

Patricio Silva Young ^{â??} General Manager, IMS Health Argentina ^{â??} South Cone



02.02.2015

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The general manager of IMS Health Argentina ^{â??} South Cone weighs in on why his organization plays a crucial role in the pharma industry in Argentina.

How does the Argentinean market look today?

The Argentinean market is a solid, mature and competitive business with a lot of potential in biotechnology and speciality products. Local conditions have helped motivate Argentinean laboratories build modern competitive skills and develop as a solid industry.

Which are the main challenges that companies are facing today?

The uncertain economic environment and the demand of pharmaceutical products are likely to be the main challenges companies doing business in Argentina face today. The current economic situation has added new levels of complexity to an already challenging market environment. To strengthen their resilience, manufacturers need to adapt new strategies by re-evaluating their commercial models, pursuing opportunities in emerging markets, and strengthening the value proposition of their medicines in ways that resonate with payers and patients.

On May 15th of 2014 IMS Health hosted a World Review Conference in Buenos Aires. What were the main topics discussed?

During IMS's World Review, we emphasized how emerging markets would play a leading role in global industry developments in the years to come and are projected to account for 60 percent of total global growth between 2013 and 2017. Thus, the global ranking of countries show many changes, and the pharmerging markets are increasingly well positioned. This is the case of Argentina, which is expected to move from 19th (2013) to 14th in the top 20 by 2017.

What are the current activities of IMS Health Argentina?

IMS Health Argentina provides market intelligence services to many of the top pharmaceutical companies worldwide, and is the benchmark company in this field. IMS Health Argentina has been present in the country for 40 years, and offers both information and consulting services to its clients.

One of the key aspects of the services that IMS Health Argentina provides is its regional services. Many of the multinational companies, and some national companies, use these services in order to gain critical insight into the Argentinean market within a regional context. IMS Health Argentina is in an excellent position to offer these services, as IMS Health is present throughout the region and has a team of experts and thought leaders dedicated to providing the best information possible.

IMS Health is a company that provides information, services and technology for the healthcare industry. IMS Health's products and services are used by companies to develop commercialization plans and portfolio strategies, to select patient and physician populations for specific therapies, and to measure the effectiveness of pharmaceutical marketing and sales resources.

What is the main source of growth in IMS Health's business?

IMS Health is currently expanding its portfolio of products and services in two segments. The first is information and analytics and new data services. We have increased and improved offerings aimed to help companies measure and track their performance. We used to have improved our data set to include pharmacy-level data, which provides more granularity on each therapeutic class. We also have an e-commerce platform that allows companies to effectively measure the whole distribution chain up to the point of sales level.

The second area, an engine for growth in Argentina and Latin America as a whole, has been our consulting practice. Multinationals tend to take a very large view when it comes to their operations in Latin America, and so one manager can be in charge of the whole region, not just a country. Brazil and Mexico are both fairly autonomous, but when it comes to the rest of Latin America, you need to think in terms of the region, not just particular countries. This is part of globalization, and part of what IMS Health tries is to reflect that regional view by implementing an international standard of best practices. As I mentioned, we also have to consider that the Argentinean industry in general is growing in maturity. Consulting is growing more and more popular, not only in the pharmaceutical industry, but in other sectors as well. Information is a very important part of doing business in today's world. Many local companies in Argentina have realized this by conducting their own surveys however, they are not always successful. There are a number of reasons for this, but I think the experience and wealth of knowledge of a company like IMS Health really helps us to do the best job.

Why IMS Health Argentina is the partner of choice for pharma companies?

In the past, you could build a business based on assumptions without reviewing them over time. Today, you must not only build your business on very solid assumptions, but go back and look at them every single day because they change. If you want to be successful, you have to be as dynamic as the market is. You cannot assume that the business model of two years ago is still valid;

things have changed. There are too many variables and you have to adapt. Conventional models no longer work. Nowadays it is crucial not only to have the "know how" in pharmaceutical market but also to have the support of insights and key information assets.

Today, the pharma industry is the only industry in the world that has solid information for everybody. IMS Health is the partner of choice by providing this information. IMS Health is an expert in the market. We are the company with the most robust information available in the pharmaceutical market. We offer customized solutions to respond strategically to client needs and we have an outstanding and skilled customer services team.

Normally, if a multinational company hires IMS Health and they want to evaluate different markets, we have different people who are experts in those markets that we leverage for a comprehensive analysis. It makes processes much easier because the Client does not have to learn about the market or incur costs travelling across the world from country to country because of IMS Health's local presence in over 100 countries. IMS offers a company exposure and integration of global, regional and local level information. We are experts not only on the local or regional market; we have an ideal picture of the pharma worldwide market.

Additionally, the type of work IMS Health does is very diverse. The company works with multinationals but also local private companies, government, and distribution channels. IMS Health has a 360 degree view as to what is happening across the world in healthcare.

What is your professional background and when did you arrive in Argentina as the general manager of IMS Health Argentina southern cone?

I have more than twenty five (25) years of experience in the pharmaceutical market with BMS, Cyanamid, Bayer Pharma and seventeen (17) years with IMS Health. My tenure at IMS began in Ecuador, where I was able to start operations on behalf of IMS and grow said business to a formidable player in the market place for thirteen (13) years. During the last four (4) years, I have lead the southern cone region (Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay and Paraguay) of the IMS Latin American Business Unit, providing services and intelligence applied to our strategic partners in the pharma industry.

You have been working 17 years at IMS Health: what made your presence in Argentina successful?

I came to Argentina to help and give support to the local operation. A much greater concept I would say: I came here to get the growth for the company aligned with standards, processes, and methodologies. We know that recruiting key talent is the key of differentiator to improving and promoting innovation. Our organization's success is due in large part to the acknowledgement and advancement of our key talent. IMS treats its employees with respect and listens attentively to what they need.

If I treat you well, you will bring me success. A good work environment is key and that is why IMS Health has been successful at recruiting and retaining the best candidates.

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