

Loay Badr – Country Manager, Egypt & Regional Leader, Levant & North Africa, BD



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BD's Loay Badr outlines the rationale behind the medtech giant's recent establishment of a direct presence in Egypt, the significant opportunities for medical device players in the country as it embarks on an ambitious healthcare transformation programme, and how the firm plans to impact and save even more patient lives across the Levant & North Africa via a refreshed strategic outlook.

Have you always worked in medical technology? Could you outline your career trajectory thus far?

I started my professional career in 1997, so it has been almost 25 years.

During this long period, I was privileged to learn from the great leaders I worked with and the great corporates I worked for; I started in Egypt and then moved to the Gulf region for 18 years before I returned to Egypt and took on my current role.

I was exposed to different cultures, managing businesses for many multinationals in robotics, radiology, surgery, and automation.

In 2011 I joined Carefusion in Dubai to lead the Middle East's Dispensing and Pharmacy Automation technologies; in 2014, Carefusion was acquired by BD. In BD, I was part of EMA's Medication Management Business Unit creation and continued to manage the dispensing and automation technologies.

In 2018, I became the KSA Country Manager for Commercial operations and successfully led the execution of the new go-to-market model of BD in Saudi Arabia. The success criteria included strategic planning, executive-level negotiations, multi-stakeholder management, system setup and testing, team integration, and project management.

In my current role, I am responsible for establishing the legal entity of BD in Egypt, developing the BD Strategy and defining the regional priorities of the region in light of BD's EMEA and Global strategies, building the organizations for Egypt, Levant and North Africa while driving the strategy execution.

What drew BD to the Egyptian market initially, and why the recent decision to start having a direct presence in the country?

BD has had a presence in Egypt for over 30 years. While our direct presence in Egypt is a more recent development, we continue to work with our long-term partners or distributors in the country.

The vision for the BD Scientific Office in Cairo is to pursue our purpose of *advancing the world of healthTM* and support BD's strive to help build more resilient and sustainable healthcare systems in the region. This is a milestone that puts us a step closer to supporting the country's vision of improving patient outcomes, enabling us to establish the identity of BD and strengthen its visibility. Also, the BD scientific office will allow us to have products registered under the BD name and connect and build relationships with local authorities like the Egyptian Drug Authority (EDA) and The Egyptian Authority for Unified Procurement (UPA).

The BD Scientific office in Cairo will focus on training and education activities and promotional activities supporting the distributors, especially in accelerating the launching plans of many new solutions. We will be working closely with the Egyptian Drug Authority, and they have been very supportive during the office licensing. We are looking forward to collaborating more with the EDA.

BD is a trusted partner, our strategic partnerships across the patient journey, combined with our 125 years of experience, have strongly positioned us to continually advance science and clinical outcomes, caring for patients and healthcare workers¹. We look forward to strengthening Egypt's healthcare journey by advancing our patient and healthcare worker safety movement and building on our initiatives in the country with innovative MedTech, insights, and practices.

Egypt is also appealing due to its size, healthcare reform, and the new National Health Insurance Program launch. Egypt has the largest population in the Arab world, with 105 million people⁴, and reported a high economic growth of 6.6 percent (according to the most recent report of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)⁵). This is the country's highest economic growth since 2008 and in the ME region. Foreign Direct Investment doubled in 2022, such economic performance represents an opportunity for MedTech and Pharma multinational companies⁶.

There are increasing levels of investment, and health economics is being highly regarded, which leads to improved utilization of medical devices. The country is even investing in buying high-tech equipment. We need to be there and ensure that such technologies are taken advantage of by the country, which is the role of the scientific offices; we offer training and education to caregivers so

they can focus on what matters most to them: providing the best care for their patients¹.

What can you tell us about the difference in infrastructure between the country's public and private hospitals? How does BD approach these two sectors differently?

The establishment of the General Authority for Healthcare Accreditation and Regulation (GAHAR) in Egypt was a significant step as they set quality standards for health services and applied them to medical care facilities and they accomplished the accreditation and registration of medical facilities and medical professionals, thus ensuring compliance with quality standards.

As we pursue our BD purpose of *advancing the world of health*TM, we are continuously working to improve the delivery of care through improved technologies across the patient journey, to contributing towards more affordable and accessible healthcare systems². We had the opportunity to meet with the GAHAR leadership team and shared our vision which very much aligned with theirs. Accordingly, all the in-country training programs that we organize are focusing on patient safety and healthcare workers' safety.

The project of implementing universal healthcare coverage for all Egyptians will be fully implemented in 10 years, and all hospitals providing the service will be accredited by GAHAR; this means that the standards and quality of care will be elevated.

Most private chain hospitals are also considering accreditation to continue delivering high-quality, high-standard service.

We approach both sectors similarly as, in the end, both providers (governmental and private) are serving patients.

Social media is an integral part of this transformation because, nowadays, everyone is more connected. Patients come in already having an idea of the treatment they need. They search online for answers and even join support groups. So we are witnessing a much more active role that patients are taking in their treatment which is changing the market dynamics.

