

Case Study on:



Ruban D'Honneur Recipient

European Business Awards 2011

The Import/ Export Award
Pharmathen S.A.



Pharmathen

Innovation, Integration and International Expansion

Words from the Judges

“Focused specialisation and carefully planned international development drives Pharmathen’s outstanding success.”



Pharmathen is a well-deserved recipient of the Ruban D’Honneur for the Import/Export award at the European Business Awards 2011. The accolade has been given in recognition of its impressive international export achievements and strong position in both generics and innovative drug developments.

Athens based pharmaceutical company Pharmathen is focused on developing, manufacturing and marketing health care products primarily for international export. With three state of the art R&D centres and two finished formulation manufacturing sites, Pharmathen is fully integrated in the development and supply of innovative pharmaceutical products.

The company’s competitive edge is characterised by cost efficient development and production, creative marketing and added value customer service. Today, the in-house development products of Pharmathen are registered in all major EU markets and licensed out to many of the world’s largest pharmaceutical companies in more than 85 countries worldwide. Pharmathen has an annual turnover of €128.2million with further growth expected in 2011. The company exported more than 18 million finished packs (tablets, capsules and injectables) in 2010.

“In 1997/98, we took the high risk business decision to focus on the export market and more than 75% of our sales turnover is now generated from our export activities. We use partners and agents to maximise our global distribution and are also developing joint ventures or subsidiaries in certain territories. Today, we cooperate with 200 of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world.” Vassilios Katsos, CEO, Pharmathen

Pharmathen has grown rapidly in size and operations as a result of its international activities over the last two years, which has in turn led to increased manufacturing and logistical demands. To satisfy the greater production figures and expanding volumes of finished products earmarked for export, the company recently opened a new manufacturing plant in northern Greece.

Ruban D’Honneur Recipient



“Our new state-of-the-art facility will launch us onto the big stage and enable us to compete with much larger pharmaceutical companies. We will no longer be restricted by capacity and will be able to fulfil greater orders at a lower cost per unit.”

The new factory complements the company’s original plant in Athens which was established in 1974 and has long since been outgrown. The €42million project is by far the best facility of its kind in Greece and is the biggest in south-west Europe. It has the ability to produce three billion tablets and two billion capsules per year. Exports will be sent direct from the factory to Pharmathen’s global distribution partners, primarily in Europe and the USA.

Innovation is Pharmathen’s cornerstone. It became apparent quite early on that the business could not compete in the international arena on price alone and needed to also focus on developing new technologies and new medicines, often in breakthrough areas including cancer treatments. The company has made heavy investments into the development of new products and invests in excess of €20 million in R&D every year. Over the period 2005-2010, Pharmathen developed an impressive 10 new molecules annually, while today the company hold more than 35 international patents. Innovative products and technologies are always progressing through the development chain; most recently the company has been focusing on slow release products and new drug delivery systems.

“Our main aim is always to improve patient health and provide a better quality of life for anyone using our products. We look to create new unique products with added value but we also explore ways of extending the lifecycle of older products.” Evangelos Karavas – Vice President of Research & Industrial Operations, Pharmathen

By developing these new products and adapting existing medicines, Pharmathen is consistently improving its competitive advantage in international markets.

“Pharmathen is one of the fastest growing pharmaceutical companies in Greece and one of the largest generic development companies in Europe with a development pipeline of ten generic molecules a year registered in all major EU markets and licensed out to major pharmaceutical companies in Europe, Canada, Australia, South Africa and the United States. It is an outstanding example of how focused specialisation and carefully planned international development can drive outstanding success.”

Phil Forrest, Chairman of Judges, European Business Awards 2011



Looking to the Future...

From its strong foundations in the European market, Pharmathen aims to increase its activity in the United States as well as focusing on emerging markets such as the Middle-East and North Africa regions (MENA), Asia Pacific and the Rest of World (RoW) through the creation of new distribution networks. Other markets that Pharmathen cannot ignore are the heavyweight Chinese and Japanese markets. The company has already opened new regional offices in Jordan and established permanent representation in South America.

The new, technologically-advanced facility in northern Greece has already been approved by European Health Authorities and

has also been approved by Saudi authorities (SFDA) giving Pharmathen access to the important Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) region. In the very near future, Pharmathen is expecting approval by the FDA in the United States which will allow access to the largest pharmaceuticals market in the world.

Pharmathen is looking to expand its own label products and grow the Pharmathen brand internationally. Currently agreements for own label products have been signed in the Middle East and Africa as well as in Latin America. It is hoped that other territories will be signed in the near future.



"This award is an extremely important recognition on a European level. It is an acknowledgement of all the hard work and effort that our staff have put in to making us the fastest growing pharmaceutical company in Europe. It is also a reward for the business choices we made in previous years, that we are reaping the benefits of today."

About Pharmathen

Pharmathen, located in Athens, Greece was founded in 1969 as a private pharmaceutical company. Its 800 employees are involved in the entire product lifecycle including R&D, manufacturing and marketing of pharmaceutical products in more than 85 countries worldwide.

Pharmathen's values have always been to innovate, integrate and expand in international markets. These values have enabled the company to develop a long-term and sustainable exporting strategy.

The company invests almost 14% of its yearly turnover into R&D and has consistently ranked among the largest R&D companies in the E.U. based on the "EU R&D Industrial Scoreboard" – 44th in 2008; 30th in 2009; 32nd in 2010, out of 4500 EU pharmaceuticals companies.

Today, Pharmathen employs more than 130 scientists in three modern research centres. The company holds over 35 patents and is fully integrated from APIs (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients) to finished formulations.

Despite the Greek financial crisis and the global economic downturn, Pharmathen has grown by 25% since 2009 and is expecting 25% organic growth in 2011. In 2011, the company is forecasting a turnover of over €145 million.

About the European Business Awards

Since 2007, the European Business Awards programme has been shining a light on the most pioneering businesses on the continent by promoting excellence, best practice and innovation in the European business community. The awards programme recognises excellence in all disciplines of business including individual business functions. Last year entrants ranged from fish farming organisations to renewable energy firms. Together they had a combined turnover greater than €766 billion Euros (6% of EU GDP) and employed over three and a half million people between them.

Businesses from each of the 28 European territories are invited to enter the Awards. The competition for finalist places is fierce with many of the Europe's most established brands being represented.

The judging panel is comprised of experts in their fields who each bring experience, business acumen and understanding to the board. The overall winners in each of the categories will be announced at the Awards ceremony in Barcelona on 22nd November 2011.



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