Interview: Fernando Dussan – Country Director Andean Region, Boston Scientific, Colombia



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19.06.2017

Tags: Colombia, Boston Scientific, Medtech, Latin America,



Regional leader of Boston Scientific's Andean Region, Fernando Dussan, share his insights on why Colombia is suitable to host the core business of Boston Scientific. He speaks about the company's expansive portfolio, the key challenges in the ecosystem, as well as building a holistic partnership that places the patients at the core.

Mr. Dussan, you have assumed this position as the Andean region leader for Boston Scientific over two years ago. What have been your strategic priorities for the region, as well as for Colombia in particular?

For Boston Scientific Colombia, the core business is in Colombia. Nonetheless, for the Andean region as a whole, there is also a significant focus on countries such as Peru and Ecuador, which are both experiencing stable growth.

In Colombia, Boston Scientific is viewed as a leader in the cardiovascular business. My challenge when I took on the role is for Boston Scientific to further grow in the Urology, Endoscopy and Neuromodulation segments in Colombia, wherein there is untapped potential to introduce the latest innovate technologies such as Boston Scientific ‘s products in these lines of medical specialties.

Given that Boston Scientific considers Colombia as an ideal country to host your core business, what are the ideal factors that make Colombia the optimal choice to spearhead regional operations?

Colombia is the third largest market in Latin America and the largest one for the Andean Region, with a strategic location and healthcare system that covers more than 96% of the country’s population.

Globally, Boston Scientific’s portfolio is strongly driven by interventional cardiology products, which comprised of 26% of the net sales of the year (2016). What are the key growth drivers in Colombia and what are some exciting products in your pipeline?

Cardiology remains the key growth driver with a strong portfolio. We have, however, recently integrated AMS, which will potentially generate growth for the urology business in the upcoming years. Our Endoscopy and Neuromodulation businesses also have new product launches.

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When we spoke with Marisol Sanchez, she spoke about a pilot program, STENT, launched in 2015 in order to regulate medical devices prices in the market. What are your thoughts about this program?

My understanding is that this program is a pilot program to be implemented in the future for all medical devices as part of government policy to optimize the resources of the healthcare system and increase coverage in and access to healthcare.

After two years of the pilot program, there has been a reduction in expenditure in stent purchases by the government. This program, however, has not yet shown to have increased access by more patients to cardiology care, in a country where cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death.

Do you believe this message is properly conveyed to the relevant authoritative entities that there needs to be a shift in the discussion regarding how medical devices need to

be evaluated?

While universal healthcare coverage is an appealing concept in theory, the system cannot afford to realize this ideal into practice. The biggest barrier for all the key players in the industry has been the fact that although there is a willingness to provide access to the latest medical technology, there are insufficient public funds to achieve this goal.

What do you believe is the right balance between being conscientious with the price concerns of the system, as well as ensuring that innovative products are made available in the market for patients that need them the most?

The biggest challenge in the system is to strike the right balance. An example of a right balance measure is to implement co-payments for certain treatments. A cost-effective option is to reduce medically unnecessary hospital stays. In the end, solutions do need to be more patient centric and should not only focus on price.

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What steps has Boston Scientific taken in Colombia to portray itself as an ideal partner for innovative solutions for patients and healthcare solutions?

Boston Scientific is a segment of the healthcare ecosystem. Patients are at the core of Boston Scientific strategies with a focus on patient awareness campaigns. The other important parts of the health ecosystem that Boston Scientific simultaneously focuses on are the physicians, payers, purchases, as well as policy makers. We focus in particular on creating different value propositions for each of these stakeholders, anchoring the primary goal of positively impacting patients.

In the interest of impacting the ecosystem, how do you build a rapport with different stakeholders in order to foster the ecosystem?

We have created a Health Committee tasked to liaise closely with the industry and regulatory bodies to ensure the well-being of patients. More recently, we also continue to promote access to innovative medical treatments to patients in remote locations through telemedicine initiatives.

In an interview with Business World in 2015, you had mentioned that “CSR is a key factor in the motivation of employees, it is essential that they feel proud to belong to a company that transforms lives.” Can you share to our global leaders why CSR is such an integral part of your corporate culture?

Our CSR initiatives are primarily done through internal social responsibility programs and our involvement with Fundación CEA (Chamber of American Companies) where we have created with CEA community outreach programs in impoverished areas of the country. We also encourage our employees to volunteer and educate people about healthcare initiatives. It is rewarding for our employees and our company to participate in social responsibility programs engaging with our local community.

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