a number of people have gone on to work for pharma companies having been with BD. At the pharmaceutical systems level we are creating what we refer to as a global account management organization. Pharmaceutical companies are by their very nature extremely global. The traditional BD model has been based more on regions, focusing on countries with differentiated healthcare models. Today we are creating an organization where one person is in charge of all communication worldwide with a specific pharmaceutical company. We are breaking silos by adopting the communication methods of pharma companies.

In France, at your Pont-de-Claix site, you manufacture syringes for the rest of Europe. At a time when many have been questioning the attractiveness and competitiveness of France as a country of production, why does BD believe France is a place to be?

When it comes to our pharmaceutical systems business unit, we manufacture worldwide around 2 billion glass syringes at five different plants in the US, Mexico, Hungary, Japan and France. Each plant is specialised with differentiated strengths and capabilities. High-flow, high volume products tend to be manufactured in Hungary and Mexico. We specialize in high-added value products at our French Pont-de-Claix site, where the emphasis is more on technology rather than cost. That is not to say that costs are not an issue in France or that technology is not important at higher volume sites, but rather it shows you where the priority lies. In this regard, our syringes for the biotech companies are manufactured in France, a market which requires an extremely high level of quality and which is showing strong growth potential.

What do you see as the advantages, or on the contrary any challenges, of being based in the Grenoble region?

Grenoble is known as a university and innovation-driven environment, particularly in the area of information and communications technologies. However, the region is also strong in the healthcare field, with a number of companies and a strong innovation network. It is true that due to our location it can be a challenge to attract the best talents, as a city in between Lyon, the second life sciences hub in France after Paris, and Geneva. There is more work to do to further develop the image of the Grenoble area when it comes to the healthcare arena.

To conclude, a few words to characterize the new BD?

The new BD is closer to our customers. In the future we will be providing more user-friendly products, offering global solutions to our clients across the globe. Through the acquisition of CareFusion, we aim to connect people and provide better solutions in the market place.

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