Andrew Corrieri, CEO, Pharmaconsulta, Malta



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Andrew Corrieri, founder and CEO at Pharmaconsulta Ltd, tells the story of how he founded his consultancy, as well as the key expertise he can bring to its clients. Moreover, as one of the key experts in the industry, Corrieri takes the time to highlight the key advantages of doing business in Malta.

Can you introduce the history behind Pharmaconsulta's foundation to our international audience?

I am Andrew Corrieri, a pharmacist by education. I furthered my studies to specialize in pharmaceutical regulatory affairs. I have studied at the University of Malta where I obtained two master's degrees. In 2009 local regulations became stricter in Malta which lead some pharmaceutical companies to have difficulties with their inspections. These firms needed regulatory support to comply with the new regulations and maintain their licenses, so they asked for my help as a consultant. Through word-of-mouth, I gained more clients and then decided to launch my own company, Pharmaconsulta.

A few years later, we expanded our reach from local businesses to global pharmaceutical companies overseas, mainly in Europe. Our current focus is on expanding into the Middle East. As a Maltese company, we have an advantage because we can understand more easily and feel more

comfortable with the Middle East's cultures and languages. Due to our great development, my colleague, Daniel Attard, joined me last year and brings to the company his multicultural experience gained with global companies and laboratories in Switzerland and Germany, to further help our clients.

What is Pharmaconsulta's complete service offering?

Currently, the main area of interest for some of our global clients is life cycle management, especially for some of their products registered worldwide that are now entering Malta. In this regard, we are in charge of their regulatory submissions, controlling packaging and product documentation as well the correspondence with authorities and dossier management.

We are also helping our clients obtain and/or maintain their manufacturing or distribution licenses. The Maltese Medicines Authority has already certified 76 GMP sites, mainly from India and China. In the same way, we believe that Pharmaconsulta can open the door for the MENA region, Indeed, the Middle East has decided to upgrade their standards by getting EU-GMP certification on their Pharmaceutical Manufacturing sites which will give them a competitive advantage in both their country and their target markets.

Most of the requests we are now receiving are asking us to perform audits at manufacturing sites in order to prepare the site for inspections by their regulatory authorities, including the FDA. We can operate in all parts of the world, but our main requests come from Europe. We are also able to offer all related pharmacovigilance services and post-marketing surveillance. We also assist in regulations and help companies monitor special orphan drugs that are coming to Malta.

What opportunities can the medical cannabis sector bring to the island?

I personally agree for the entrance of cannabinoid solutions in Malta, as certain studies have shown positive results for some cancer patients. As health professionals, our main duty is to take care of our patient's health and we have a moral obligation to provide access to cannabinoids if these can improve the suffering of multiple sclerosis and oncology patients.

However, the main issues will be regulatory. Indeed, like all drugs, there will be misuses but the superintendent of Public Health does an effective job in publishing circulars to healthcare professionals and patients to prevent and report any drug abuse. The regulation for these type of products in Malta should be the same as the narcotics and psychotropic regulations, which will be strongly restricted and controlled. Patients will only receive these medicines with a prescription and with a monthly limit. The goal of the industry will be to minimize the risks and provide as much

control as possible. Therefore, Pharmaconsulta can provide expertise to companies eager to enter this market segment in Malta.

What are some of the key advantages of basing a business in Malta?

A mixture of a highly educated demographic, interesting tax rebates and a good quality of life in nice weather is an attractive package to encourage companies and talented individuals to settle in the island. Malta is mainly attractive for the corporate tax incentives that attracts many businesses, but it is important to note the role of the highly educated talent pool available in the country. The University of Malta is providing a strong education and many graduates are offered training opportunities and incentives to work in industry after their diploma. We are also an English-speaking country which is the universal language in the pharmaceutical industry.

How do you establish yourself as the partner of choice for the industry?

At Pharmaconsulta, we are encouraging the self-growth of our employees by offering them the possibility to participate in various professional courses to improve specific skills. Updating our knowledge and education is a way for us to keep up to date with the country’s legal advancements. For example, our next study subject is the Japanese Regulatory system as it is an important strategic market, however we still need to study more and prepare ourselves for the new trends coming to the global industry.

We also do everything we can to service every client to the best of our abilities. To do so, we recruit consultants locally and from overseas to maintain the high quality of our expertise. Our team is constantly growing in size and in skills. We are constantly learning new regulatory strategies and systems because understanding our client’s needs and providing them with the most relevant solution can give them an economic advantage.

What are the next objectives that you have set for the organization?

We are planning and developing enhanced regulatory intelligence services in an effort to predict future regulatory changes. A great example is the potential changes that Brexit may cause. Some of our clients have asked for our strategic expertise to help them plan for the potential consequences of Brexit on the Maltese environment. Our analysis has mostly highlighted potential opportunities for our clients. Their initial belief was that regulatory changes are an obstacle, which made them concerned about Brexit. However, we are helping them to position themselves to anticipate the coming regulatory challenge so that it can lead to new opportunities. In the case of Brexit, it is likely that more British companies will relocate to Malta, without any issues as the

Maltese staff is already well trained and the certification standards are similar in Malta.

What would you like our readers to know about Pharmaconsulta?

I believe Pharmaconsulta has built its reputation on the high quality of its services as well as delivering projects in a timely manner. We are proud to deliver our services within the deadlines and our activities are quite unique. Many of our clients have asked us if we can provide services which they found to be complicated, or did not have the right skills internally to deliver, but we are eager to find solutions and overcome challenges for our clients.

I have a personal drive to move forward and innovate in our service offering. For example, we recently helped one of our clients to start clinical trials in Malta, which is an activity that has never been done in the island before. As we are proactive, we will be starting a clinical trial project in Milan to gain the expertise in this field so we can help our client to the best of our abilities. We also like to be one step ahead and are business oriented so we can open some doors for our clients who can benefit from our strong and important global network of companies.

As we are dealing with science and scientists, we have to understand that the funding and the business strategy are the key differentiators between a successful product available to patients and a great solution that will stay on a laboratory’s shelf. Therefore, we like to encourage networking activities between different players and we are going the extra mile to help our clients develop their business and build on their strategies. We feel proud when we can solve an issue and when we can succeed where others have been failing. As the founder and CEO, I believe it is only the start for Pharmaconsulta as we are now launching a new line of business in the manufacturing and distribution segments so I am looking forward to developing our activities in the upcoming months.

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