

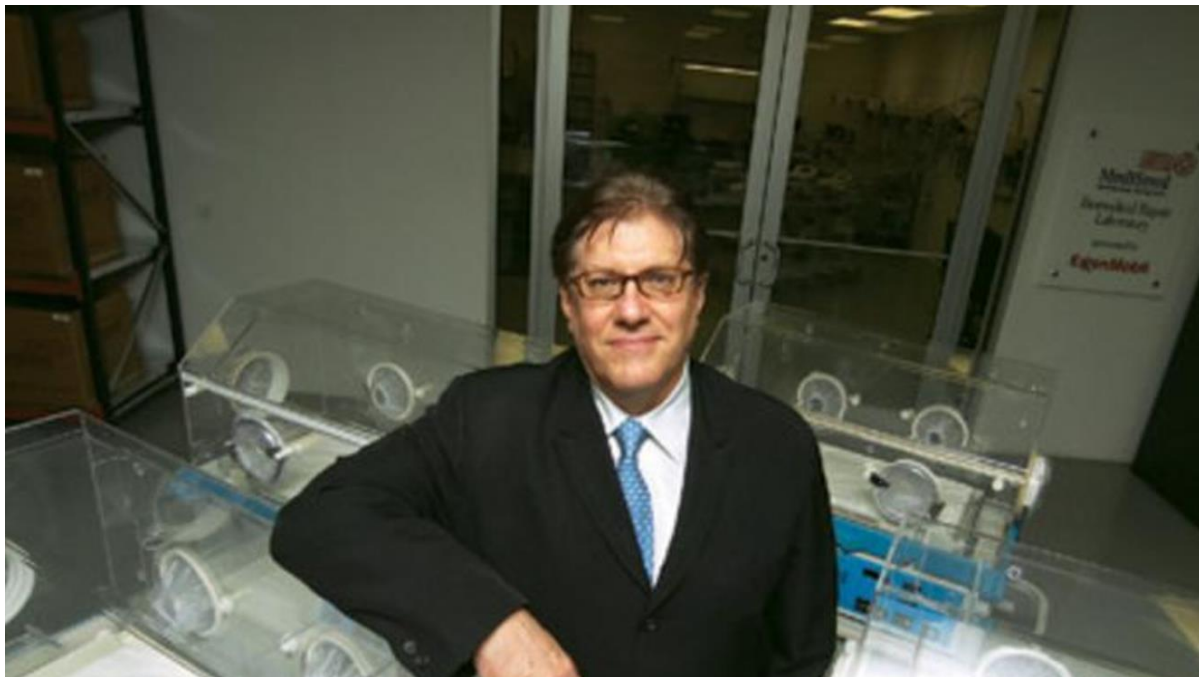
Medicine man

CEO Nick Hallack brings an all-business approach to the global nonprofit, MEDISEND INTERNATIONAL

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MediSend International began with a simple but profound mission: Improve the health of people in developing countries.

In the early days, that meant sending medicine by the suitcase with medical volunteers. But new leadership, in the form of a business savvy CEO, has significantly boosted the nonprofit's reach.



Dallas-based MediSend International distributes medical supplies and equipment, helps provide emergency medical relief to victims of disasters and offers educational programs to train program participants to repair and maintain biomedical equipment. It works with the World Health

Organization, Save the Children, the International Red Cross and others to make sure that the goods reach those in need.

The organization has just 14 employees but gets ongoing assistance from a cadre of volunteers. It also gets solid corporate support from heavy hitters such as the Exxon Mobil Foundation, and has a number of strategic partners - - manufacturers, distributors and hospital systems -- that donate medical supplies and equipment.

Founded in the early 1990s, the organization really began to take off after President and CEO Nick Hallack joined three years ago. A chance encounter led to the opportunity.

Hallack formerly handled finance, marketing and international business development for a European luxury goods company, jetting back and forth between offices in New York and France. Tired of his high-flying life, he decided to cash out and retire in Paris.

About three years ago, Hallack was in Dallas visiting family when he needed back surgery. It ended up being performed by MediSend's founder, Dr. Mark Lazar.

Hallack became enamored with the mission of the group, and MediSend knew it could benefit from Hallack's business expertise. The strategies and systems he has since implemented have dramatically broadened the group's reach. What once was a small charity has become a global do-gooder. In 2006, MediSend delivered about \$20 million in medical supplies and equipment to developing countries.

Soon after joining, Hallack spent several months drafting a strategic three-year business plan for MediSend. It led to new supply-chain management and processing systems that allow participants to order medical supplies and equipment online. It also led to the development of one of the largest biomedical repair laboratories in the area, as well as an equipment-repair school for students in developing nations.

Hallack focuses on three things -- performance, accountability and quality -- and says they work hand in hand. For example, a feature that allows donors to track exactly where their donation is during the process, helps with credibility when MediSend is reaching out to large corporations. They expect that kind of accountability from the organizations they support, Hallack says.

"We offer consistency, predictability and stability, and that resonates well," he says.

Exxon Mobil Foundation supports MediSend through the company's African Health Initiative, which has donated \$100 million in programs to combat malaria in African countries where it does business. The relationship began about seven years ago, says Bob Ball, African Health Initiative program director.

"We've been impressed with their business-like approach to getting the job done," Ball says of MediSend.

Staying nimble

Looking forward, MediSend aims to soon provide fully stocked biomedical equipment repair kits through companies that offer hospital supplies.

"If you're nimble, you can get things to market much more quickly," Hallack said, adding that he sees innovation as one of the hallmarks of MediSend.

"We were able to get the biomedical lab repair program from idea to fruition in six to eight months," he says. "The extensions of our services are very logical" -- and all in line with the overarching goal to help make the recipients of the medical supplies and equipment more self-sufficient.

Tom Reisenbichler, managing director at the architecture firm Perkins & Will, created MediSend's education and lab space. Supporting the organization is a natural fit, said Reisenbichler, who has long worked in the health care industry and joined the nonprofit's board about 18 months ago.

Reisenbichler said he's impressed with the depth of talent Hallack has drawn to the organization -- as well as Hallack's own abilities.

"I didn't recognize ahead of time the quality of the things he has been able to achieve," Reisenbichler says. "He has the vision."