

Dr. Sanjay Advani, The Standard Newspaper – Tuesday 1, December 2009, Published Article

Beta Healthcare to Roll Out More Brands

The drug maker will improve its revenue through the acquisition and partnerships with other pharmaceutical firms. Beta Healthcare Kenya has acquired Colgate Palmolive's manufacturing plant in Nairobi's industrial area. The firm wants to use the facility to diversify its product offerings in the local and regional market. The deal, which Beta Healthcare General Manager Sanjay Advani said work to refurbish the plant is on and would end before March next year.

Colgate Palmolive ceased manufacturing in Kenya in 2006 and tendered out its plant after a review of its marketing and distribution operations. The review process was to explore cost cutting ways for the multinational and also efficiently use its global supply chain system.

Though Beta Healthcare decries high cost of production and other challenges in the country, in the last one year including low consumer spending and a dip in the sales volumes. The firm is optimistic about the prospects in the local and regional markets. Through the manufacturing plant and partnerships with other international pharmaceutical companies, it will introduce lifestyle drugs in the market. This is a radical shift in strategy for the company that has been known for its over the counter pain management drugs.

Dr. Advani said the firm would in the next five months introduce the range of products that would also be available over the counter. "This will enable us diversify our products and increase revenue", he said.

Imports

The firm will, at first import drugs from India, but will switch to local production once the local plant systems are complete, he said. The new line of products will include vitality and energy supplements, women weight loss pills, memory enhancing products for adults and children and a product for strengthening bones. The firm expects to capture the market in the next three years and hopefully doubles its revenues, Advani said.

The target market is rather new and could prove difficult for the drug maker. This is because lifestyle drugs in the market are imported and target high-end consumers. A month's supply of Slimming pills, for instance, retails at KShs. 2,000.

The firm will also have to contend with negative perception on such a cluster of medication in the market. Medical experts have warned of side effects that come with use of such drugs as sex-drive enhancing drugs or slimming pills like the threat of heart disease.

"The products are herbal in nature and have no side effects. They are affordable, for example a monthly supply of Slim Trim, which is the weight loss drug, will go for about Sh 400," he said. "Many of our earlier products have been popular with the older generation but had problems with the younger generation.