
Zoom On: Wayne Spittle - Executive Vice President, Samsung Healthcare



Wayne Spittle

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Executive Vice President -
Samsung Healthcare

When Samsung entered the healthcare market in 2013, expectations were high that Samsung's success in B2C products would be transferred to the medical arena.

HealthManagement caught up with Wayne Spittle at RSNA's 100th Annual Scientific Meeting in 2014 to find out more about Samsung's progress and plans.

Wayne is based in Seoul, Korea. Originally a radiographer, he moved first into healthcare management and then to the equipment vendor business. He previously worked as General Manager and Senior Vice President, Asia Pacific Philips Healthcare in Singapore and as Managing Director, Philips Healthcare Australia.

What is your role and what is your current responsibility in Samsung?

In my role as Executive Vice President of Samsung Medison, I have come across all the modalities of Samsung's medical equipment business. It's basically a round strategy - strategic product development and the go to market strategy. I work mainly in marketing - taking product to market and what we should be doing in defining our product and product innovation. This is done very much in conjunction with the strategic marketing group, the R&D group and the vision of Samsung.

Can you tell us more about Samsung's move into healthcare? Have expectations been met?

Speaking about the EMEA region, the market has come back for us especially. Ultrasound has been exceptionally successful; we have seen extremely high success rate in DR as well. Whilst the European economic climate isn't conducive to expanding healthcare, we've been very successful in the market. In the global markets we see challenges, especially in the USA with Affordable Care and the rationalisation of healthcare. But Asia is growing very well.

Samsung has a good name due to its B2C products. How do you see that this expectation has been met in the medical community?

Everybody is excited about the brand of Samsung coming into healthcare. Since December 2014 everything has been branded Samsung. In the past we had different products through the acquisition of NeuroLogica and Medison. All the healthcare products from DR through IVD to ultrasound are branded Samsung. The impact of this acceptance globally has been exceptionally good. Everybody trusts the innovation of Samsung to actually deliver quality products.

How do you see that the Samsung IT group will strengthen the medical portfolio to offer the medical community?

What we can offer are strong solutions that Samsung focuses on - from hospital television to IT solutions, networking, printing, air conditioning. Everything that Samsung does, we can actually encompass into the healthcare portfolio. So we work more and more across that B2B enterprise solution for hospitals. Even tablets, computers, networking, IT, it's all there to come through the whole portfolio. Typically we go into hospitals now and not only talk equipment, but we also talk solutions. Samsung has a wide range of products to offer - IT solutions and software for hospitals through the SDS group.

How important is management leadership in healthcare?

Management leadership through the whole healthcare sphere - in hospitals, in equipment providers, solution providers and across the whole broad spectrum of healthcare delivery requires people to understand the issues and develop solutions. True managers are about understanding the issues. We have an ageing population and a rise in non-communicable diseases, so we need to understand the issues of healthcare overall in the community, not just in the hospital. So management and leadership are extremely important. The number of people that are actually in hospital that don't need to be there is extremely high, so management and leadership and especially leadership need to recognise this and work out solutions around it. If you have a look at mobile phones now and Samsung watches we can do a lot of measurements - activity, heart rates. We can do SpO2 measurements on a watch and we can track on the new watch solutions for elderly patients that might be at risk of Alzheimer's disease, we can GPS track them. It is the whole spectrum there Samsung is looking at. It is extremely important, and you don't want just administrators in healthcare management. In hospitals and healthcare planning you need people, who understand solutions and go to solution providers and work together to provide direction.

Do you see in the last decade a changing role from the stakeholder groups towards more active responsibility from clinical minds to management roles?

Healthcare delivery has been very much around diagnosis and 'hit and miss' or 'trial and error'- based medicine. The ability of products now to provide evidence-based medicine, to actually provide a better solution for healthcare delivery and the patient overall is much improved. You see the sphere of holistic-based medicine. What you do when you go to a doctor and he gives you a diagnosis? 80 percent of people go home and look on the Internet. So it is a bigger sphere than everybody realises to actually recognise patient management, healthcare delivery. We just can't afford to have people in hospital.

What can we expect from Samsung in the next few years?

Recognition of issues across the patient sphere. Samsung will continue to develop and provide the best possible solutions across an ever expanding platform.

Do you have a top management tip?

My tip for anybody is to find a coach, who can help you, who understands business, especially if you are moving into an area you are not familiar with.

My biggest tip for anybody is to actually listen to the problem. Customers, doctors, patients all have issues, and if you can understand the problem you can actually come together and create a solution. It is actually working collaboratively with people not actually dictating to people. At my stage of life and career it is about coaching people to give better solutions, better knowledge and better understanding. I say to everybody in my office my doors are always open, so feel free to come and talk to me, because we are here to provide solutions. The solution can be a product, it can be about financial solutions or understanding about a customer's needs. If there is a specific issue they bring up we have to have the ability to listen and understand and deliver. The other thing is conflict, how you handle conflict. Conflict is always an opportunity, it's never open.

What is your most important career highlight?

Being Executive Vice President at Samsung and driving strategy on healthcare delivery.

If you have not chosen this career, what you have been?

I came from a hospital background and healthcare management. I was originally a radiographer, doing ultrasounds, and then ran a large hospital group for radiology services and, later went into healthcare funding as well. So then it changed into the equipment business. I enjoy meeting people and as I said, it's about understanding people's need and it can be a country need, it can be a hospital need, it can be a personal need, but it is actually delivering something to those people.

Do you have a favourite quotation?

My favourite quotation is my philosophy of life. Live life to its fullest and give as much as you possibly can. It's not about yourself, it's about working with people and understanding people.

What will your wish for 2015 be?

I think we are on the balance of global crisis so my personal wish will be to see world peace. I really want to see the world settle down. As for the business I want to see Samsung continue to grow and prosper in its product development.

Published on : Thu, 5 Feb 2015