

Gregory Wasson

Former President and CEO of Walgreens

Greg Wasson is the former President and CEO of Walgreens, the largest drugstore chain in the U.S. He took the reigns during a historic economic downturn and while our country's healthcare system was in the midst of large-scale reforms. He transformed an iconic company and helped change an entire industry for generations to come, ensuring that Walgreens would play a much larger role in the delivery of healthcare in the United States. Today, Wasson is co-founder of Wasson Enterprise, an investment firm that specializes in healthcare, technology, and innovative consumer and shopping solutions. Additionally, Greg co-founded CoolerScreens, an innovative in-store digital marketing and merchandising platform transforming retail point of sale media.

Exclusively represented by [Leading Authorities speakers bureau](#), Wasson discusses leading a global business, transforming an iconic brand, and the current state of healthcare in the U.S. From developing brand mantras, cultural beliefs, and store designs to deciding on the right partners for international acquisitions and expansion, he shares what he learned leading Walgreens and studying the most innovative retail concepts in the world. His presentations pull from his experience leading one of the world's most-respected brands and the pharmacy by which all others are measured.

During his CEO tenure, Wasson delivered total shareholder returns exceeding the S&P 500 and generated more free cash flow over six years than in the previous 98 combined. Known for his willingness to take large risks, he also spearheaded a string of big-money deals that moved the company into new markets. He is credited with creating significant financial and shareholder value, initiating and completing game-changing mergers and acquisitions, leading complex organizational and structural change, assembling a diverse and high-performance senior leadership team, and establishing Walgreens position as an industry leader. Before retiring from Walgreens, Greg had transformed an iconic 114-year-old domestic company into the first global pharmacy-led, health, well-being, and beauty enterprise via the successful merger with European-based Alliance Boots to create Walgreens Boots Alliance. In 2014, Walgreens Boots Alliance had a record fiscal year with \$76.4 billion of sales, 8,309 locations, and 251,000 employees.

Wasson joined Walgreens in 1980 as a pharmacy intern. He rose to managing pharmacies in Houston and later became regional vice president of store operations. From there he took on various executive roles in the health initiatives division and was ultimately promoted to COO in 2007 and CEO in 2009.

On becoming CEO, Wasson focused on tackling the commoditization of retail consumer sales and pharmacy services, rising drug prices, and mounting reimbursement costs. He launched "Walgreens Plan to Win" which transitioned the company from its previous strategy of rapid store expansion to one of improving the customer experience. He utilized Walgreens' key real estate properties (the company had amassed some of the most valuable retail real estate in the country) and launched a rebranding campaign that revamped the look and feel of its stores, expanded healthcare services, and enhanced cosmetics counters and fresh food offerings. He also decentralized leadership to move decision-making to those closest to the core business and empowered his executive team to tackle big decisions. Wasson crystallized the company around three strategic growth drivers: creating a "Well Experience," advancing the role of community pharmacy in healthcare, and establishing an efficient global platform.

In addition to Walgreens, Wasson also serves on the boards of Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC), The Economic Club of Chicago, Corporate Leadership Center, and the Museum of Science and Industry. He is a past board member of Verizon Communications Inc., PNC Financial Services Group, Alliance Boots' and AmerisourceBergen's.

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