

Balancing science and management

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	<p><u>Biotechnology</u></p> <p>Dr Subir Basak CEO and CCO, Intas Biopharmaceuticals</p>
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It has often been preconceived that good scientists can never be good managers and vice versa. Subir Basak, chief executive officer and chief commercial officer, Intas Biopharmaceuticals unshackles that view. Basak does not comply with the concept of working in water-tight compartments but in a unison between research and development (R&D), manufacturing, and regulatory departments in biotechnology.

He brings along a track record of over 20 years in biotech and pharma, having worked with the leading pharma and biotech majors. Basak procured a bachelor of science (BSc) degree in chemical engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee, in 1991. He then completed his masters in biotechnology and bioengineering from Purdue University in 1992. He recalls, "While at Purdue, we published a couple of papers. Merck got interested in our research as they were looking at cost affective ways of making high quality vaccines. I got a Merck scholarship to work in the area of fermentation and purification." Many of Basak's findings in the area had been implemented by Merck into its vaccine products. By the age of 24, Basak got his PhD degree in biotechnology.

He then went on to work with Bayer which came up with the world's first recombinant Factor VIII, a clotting protein for patients

with bleeding disorders. Within five years he had overseen Bayer's products right from its R&D, production, and regulatory stages. Having garnered hands on expertise in R&D, Basak decided to pursue a full-time MBA course from Kellogs School of Management, specializing in strategy, finance, marketing, and organizational behavior. Post Kellogs, he worked at Amgen, which had in its portfolio blockbuster products like EPO and PEG-GCSF.

Basak returned to India in 2005 to join Biocon's formulation business. In 2007, he joined Dr Reddy's Labs where, along with its biosimilar business, he gained experience in the branded generics. In 2010, he joined Celestial Biologicals which is into the business of plasma-derived products (a part of Intas Biopharma). Since then Basak oversees the overall operations and all functions including R&D, manufacturing, quality, medical affairs, domestic and international commercial operations at Intas Biopharmaceuticals. "We sell three proteins via Celestial and five via Intas Biopharma."

Basak has been proactively involved in bringing about a close partnering between R&D and manufacturing and good alignment of teams across functions. This has yielded good results for Intas Biopharma for its products. Apart from being a prominent manufacturer of EPO, Intas today has four to five products in the pipeline, Rituximab being the lead product. "Rituximab has a unique technology and within 12-15 months this product would enter the market. We are now in the process of advanced clinical trials," informs Basak. Basak is also engaged in a couple of human resource activities. He has also introduced leadership training programmes for all managers to create smart talent pool.

Nayantara Som Banerjee in Mumbai