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In Quick Succession: Wave Of New Leaders Could Reshape Industry

Numerous Major Off-Patent Players Have Announced New Leadership In Recent Months

by David Wallace

With a number of top generics and biosimilars firms announcing new leaders over the past few months, the industry could be in for some strategic shifts as new faces take the helm at established off-patent players.

Ask an industry onlooker what the following companies have in common – Teva, Viatris, Apotex, Fresenius Kabi, Hikma, Zentiva, Alvotech, Nichi-Iko, Biocon Biologics and Padagis – and they might answer that these firms are among the leading generics and biosimilars players around the world.

While this is accurate, a further characteristic that these firms share is that within the last few months, they have all either implemented or announced leadership changes at the very top of their organization – with such a rapid turnover of leading executives suggesting that fresh strategies and new thinking could be on the way for an unusually high number of off-patent leaders in a short space of time.

One of the industry's most significant appointments took effect on the very first day of 2023, with Richard Francis taking over leadership of Teva from former president and CEO Kåre Schultz on 1 January.

While Francis already has a full plate in managing one of the biggest generics and biosimilars players in the world (*see sidebar*), he has also pledged to conduct a thorough strategic review of the company during his first months in the job.

Francis has suggested that as CEO he will adopt “a purposeful strategy that has real intent behind it,” characterizing this as “[not] a revolution, but also something that is not going to be marginal.” (Also see "[Teva's New CEO Francis: No Revolution, But New Strategy Will Not Be Marginal](#)" - Generics Bulletin, 12 Jan, 2023.)

Even in the earliest days of his tenure, he underlined that “we’ve got to make some choices about what we want to invest in. And that means [thinking about] what we’re going to have to stop investing in.”

And while “we need to keep control of costs to make sure we can keep servicing the debt in the way we are and have been,” Francis said, “I do think we’ve got to make some choices now. Very quickly, this is going to change, the landscape is going to change.”

A full, detailed strategy for Teva is expected to be unveiled mid-year. (Also see "[Teva Promises New Strategy By The Summer, Washes Hands Of \\$1bn US Target](#)" - Generics Bulletin, 9 Feb, 2023.)

Viartis Appointment Suggests Shift Towards Branded Sector

Another leading off-patent player, Viartis, also announced a CEO change in early 2023 – this time, hinting at a strategic shift towards the firm’s interests in the branded sector (*see sidebar*).

Former Celgene executive Scott Smith took over as CEO of Viartis from 1 April, replacing Michael Goettler who has shepherded the firm since its creation through the merger of Mylan with Pfizer’s Upjohn mature brands business in late 2020.

A shift towards branded thinking is natural for Viartis, as in terms of its off-patent interests the firm is increasingly focused on complex generics after having offloaded its significant biosimilars business to partner Biocon Biologics last

Five Things Facing Teva’s New CEO Richard Francis

By [Dean Rudge](#)

24 Nov 2022

With Teva clearing up early who will replace outgoing president and CEO Kåre Schultz, *Generics Bulletin* looks at five issues that await his replacement, the former Sandoz head Richard Francis.

[Read the full article here](#)

Viartis To Bring In Plenty Of Brand Knowledge With New CEO Smith

By [Dean Rudge](#)

27 Feb 2023

Only three months after joining Viartis’ board of directors, Scott Smith, famed for spearheading Celgene’s successful and lucrative Inflammation and Immunology division, has been announced as the

year in a deal worth \$3bn that creates a new global biosimilars industry leader. (Also see "[Biocon Closes \\$3bn Deal For Viatris Biosimilars](#)" - Generics Bulletin, 30 Nov, 2022.)

company's new CEO, beginning 1 April.

[Read the full article here](#)

And Biocon Biologics is itself now under new management, with Shreehas Tambe taking over from Arun Chandavarkar as CEO late last year, shortly after the Viatris transaction closed. (Also see "[Tambe Moves Up To Lead Biocon Biologics](#)" - Generics Bulletin, 6 Dec, 2022.)

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, executive chairperson of Biocon and its Biocon Biologics business, said Tambe and his executive team would be tasked with "building a future-ready, world leading biosimilars player and a well-recognized global brand that is committed to impact global healthcare."

Apotex, Fresenius Kabi And Hikma Welcome New CEOs

Another leading generics and biosimilars player that is new under new management is Apotex, which recently named industry veteran Allan Oberman as CEO, at the same time as the Canadian giant announced the completion of its acquisition by funds advised by SK Capital Partners (*see sidebar*).

Oberman – who replaces Jeff Watson, leader of Apotex since early 2018 (Also see "[Desai resigns as chief of Apotex](#)" - Generics Bulletin, 2 Feb, 2018.) – has been appointed "to transform Apotex into a Canadian-based global health company," according to the firm.

Two major US generic injectables players have also recently appointed new leaders, with Fresenius Kabi bringing in seasoned pharma executive and former Sandoz head for Western Europe, Pierluigi Antonelli, as its new CEO (Also see "[Fresenius Pushes Kabi Even Higher As Former Sandoz Exec Named CEO](#)" - Generics Bulletin, 28 Feb, 2023.) – as Kabi pledged to "deepen our focus" on its generics and biosimilar business – and with Hikma recently promoting its president of injectables, Riad Mishlawi, to become the firm's new CEO from the start of September. (Also see "[Hikma Names Injectables Chief Mishlawi As CEO](#)" - Generics

A New Era: Apotex Gets Fresh Leadership As SK Completes Acquisition

By [David Wallace](#)

11 Apr 2023

As SK Capital Partners completes its acquisition of Apotex, generics industry veteran Allan Oberman has been named as the new president and CEO of the Canadian giant, replacing Jeff Watson who will remain on the company's board.

