

Developing Efficiencies During Globalization of Abbott Nutrition

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As Abbott Nutrition, a multi-billion dollar division of Abbott Laboratories, became a global entity in 2006, the research and development division began serving two large commercial groups, Abbott Nutrition Products Division (U.S.) and Abbott Nutrition International (the rest of the world). It became clear that, although we have a common mission, "...to provide innovative and superior nutrition that advances the quality of life for people of all ages", we had many differences. These differences ranged from those of regions, cultures, and regulatory requirements to basic processes and procedures. This provided challenges and growth opportunities for everyone involved.

My focus is to develop efficiencies such that we can deliver on our long range plan, providing growth for our shareholders, within the confines of our resources. Currently the focus is on providing a system for developing common science-based messages; identifying differences in processes and procedures and acting on unifying them to assure compliance; providing opportunities for nutrition scientists to meet with our colleagues throughout the world and understand the various regional needs; partnering with key stakeholders, thought-leaders, scientists in academia and the health care industry globally to improve our products and develop new ones; and working collaboratively with our colleagues as we develop strategies for successfully providing quality nutrition products in emerging markets.

In the past few months, we have had the opportunity to bring scientists into our group from different departments in Abbott Nutrition. In so doing, an abundance of new responsibilities have been brought to the group and restructured such that the scientists with the knowledge and accountability for the scientific support of the products are taking ownership. Strategies are being developed to more efficiently serve the needs of our affiliates worldwide by using resources currently available or by working to adapt resources within Abbott Laboratories that have not yet been effectively used by Abbott Nutrition.

Although the work has just begun, a lot has been accomplished. Additional head count has been allocated for efforts in emerging markets. Those positions were carefully filled with individuals whose educations, experiences and skills compliment that of the rest of the group. We have expanded the Pediatric Nutrition Science group over 100% this year. The group has become more integrated with our international affiliates resulting in many requests for the input of pediatric nutrition scientists in global marketing meetings, training events, congresses, and planning programs. Additionally, key opinion leaders from many countries are traveling to Columbus to hear scientists, both from Abbott Nutrition and outside investigators, present on the science behind our products.

There is much yet to be done. Globalization is an ongoing process and the need to develop efficiencies is as well. But the foundation is being built. Guidance from my mentors, including Robert Miller, Divisional Vice President, Abbott Nutrition R&D, FSLI Cohort #1 Fellow, and Keith Garleb, Director, Pediatric Nutrition R&D, has been extremely helpful. The tools provided by my experience with FSLI are invaluable. Lastly, the experiences that globalization has provided have broadened my vision, understanding of the world, and expectations of myself.

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