

Mission-Driven

An Interview with Stephen Shaya, M.D., Executive Servant Leader, J&B Medical

EDITORS' NOTE Since 2004, Dr. Stephen Shaya has been the Executive Servant Leader at J&B Medical, a global healthcare solutions company. His role oversees all strategy, innovation and growth for the company. He has received many recognitions including the 2015 Global Distinguished Healthcare Award from the Center of Economic and Leadership Development, and a United States Congressional Commendation. In 2017, Dr. Shaya was named the American Diabetes "Father of the Year." Dr. Shaya spoke at the Vatican in 2018 on how leveraging technology could help extend care globally. He currently sits on a number of boards including as the Chairman of the American Diabetes Association in Michigan, Henry Ford Hospital (West Bloomfield) Board, Citizen's Rx, and Velatura. In addition, he is the Managing Director of Akkad Holdings, a global family office which deploys growth capital around the world. Dr. Shaya graduated from Birmingham Brother Rice High School summa cum laude and was awarded a Merit Scholarship to attend Wayne State University. He attended Wayne State University Medical School and graduated in 1996. Dr. Shaya subsequently finished training in Family Practice at North Oakland Medical Center.



Stephen Shaya

business enterprises and has customers in 48 states and 28 countries. The company has brought many new ideas and solutions forward to the delivery of care and continues to strive to improve patient access and quality.

Will you discuss the history of J&B Medical and how the business has evolved?

Our history and heritage starts with my grandmother. My grandmother was a midwife in Iraq in a small rocky Christian enclave. She had 10 children. While the tenth child was in utero, my grandfather passed away. My grandmother raised all 10 children and, as a midwife, delivered thousands of babies during that time since they didn't have hospitals nearby. She delivered many, many people who are in my community today. She came from a modest background, but she was rich in family and rich in spirit which is what mattered. Part of her DNA was a calling for service.

My grandmother came to the United States with my mother in 1966. My mother and father met here and it was a typical immigrant story. My father trained to get a medical degree at the University of Michigan and was working several jobs during that time. We had an amazing childhood and my parents always believed, even when they had nothing, that it was important to give back.

When my father got his medical degree in pathology, he opened up a small boutique medical lab which he kept for more than 10 years. When the medical lab sold, he was retired for

about five weeks. My mother basically told him that he needed to go find a job so he started a medical supply company in 1996 since he could not get back into the lab business because of a non-compete. At that point, I was finishing up medical school. I came to the company a couple months after he started and I spent three years with him. We grew J&B to what it is today which is a global healthcare company.

Everything was based on the premise that we were a platform of purpose and possibilities. We truly believed that providing access to affordable healthcare was a right and we were going to find as many ways as we could to achieve as many efficiencies as possible to make that happen. That is the pretense of J&B Medical.

Is the J&B Medical brand well-understood and is building brand awareness a focus for you?

I like to describe our thought process to date as being all steak, no sizzle. When people come to J&B from around the world, they are amazed at all the different innovative, creative, game-changing things that we are doing on a daily basis. They're absolutely astounded. I think in this new age, it is becoming increasingly important to tell our story. Our DNA is that we're a very mission-driven, purposeful company. A company based on purpose and possibilities and passion.

When people come to visit us, they feel it. They embrace it. I think it is very important to go out there and tell our story and just be who we are, which is authentic people and it's very real and genuine. It's a phenomenal story. J&B truly epitomizes what makes our country so great.

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As J&B Medical has grown in size and scale, has it been important to maintain the family culture?

My mom and dad are still very involved in the business and I think that's important to set the mission, the values, the vision, and the strategic direction for J&B. J&B is a family business. The fact that my parents have stayed engaged and have kept our Midwest approach is very important. Everything that we've done at J&B has been about how we plant these seeds and create these opportunities that are going to blossom not just over quarters and months, but over years.

We take a very long ball approach and that has paid off in a variety of ways. One of the advantages we have is that my parents, despite people knocking on our door regularly to invest and/or acquire J&B, have never taken outside monies in our company. I think that has been a very important decision that my parents have made to preserve the values and the vision of J&B.

There are a lot of legends in the cemetery, but there are very few legacies. My parents view J&B as their legacy and there's so many people that we go out and help provide access to care that haven't had it



J&B Medical's headquarters in Wixom, Michigan

around the globe. When you help people reach their health potential, they can reach their human potential and we passionately believe that.

J&B is a company that has been built around purpose. Do you feel that it is a responsibility of leading companies today to be focused on more than just the bottom line?

The people that we're hiring want to know what we're about and what we stand for. People want to be a part of something bigger than themselves. I think customers are more engaged in wanting to know what you're about and what your corporate sustainability programs are.

One of our best programs has been a program that we've run in Atlanta, Georgia, with a group called Bobby Dodd Institute. Bobby Dodd has service-disabled veterans with disabilities and other people with disabilities that they hire and provide employment to. We have today over 100 employees at that facility in Atlanta. I was just there a couple weeks ago. One of our employees has visual impairments and her guide dog is Hook. He's definitely a rockstar for our company.

I am so proud every time I go down there and see what we're doing. It's about the health of the

patients, it's about the health of the employees and it's about the health of the community. I think we need to redefine and reimagine how we see health and I think you need all three pillars if you really want to make a difference.

It is important that we're engaged with the community. It's important that people see that we're trying to make a difference. People want to be part of something and today it's unfortunate that our world is very divided religiously, culturally, and politically. I think people are looking to be part of something that's positive, part of something that can make a difference. We rise by lifting others and we're all in this together and we can't leave anyone behind. ●

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