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30th November 2023

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Letter of Condolence

I am deeply saddened by the demise of Professor Rashid Bhikha. I have shared some of my most personal feelings during this difficult time with close Family, friends and the Bhikha Family.

Whilst I do think that this time remains personal, it may help to share what I submitted almost 5 years ago to the Pharmacy Council on Professor Bhikha's legacy. Reading it again reminded me of the enormous contribution this man made to our profession and our country, and the testimony of how hard work and resilience pays off.

I hope reading this will continue to inspire people and add to the eternal reward of our beloved Mr Bhikha.

Many thanks once again to the Bhikha Family in allowing us a platform to express our feelings during this difficult time.

Warm Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Muhammad Bodhania', written over a horizontal line.

Muhammad Bodhania
CEO



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19th May 2019

To whom it May Concern,

Reference Letter in Favour of Professor Rashid Bhikha for the South African Pharmacy Council's Legacy Award

Rashid Bhikha is a pharmaceutical legend. The Award may further underline this fact or confirm it for those people unaware of his reach and influence in the pharmaceutical industry. Here's why I say this.

1. It takes a special type of black person to open a pharmaceutical factory in South Africa during apartheid. Rashid Bhikha didn't only do this successfully but he went on to grow that factory and his business during the darkest days of Apartheid. This bears testimony to his resolve, his tenacity, mental strength and overall entrepreneurial spirit. This would also not have been possible were it not for his high level of professionalism because of the requirements of a highly regulated pharmaceutical environment.
2. The business that he created went on to act as a training ground for many young black pharmacists. In my 8 years at Be-Tabs, the company created by Rashid Bhikha, I do not remember a single year that we did not have a pharmacy internship programme running. In fact, I joined as an intern and after about 5 years, I ran the internship programme for 5 interns in one year. Rashid Bhikha unselfishly taught what he knew and encouraged an environment of learning.
 - a. And it was not only pharmacists that learnt. I think Be-Tabs was one of the first companies to open its doors to training new MCC inspectors, in both the factory and laboratory.
 - b. Some technicians in the factory with experience as old as myself when I just joined knew more than most interns, and most of them acknowledged that they were taught by the "old man".
3. Many of the pharmacy interns at Be-Tabs have become CEO's and/or shareholders of their own pharmaceutical/healthcare companies today. Some that immediately come to mind are listed hereunder:
 - a. Salma Ebrahim, Twinz
 - b. Salima Ismail, Zimbili Pharma
 - c. Suhail Gani, Austell Laboratories
 - d. Imran Suliman, Innovata
 - e. Hashim Bhikha, Apothecan Labs
 - f. Muhammad Bodhania, Oethmaan Biosims



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4. Be-Tabs also produced pharmacists who occupy or occupied senior executive positions in bigger pharmaceutical corporations, like Adcock Ingram, Sun Pharma, etc. like
 - a. Zeyn Limbada
 - b. Grace Job
5. Be-Tabs also produced non-pharmacists that currently occupy senior executive positions (CEO/COO) in pharma companies, like:
 - a. Arshad Bera, CEO, Unimed
 - b. Moosa Areff, COO, Kiara Healthcare
 - c. Avi Ramcharand, ex-CEO Aurobindo SA
6. Besides people, product and technology innovation over 25 years had a national impact as illustrated by some of the following examples
 - a. The introduction of "piggy-back registrations" was pioneered by Rashid Bhikha. This was effectively a clone product that was contract manufactured by Be-Tabs but marketed by another company. This introduced competition in the market and made generic medicines even more affordable and accessible. This model gave rise to many new generic companies, like the establishment of Medpro Phamaceutica, that later went on to become Cipla Medpro, the 3rd largest generic company in South Africa at some point.
 - b. The introduction of PRP's (Patient Ready Packs) into the State sector, thereby reducing costs to the State of medicines that is still very prevalent today in our current tender system.
7. Rashid Bhikha, being the classical entrepreneur he was, was also a first mover once the end of apartheid ended sanctions in South Africa.
 - a. Be-Tabs became the first company to tie up with an Indian company thereby giving them access to new products and technologies from India, as well as access to competitively priced API's and finished product.
 - b. The increased popularity with new healthcare products in the form of herbal and other nutraceutical products was also spotted by Rashid Bhikha. The launch of Tibb Healthcare, focussed on herbal medicines saw the company export products manufactured in its plant to the Middle East, particularly Dubai and Saudi Arabia, as well as to Malaysia. Tibb Healthcare still exists as a separate company today, having outlived Be-Tabs that was eventually sold.
8. The increased capability and competencies developed by Rashid Bhikha had no limit. He encouraged wider industry participation and Be-Tabs was the first black owned company to place a person of colour on the NAPM Executive. The NAPM (National Association of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers) was the trade association that represented local manufacturers and generic companies, and boasted the largest local companies, Adcock Ingram and South African Druggists (now Aspen) as their members.



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In conclusion, all this was in my 8 years with the man, and he has been a pharmacist for 50 years. Makes you think, doesn't it?

Please feel free to contact me for further information.

Yours faithfully,



Muhammad Bodhania

About Muhammad Bodhania

Muhammad Bodhania is a qualified pharmacist and has spent some twenty-nine years in the pharmaceutical industry. His roles have included all aspects of the professions, including production pharmacist, factory manager, operations manager, new markets executive, commercial director and managing director.

In 2003, Muhammad started a new black empowered pharmaceutical company, Medreich SA, with overseas partners and held the position of Managing Director. Muhammad was a Director on the Board of Adcock Ingram Limited India between 2007 and 2016.

In 2016, Muhammad bought out the majority shareholders of Medreich SA to own 100% of the company and changed the name to Oethmaan Biosims (Pty) Ltd.

Over the years Muhammad has also played an active role in the pharmaceutical industry serving on the National Association of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers (NAPM)/ (GBMSA), International Generic and Biosimilars Association (IGBA), and the Industry Task Group (ITG).