A closer look at the health sector shows a positive healthcare expenditure growth in the cluster; however, the healthcare expenditure percent of GDP falls between 4.5 -7.5 percent of GDP⁷ according to 2019, which is behind the world average (9.8 percent). Also, the number of beds in the region is average 1.5/1000 citizens, which is below the world average (2.89 units per 1000 citizens)⁸.

The shortage makes it crucial for the healthcare system to optimize bed usage and enhance efficiency to satisfy patient needs. In this regard, BD is taking the lead and we recognize that we have a huge responsibility to extend our innovative solutions and programs that help assess and optimize efficiencies, reduce cost and increase patient outcomes across healthcare organizations¹.

What can you tell us about the tendering system in Egypt? What is working and what could be improved?

Tendering and procurement is centralized under the UPA for most of the governmental sectors, and our distributors -as the BD's commercial partners- participate in the tenders.

The technical committees evaluate the technical offers based on the tender's specification, and they use a scoring system. Then the financial negotiations start, and once the final products are

awarded, they are available on the UPA portal for hospitals.

The automated ordering system is a great achievement as it allows hospitals to access the catalogue of products and place orders with suppliers. I believe this is a simplified new process for ordering.

Unified procurement is a concept used in many countries i.e., Saudi Arabia, UAE, etc.

I believe centralized procurement allows more hospitals around the country to access products faster. Health-technology assessment programs and value-based procurement are key areas of focus, and we need to learn more about it from the perspective of UPA and MOH as it could help advance Egypt's healthcare system.

Does BD have a product portfolio to accompany the current government healthcare agenda which focuses on early diagnosis and screening?

If we look at oncology mortality rates, we notice that they are unfortunately moderate to high in our region, with the highest incidence rates in Iraq, Egypt, and Syria, showing a gap and responsibility for action to improve diagnosis, management, and research. BD offers solutions that support oncology screening and diagnosis, which is part of the Egyptian presidential healthcare initiatives.

Our BD team is exerting considerable efforts to support oncology healthcare workers by upgrading the practice of chemotherapy handling and has always been there for the patients offering some solutions for easy access to hard lesions and therapy administration. We play a critical role in ensuring diagnostic precision and efficiency while facilitating intra- and extracellular research.

Can you tell us about the work and awareness around safety movement that BD is undertaking in Egypt and why is important?

Safety is not a luxury element to healthcare organizations. BD strives to extend enhanced safety measures to patients, healthcare workers and the broader healthcare system.

One of our strategic priorities in Egypt and the region is to reinvent healthcare by expanding the safety solution awareness and education on safe injection, safe cannulation, safe chemo preparation and hazardous material handling, as a few examples. This will allow the healthcare system to enhance patient safety, quality of care and care delivery.

Usually, distributors work with several brands, is that the case for BD in Egypt and how to mitigate the sometimes lack that could be a consequence of it?

In BD, we have established partnerships with many of Egypt's MedTech suppliers. We provide them with all the support needed, and now we have become even closer to them by having our scientific office open.

Distributors lead all the commercial activities and do marketing and application support for customers. They also manage all after-sales service and support activities.

I believe the typical principal company distributor operating model needs to evolve, and the new way of working should be more in the form of true partnership to drive patient and customer centricity as the healthcare landscape is changing fast, the challenges are big, and the opportunities are massive.

What are BD's plans for the future and what can we expect for 2023?

Grow, Simplify and Empower are the gears for the growth of BD in the Levant & North Africa and the strategy to impact and save more patient lives.

We grow by establishing awareness about safety and the impact of quality on patient outcomes and healthcare workers' safety.

BD's purpose of *advancing the world of health*TM is why we come to work every day; in Egypt and LENA, our vision is to reinvent healthcare to improve the discovery and diagnosis of care, medication delivery and management, and interventional treatment.

To execute this strategy, we need to expand our reach to customers by becoming closer; therefore, we opened an office in Egypt. We expanded our team in Egypt and the region to drive the execution of the strategy, and we empower them to make decisions and support them to become experts through the different training programs we have in BD.

A clear strategy, structure, and team allows for successful execution and drives growth.

We grow by becoming a customer-centric organization; the BD marketing, medical and clinical team work closely with the customers to provide training, support, and understanding of their pressing challenges and needs, allowing us to constantly evolve and improve.

It is also crucial to simplify our business processes to improve customer experience with BD and allow our team to use their time in customer-facing activities.

Do you have a final message you would like to share with Pharmaboardroom's readers?

We touched on many important subjects, but I want to highlight that understanding our patients' needs is a key to support Egypt's healthcare reform and it is important that we all work together to enhance safety because it is our shared responsibility to do good for our country and its citizens. At BD we are extending our solutions and expertise to support all parties to deliver the right care at the right place at the right time³. This end goal is why I come to work every day and what I wish for Egypt and the region.

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