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Mylan Inc.

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Introduction

Mylan Inc. stands as a quintessential narrative of American entrepreneurial spirit, relentless ambition, and the ever-evolving landscape of the global pharmaceutical industry. From its humble beginnings in the early 1960s in a small Appalachian town, Mylan grew to become a formidable player, not just in generic drugs, but in the broader pursuit of affordable and accessible healthcare across continents. This book, "Mylan Inc.: The Story of An American Company," explores this multifaceted journey, offering an in-depth chronicle of pivotal moments, visionary leaders, bold acquisitions, and the enduring drive to surmount obstacles at every turn.

At its inception, Mylan was a modest distributor aiming to serve the underserved—an identity rooted in the ideals of community and social good. Driven by founders Milan Puskar and Don Panoz, their early struggles reflected the challenges faced by many small businesses in rural America. The decision to transition from distributing drugs to manufacturing them was not just a pivotal strategic shift—it marked the emergence of Mylan as an innovator, willing to invest in capabilities that would underpin its rise as a leader in the generics market. These early decades saw remarkable resilience, including weathering internal crises, incremental regulatory hurdles, and shifts in the external economic environment.

Mylan's evolution cannot be understood without appreciating its bold embrace of opportunity and its continual reinvention through acquisitions and technological innovation. The company's entry into brand-name pharmaceuticals, for instance, signaled a willingness to defy convention. Mergers and the acquisition of entities across the globe—most notably in India, Europe, and emerging markets—transformed Mylan into a global colossus, shaping policies and practices in ways that reverberated well beyond American borders. The creation of a robust biosimilars pipeline and investments in R&D showed that Mylan was not just a powerhouse in volume but sought to be an industry pioneer.

Yet, Mylan's ascent was neither smooth nor devoid of controversy. Alongside the success stories were public scandals, courtrooms, and congressional hearings that brought the company under intense scrutiny. The EpiPen pricing controversy, executive compensation debates, and legal disputes over drug classification and price-fixing captured headlines and ignited debate about the responsibilities of pharmaceutical firms in modern society. These events serve as important case studies in corporate governance, ethics, and the complex interdependencies between business, government, and patient welfare.

Financially, Mylan's trajectory is impressive—a climb from regional distributor to an

S&P 500 giant with multi-billion-dollar revenues and operations spanning more than 90 countries. But numbers alone do not capture the impact of a business whose products touch tens of millions of lives, particularly in developing countries and among populations for whom affordable medicine is the difference between life and death.

The culmination of Mylan's journey came in 2020 with its merger to form Viatris, a new global healthcare powerhouse. In examining Mylan's history, present circumstances, and future prospects, this book seeks to provide not only a record of corporate milestones but also an exploration of the broader shifts in healthcare, policy, and commerce that made Mylan's story possible—and instructive—for generations to come.

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CHAPTER ONE: Origins in Appalachia: The Founding of Mylan

The year was 1961, and the rolling hills of West Virginia, particularly the serene setting of White Sulphur Springs, bore witness to the unassuming genesis of what would become a global pharmaceutical giant: Mylan Pharmaceuticals. It was here, far from the bustling industrial centers of the Northeast, that two ambitious former U.S. Army buddies, Milan Puskar and Don Panoz, decided to embark on a venture that would profoundly impact healthcare access for millions.

Their initial headquarters was as modest as their aspirations were grand—an abandoned skating rink. This unconventional starting point perfectly encapsulated the resourceful spirit that would define Mylan's early years. Rather than a sterile laboratory or a sleek corporate office, the echoes of roller skates and laughter once filled the space where plans for drug distribution were now being laid.

Puskar and Panoz had met during their military service, both stationed in Japan, and a bond formed over their shared entrepreneurial drive. Upon their return to the United States, Panoz, with an idea brewing, approached Puskar about establishing a pharmaceutical company in West Virginia. Puskar's response, a simple "Why not?", signaled the start of a partnership that, despite future challenges and temporary separations, laid the bedrock for Mylan.

The problem they aimed to tackle was straightforward yet pervasive: access to affordable medicine, especially in underserved rural areas. In communities scattered across the Appalachian region, vital medications were often expensive and difficult to obtain due to their inaccessibility. Mylan's founders envisioned a solution to this disparity, a mission that would guide the company's trajectory.

In its very earliest days, Mylan operated as a drug distributor. This meant that instead of manufacturing their own products, they purchased finished goods from suppliers like Stanley Tutag and then resold them. Their sales strategy was equally grassroots: from the trunk of an old Pontiac Bonneville, they would deliver medicines directly to pharmacies and doctors, particularly those located in the more remote corners of Appalachia.

This direct-to-customer approach, while labor-intensive, built crucial relationships and provided an intimate understanding of the market's needs. It allowed Mylan to identify gaps in supply and demand, informing their future decisions on which medicines to prioritize. The founders quickly learned the specific challenges faced by healthcare

providers and patients in these often-overlooked communities.

The company's initial focus on distribution reflected the immediate need for reliable access to pharmaceuticals. It was a practical entry point into the complex world of healthcare, allowing Puskar and Panoz to establish a foothold and build a network before venturing into more capital-intensive endeavors. This early phase, though perhaps lacking the glamour of later manufacturing triumphs, was essential for developing the business acumen and market insights that would prove invaluable.

Mylan's journey from a small distributor to a global pharmaceutical leader was not a sudden leap but a series of deliberate steps, each building upon the last. The unassuming start in White Sulphur Springs, with its abandoned skating rink and a Pontiac Bonneville serving as a mobile pharmacy, was a testament to the founders' ingenuity and their commitment to a simple yet powerful idea: making medicine more accessible to those who needed it most. It was a humble beginning for a company that would eventually leave an indelible mark on the pharmaceutical industry, both in America and across the world.

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