



COMPANIES AS MARKET DRIVERS

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Background

Medical companies, be it pharmaceuticals or Medical Devices or Equipment, are an integral part of delivering health care to the community. The wherewithal of this sector has a direct bearing in its potential ability to enable the required medical service to the population in a region including the poor and the marginalized. In many occasions these companies have evolved as main enablers in providing clinical care through their innovation, R & D, reverse engineering, frugal manufacturing, pricing, etc. However, most of these are primarily done with a mind-set of wealth generation or profit maximization. There is lot more that can be and needs to be done by the medical industry.

Consider this:

- The average number of cataract surgeries done per million population in a year (CSR) in the top ten, most populous countries, excluding USA, Japan and Russia, is only 1,737. This is in spite of India having a CSR of close to 5,000, which is the highest amongst these nations. Cataract being the leading cause of blindness, there is an urgent need to triple this, if we are to make any progress towards the “elimination of avoidable blindness”. A mere increase of 250 in the CSR in each of these countries, will add another 1 million surgeries being done globally. Countries such as Nigeria and Ethiopia have a CSR of less than 500!! Further, CSR as a metric averages out the performance while in reality it masks the inequity of most of the CSR being accounted for by the urban population and those who have paying capacity to access care, while the rural poor get very little care.
- Globally, it is estimated that there are 420 million persons with diabetes, all of whom have the risk of developing Diabetic Retinopathy (DR), while 10% of them or 42 million are estimated to have vision threatening DR. This number is expected to balloon to 70 million by 2040!! Who will create the process to reach and this huge number of people with diabetes and manage those with DR? If the companies could also take a lead to do something about it, they too will benefit from this market creation.
- An estimated 1.5 billion would benefit from some form of refraction services. As of now more than 70% of them live with sub-optimal vision without any intervention!!!

“Sight loss from myopia and Diabetic Retinopathy can be avoided – but a significant scale up and investment in public education, eye health services, along with the development of innovative new approaches are required now, if we are to avoid an explosion in the number of people living with blindness and visual impairments”

----- extracted from IAPB vision Atlas, P- 12

Manufacturing companies in healthcare sector are usually the beneficiaries of the market created by hospitals and government by reaching out to the society. **This consultation wants to explore the role that Manufacturers can proactively play in enlarging the market so that hospitals, companies and the society can all benefit. Including the marginalized.** This workshop intendeds to explore and learn from past successful models such as, “Merck’s role in efficient treatment for Tuberculosis; Cipla’s role in HIV treatment or Aurolab’s role in expanding the cataract services. This understanding would help us crystalize the key enabling factors and in turn help replicate such model so that the society at large, including the industry can benefit.

Why we think companies need to play a more active role in solving health care issues?

They are better at brining innovations, rapidly to scale; have ready access to newer technologies to overcome challenges; can come up with sustainable business models and can bring holistic approach to problem solving, equipped with their expertise in varied areas, marketing, quality assurance, finance/Investment, etc.

Areas of Need:

Achieving the overall goal of Universal Eye health and systematically addressing specific conditions like Glaucoma, DR, Vision impairment in School children, Refractive errors, Cataract, etc.

Scope of the workshop

Objectives:

To collectively explore how Manufacturers can proactively play a market driving role in addressing the global eye care problem.

Expected outcomes:

With inputs from various stake holders drawn from within the ophthalmic sectors, manufacturing, non-ophthalmic medical sectors and non-medical sectors, we hope to achieve the following:

1. Elucidate the process of Market driving and translating those ideas to successful implementation.
2. Identify areas and situations ripe for intervention to drive market growth
3. Identify at least one area for the industry to drive the market growth and implement it to show as a proof of concept
4. Have a council of members to nudge and mentor manufacturers to take up initiatives for market growth.
5. Create a shift in the thinking of companies as below:
 - a. Motivate companies to work towards growing the market as a means of driving their growth.
 - b. Invest in increasing the Market itself in an inclusive manner instead of investing in increasing the market share in existing market.
 - c. Channelize their funds in solving supply-chain issues or differential pricing where needed, etc., to enable market growth.
 - d. Collectively work with respective Governments to grow the market in African countries.