

BD: Healthcare Worker Safety

Contributed by the Shared Value Initiative



COMPANY DESCRIPTION

Becton, Dickinson (BD), founded in 1897, is a global medical technology company that manufactures and sells medical supplies, devices, laboratory equipment, and diagnostic products. Based in New Jersey, BD operates in over 50 countries worldwide, employs 30,000 people, with \$8.1 billion in annual revenue (2013).



BD SafetyGlide™ Needle; credit: bd.com

THE OPPORTUNITY

In the early-to-mid-1980s, journal articles, CDC data, and advocacy by academics and healthcare worker unions raised the issue of needle-stick injuries and their potential to transmit the HIV virus and other infections to healthcare workers. Several visible cases of injury, combined with effective activism, gained the attention of the health field. BD recognized this and safety problem as a social need and a business opportunity, and in 1988, it introduced the first safety syringe, incorporating a sliding safety shield to protect the needle after use, reducing the risk of injury and infection. To pursue this opportunity:

- BD needed to understand the range of usage circumstances that presented sharp object injury risks to health workers and understand how product innovations could address the issue
- Given the initial lack of prioritization of this issue by healthcare organizations, BD would have to develop a strategy to engage healthcare facilities, frontline workers, and their stakeholders

THE STRATEGY

Realizing that product development alone would not be enough, BD built a shared value strategy:

- **Reconceiving products and markets:** BD developed the industry's broadest array of safety-engineered devices, including "needleless" systems that eliminated the need to use traditional needles in the highest-frequency category for sharps injuries
- **Improving the local operating environment:** BD forged local partnerships and health clusters to help raise awareness of the issues, influenced national policies on healthcare worker safety, trained hospital workers, and provided unrestricted grants for tracking and analysis of needle-stick injuries. This served to accelerate the health system's adoption of safety devices

RESULTS – VALUE FOR BUSINESS AND SOCIETY

BD's safety strategy, first in the U.S., and then globally, has led to substantial business growth and reduction in sharps injuries.

Business results:

- BD's safety devices grew from approximately \$5 million in revenue (1988) to approximately \$250 million in revenue (1999) to \$2.1 billion in revenue (2013)
- Sales of safety devices in emerging markets have accelerated, with 2012 growth of 25%, and over 42% growth in China alone
- Safety devices have been BD's single largest source of growth over the past 25 years, and BD leaders anticipate that safety-engineered devices will continue to be a source of positive sales growth for the company over the next five to ten years
- BD has gained competitive advantage and enhanced its margin in a traditionally lower-margin, high-volume business

Social results:

- Data from the International Healthcare Worker Safety Center indicated that sharps injuries to nurses declined by 51% between 1993 and 2004
- By the late 2000s, BD supported policy changes in many countries, including the United States, the European Union, Russia, Brazil, and Taiwan; key legislation required the use of safety devices in health facilities

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LESSONS LEARNED, CHALLENGES AND OUTLOOK

BD's remarkable growth in safety products has illuminated key lessons:

- BD was able to design products and provide comprehensive education to local providers by partnering with leading scholars, researchers, and healthcare worker safety advocates
- BD continues to innovate, developing new safety products and incubating opportunities in developing countries through its Global Health function; products such as the Emerald Syringe, which has reuse prevention and safety features, will reach more health workers globally while also reducing cost and waste

BD believes that there are still substantial opportunities to improve safety:

- In the U.S., non-hospital sites have not fully transitioned to safety technology
- Internationally, most countries have lower rates of transition to safety devices versus the U.S.
- Based on the high infectious disease prevalence among patients in many developing countries, there is an important need for safety products in areas such as sub-Saharan Africa