

Imperial hones animal healthcare expertise in partnership with Boehringer Ingelheim

Through its successful partnership with client Boehringer Ingelheim, Imperial Health Sciences has added a new dimension to its well established reputation as Africa's leading partner in the healthcare supply chain. The company has added the distribution of veterinary medicine to its service offering, and is making significant inroads into this sector of the pharmaceutical distribution market. Managing director Lara Haigh reveals that when Imperial secured a national distribution contract for Boehringer Ingelheim's pharmaceuticals, consumer healthcare commodities and animal health products, it represented the organisation's first foray into the distribution of veterinary medicine.

She notes that in addition to successfully diversifying into animal healthcare through its partnership, Imperial also succeeded in providing Boehringer Ingelheim with a smooth transition from its previous logistics service provider.

"The idea of transitioning to a new logistics service provider can be extremely daunting, because of the potential market disruption, the possible financial impact, the effect on customer service and even on the principal's marketshare," Haigh notes. *"With a project management team focused purely on Boehringer Ingelheim, we developed a project plan and offered our client guidance and support, to make the move as smooth and painless as possible."*

The company also rose to the challenges posed by its move into animal healthcare. *"To ensure that all activity is tracked and service levels are met, we recognised the need to invest in human resources dedicated to the veterinary medicines side of Boehringer Ingelheim's business. We aligned ourselves with regulations in the industry and dedicated personnel were trained by Boehringer Ingelheim. We upskilled our people to deal with a brand new sector and new channels of veterinary practices."*

Just over a year since the inception of the partnership, Imperial's relationship with Boehringer Ingelheim has gone from strength to strength. *"Imperial has become an extension of Boehringer Ingelheim's supply chain, as opposed to merely a service provider,"* Haigh enthuses.

The company has also increased its exposure in the animal health sector, having honed its expertise in this market through its work with Boehringer Ingelheim. *“We are aiming to make further inroads into this market, where we believe that a gap exists in the logistics and distribution solutions available for veterinary medicine,”* she concludes.

The Boehringer Ingelheim group is one of the top 20 pharmaceutical companies in the world. Since it was founded in 1885, the family-owned company has been committed to researching, developing, manufacturing and marketing novel medications of high therapeutic value for human and veterinary medicine.