



COMPANY OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2016 CEO of the Year Award



Beta Healthcare's winning recipe: Quality products, right talent

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Pharmaceuticals manufacturer, Beta Healthcare International, a respected brand in East Africa, has in the last decade worked hard and succeeded in adopting a pan-African outlook. Established in Kenya in 1947, the company is now penetrating new markets and gaining a firm footprint in sub-Saharan Africa.

Its market competitiveness, says the CEO, Dr Sanjay Advani, is hinged on its employees and quality products. "We got the right people in the right place doing the right thing," he says with a humble demeanour.

Dr Advani scooped the CEO of the Year Award in this year's Company of the Year Awards (COYA). He attributes the award, a prestigious recognition in East Africa, to his team. "Without them, Beta Healthcare International would not be where it is today. This is their success," he asserts, pointing to the award. "My work is just to select the right people and put them in the right roles. They just take over."

The Beta Healthcare team is made up of highly qualified and multi-skilled human resource mix. This has paid dividends, as the business has been on a steady growth curve in the last decade.

Initially, the company was operating from a 5000 square-foot factory in Kenya. Presently, it occupies five acres of space and runs a highly modern factory. This is no mean feat, and now the company has gained repute in the pharmaceuticals manufacturing and distribution sector in the sub-Sahara.

Beta Healthcare International is the originator of high quality yet affordable medicine brands such as Mara Moja tablets, which lead in pain and fever management, and both Action and Hedex, which drive away that headache fast. So popular are these headache regimen brands that they command a significant market share in Kenya,



Dr Sanjay Advani (sixth from right) celebrates his 'CEO of the Year Award' with his team.

Tanzania, Rwanda, Malawi, Burundi, DR Congo, Uganda, Mozambique, Zambia, Nigeria and Ghana.

Unlike its competitors in China and India who get quick access to new technologies, raw materials and packaging, Beta Healthcare International has to import all these. "We cannot compromise on quality. Quality is inherent and is remembered forever," Dr Advani shares.

For certain products whose technology and production infrastructure is not yet available locally, Beta Healthcare International sources from established and reputable firms in India and Europe.

The market knows that Beta Healthcare International Ltd products are high quality and are readily available. This fuels product uptake and market penetration.

The pharmaceuticals manufacturer has maintained a tradition of innovation, frequently launching new products within Sub-Saharan Africa. This is courtesy of its advanced Research and Development Centre.

Here, a team of research and product development experts and quality assurance personnel continually work

to enhance safety and efficacy of their products. They also get to work on product packaging to suit the buying capacity of target consumer segments. "This has made quality products available to the market and at a lower cost," says Dr Advani.

But it is the company's sales and marketing teams who work creatively to sniff business opportunities in the region. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 564 sales people are in the market daily, 94 of them in Kenya, scouting for business. Each of them gets to engage at least 10 new and existing customers in a day. This has continuously ensured high client retention rates, and brought on board new customers. "The same applies to our export markets. We have to get the right people and position them at the right place," the CEO shares.

The manufacturer understands too well that they operate in a very dynamic field where technology keeps on changing. "So, we invest in upgrading our technical expertise and periodic training of our teams and new machinery," Dr Advani explains. The company thus benchmarks with world's best. "Not a single regulator

has rejected our products. Our factory is the best in sub-Saharan Africa," he declares.

So, it was not by chance that Dr Advani was named the CEO of the Year; and that Beta Healthcare International won the Corporate Governance and Environmental Award.

The business has a Governance Manager who ensures good governance management is adhered to at all times. A Safety, Health and Environmental Department is also in place to ensure that employees operate in a safe and secure environment. Employee welfare is highly observed. They are all provided with good lunch, clean drinking water, access to regular health check-ups, two in-house fitness centers, a first aid room and medical schemes, among others.

International auditors, some from Europe, periodically audit Beta Healthcare International Ltd corporate governance and environmental safety procedures. "It is an expensive process, but it is important for us and the country," says Dr Advani.

Beta Healthcare International has also been recognised in Spain for the international award for leadership and its commitment to quality. In neighbouring Tanzania, the firm has in the last eight years scooped the President's Awards for the Best Pharmaceutical Company.

I focus on the positive side of every challenge – Dr Advani

You are Kenya's top CEO, 2016. Did you see it coming?

I did not expect it. However, in Beta Healthcare International, we say that numbers are the only thing that speak the truth. I am honoured to be selected by KIM and my team as the best CEO.

Your inspiration?

It is people that inspire me. Every day, I learn something new from them. At a personal level, it is my son and wife. It inspires me when I see my wife growing spiritually and my son growing into a young man and doing what is expected of him.

How have you remained afloat at a time when businesses are struggling?

I focus on the positive side of every challenge. We have a saying in the Aspen Group that "When everyone else looks at darkness, we at Aspen look at the light at the end of the tunnel." Roses have got thorns, but also, thorns have got roses. So, I have to learn from any business challenge in order to manoeuvre similar situations in future. Every day is a learning process. I got no other alternative than to succeed.

Any future business expansion plans?

Focus now is to bring into the market some new products, grow our market share and make an entry into two countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2017.

Why Dr Advani is this year's top CEO

Dr Sanjay Advani is a consultative business leader, a professional trait that has propelled his team to gain market leadership. The Kenya Institute of Management (KIM), which organises the Company of the Year Awards and assesses organisations using the Organisational Performance Index (OPI), passed the following judgement in awarding the CEO:

"He inculcates a performance corporate culture and gives his team space to initiate ideas for further improvement. He values strong governance structures, succession planning and is result-driven through consultative leadership approach. He creates a conducive environment,

propelling the team to achieve higher performance. The organisation's profitability has progressively attained market leadership in East Africa within the pharmaceuticals sector. This CEO believes everything happens in the market place, where the problems are, and not behind a computer."

Dr Advani has more than 26 years of experience in the pharmaceuticals industry. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Management, a Master of Business Administration degree and a PhD in Pharmaceuticals.

He sits in management boards of Beta Healthcare International, Shelys Pharmaceuticals in Tanzania, Beta Healthcare Uganda Ltd, Kama Industries

Ltd in Ghana, and Aspen Pharmacare Nigeria Ltd. In the last three years, he has served as a Council Member at the University of Nairobi.

Margaret John-Mathenge, Beta Healthcare regional head of human resources and administration, says of him: "Dr Advani believes in the power of his people and gives leeway for everybody to share ideas. This drives productivity and results. He values integrity, innovation, excellence, commitment and teamwork – five components that are dear to us. We call them Aspen competencies. He has made succession planning part of every team leader, which is critical to the sustainability of the business."



Dr Sanjay receives the 'CEO of the Year Award' from Cabinet Secretary for ICT, Joe Mucheru, during the 2016 COYA Awards.