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Bulletin, 12 Apr, 2023.)

And the list does not end there: recent months have seen a slew of further leadership appointments at top generics and biosimilars firms, including Zentiva recently announcing that former Acino chief Steffen Saltofte would join the firm to succeed Nick Haggar as CEO from 2 May and “lead the further acceleration of Zentiva” (Also see "[Zentiva Enters A New Phase With Saltofte As CEO](#)" - Generics Bulletin, 18 Apr, 2023.); and with ailing Japanese firm Nichi-Iko recruiting Sandoz Japan country head Shingo Iwamoto to become the firm’s next president and CEO, after the resignation of Yuichi Tamura. (Also see "[Who’s Hired? Nichi-Iko Looks To Sandoz For Fresh Leadership](#)" - Generics Bulletin, 31 Jan, 2023.)

Other recent appointments have seen former Perrigo Rx prescription generics unit Padagis name Pam Hoffman to replace Sharon Kochan as president, and Celltrion appoint Tom Nusbickel as chief commercial officer for its new front-end business in the US (Also see "[Who's Hired? Padagis Gets New Leadership](#)" - Generics Bulletin, 13 Mar, 2023.); while Alvotech founder and chair Robert Wessman has asserted further control of the biosimilars specialist by replacing Mark Levick as CEO. (Also see "[Alvotech Switches CEO And Takes COO From Teva](#)" - Generics Bulletin, 2 Dec, 2022.)

And Sandoz – which continues to be led by Richard Saynor as CEO – recently announced that Gilbert Ghostine, CEO of Swiss multinational fragrances business Firmenich, would become chairman of the board for Sandoz after its spinoff from parent company Novartis, which is expected to happen later this year. (Also see "[Who’s Hired? Sandoz Names Post-Spinoff Chair](#)" - Generics Bulletin, 20 Feb, 2023.)

Industry Associations Also See New Leaders

New leadership for the off-patent sector is not limited to individual companies, however. Recent months have also seen major industry associations make changes at the top.

David Gaugh – who took over as interim head of the US Association for Accessible Medicines in late 2022 after former chief Dan Leonard stepped away (Also see "[Leonard Resignation Leaves AAM Looking For New Leadership](#)" - Generics Bulletin, 6 Dec, 2022.) – has also stepped up to become chair of the International Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association following the exit of Jonathan Kimball in connection with his departure from the AAM (*see sidebar*).

IGBA Names New Chair As More Leaders Join CEO Committee

By [David Wallace](#)

14 Apr 2023

The IGBA has named the AAM’s David Gaugh as its chair for the remainder of 2023, following the recent departure of Jonathan Kimball. At

The IGBA has also been pushing forward with a fresh attempt to offer global industry leadership over the past year, in the form of a CEO advisory committee led by Sandoz's Saynor as chair and Lupin CEO Vinita Gupta as vice-chair. (Also see "[Sandoz's Saynor Leads IGBA's CEO Advisory Committee](#)" - Generics Bulletin, 18 Oct, 2022.)

the same time, the international generics and biosimilars association has added two recently-appointed off-patent industry CEOs to its advisory committee, representing Apotex And Viatris.

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The CEO advisory committee – first formed last year (Also see "[IGBA Puts Together Global Leadership Alliance](#)" - Generics Bulletin, 7 Feb, 2022.) – was designed as “a forum for industry leaders to discuss broad, strategic issues, and to engage and position the industry on a range of critical policy matters.”

Reflecting its desire to reflect the most current industry leadership, the IGBA committee has already recruited Teva's Francis, Viatris's Smith and Apotex's Oberman to serve as members.

Do Leadership Changes Offer Opportunities For Others?

Amid such a high turnover of top executives in the generics and biosimilars industry, companies now operating under new leadership may be hoping for fresh perspectives or new thinking to help drive them to new heights.

But where these firms may perceive the upside arising from their fresh leadership, others will be looking to capitalize on potential upheaval and disruption among rivals to push forward with their existing interests.

Amneal co-CEOs Chintu and Chirag Patel – themselves no strangers to management changes, having been brought back in to lead the generics firm and replace new leaders that had been installed after a merger with Impax (Also see "[Chirag Patel And Chintu Patel Return As Co-CEOs Of Amneal](#)" - Generics Bulletin, 5 Aug, 2019.) – seem to spy an opportunity as peers transition to new management.

Amneal CEO: Changes At Teva, Sandoz And Viatris Give Us Room To Grow

By [David Wallace](#)

19 Jan 2023

Amid upheaval for leading industry players Sandoz, Teva and Viatris, Amneal sees room to grow both in its home market and internationally, according to co-CEO Chirag Patel.

[Read the full article here](#)

“The changes that are happening in the market are actually favorable to us, such as Sandoz going

public by itself, Teva having a new leadership and Viartis focusing on other areas,” commented Chirag Patel earlier this year (*see sidebar*).

Such a period of change among the leading off-patent companies “leaves a very wide, mid-sized company like us to grow,” Patel suggested. “And that’s what we’re going to capitalize on [in the] next five years.”