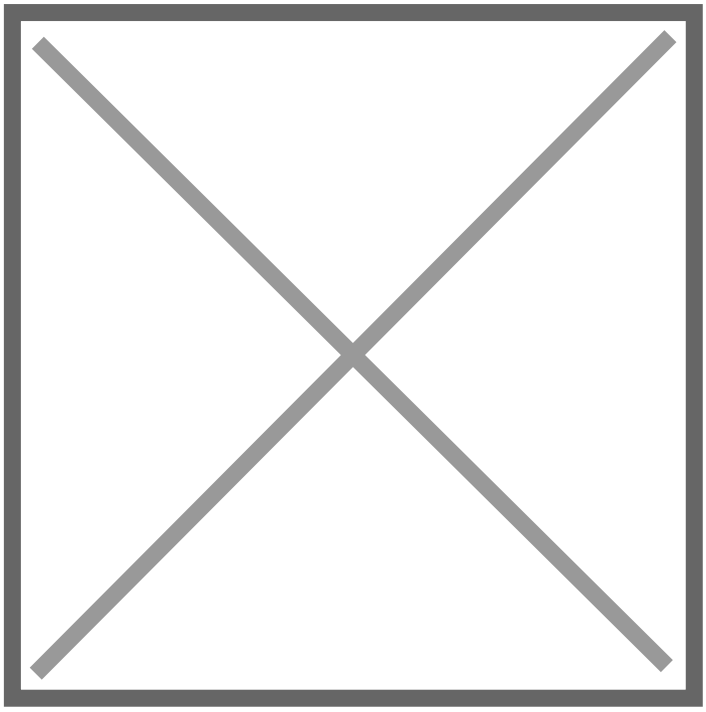
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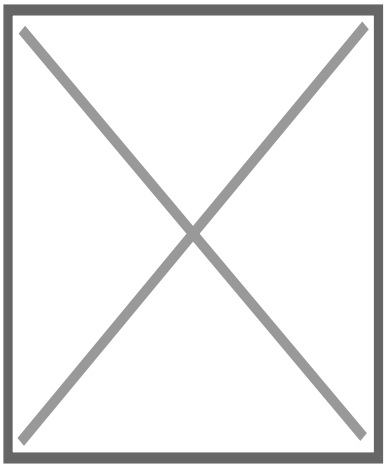
"Asia-Pacific is a high growth market and we are investing in this region,"

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Dr Poonam Taneja, director of sales, MDS AT



US-based MDS Analytical Technologies (MDS AT) is one of leading global suppliers of life sciences tools that comprises two main channel brands-Sciex and Molecular Devices. MDS is focusing on India in a very big way and making aggressive investments. In an exclusive interaction with BioSpectrum, Dr Poonam Taneja, director of sales, MDS AT, speaks about the company's strategies and business.

What is the current position of Molecular Devices after it was acquired by MDS Inc.?

Molecular Devices is now part of MDS Analytical Technologies division (MDS AT) of MDS Inc. Our three core businessesÃ¢â?¬â??MDS AT, MDS Nordion and MDS Pharma ServicesÃ¢â?¬â??are global industry leaders in the areas of analytical instruments, molecular imaging, and pharmaceutical contract research. MDS AT is the leading global supplier of life sciences tools that comprises two main channel brands--Sciex and Molecular Devices. Sciex offers market leadership in mass spectrometry and Molecular Devices sets the market-leading standards for high-performance bioanalytical measurement systems for drug discovery and life science research.

How do MDC's products support researchers in the life sciences areas?

In the life sciences market, Molecular Devices provides genomic and proteomic research customers with instruments and technology for detection and imaging. A growing focus on biomarkers and personalized medicine is driving demand for these solutions.

In the drug discovery market, Molecular Devices offers pharmaceutical and biotechnology customers automated systems and technology to screen for potential new drugs. Molecular Devices high-performance, high-throughput tools supports the ever-increasing demand to improve the speed of the complex drug discovery and development process cost-effectively.

What are your plans for India?

At Molecular Devices, we recognize that Asia-Pacific is a high growth market and we are currently focusing and investing in this region. We provide extensive training to our channel partner in India. We are also establishing a regional dedicated team of MDS-AT technical and service specialists to work with our partner here in India to support the customers promptly, efficiently and effectively. In addition, we are routinely conducting technical hands on workshops, user meetings and seminars in the region and participating in major trade shows.

Why have you chosen Chennai-based Spinco as your exclusive distributor now?

At MDS, we view our distributors as partners, who contribute significantly to our abilities, products, and services and therefore choosing the right partner is a very critical decision.

The distributor partners we work with are known for their professionalism, reliability and customer focus. We optimize these partnerships by providing extensive trainings that includes routine sales, technical and service trainings to all of our partners worldwide.

But for the recent two years, Spinco was a Molecular Devices' distributor for over a decade and has provided hundreds of MDC instruments in the Indian life sciences market. Spinco has recently reorganized itself with special emphasis on the life science market with extensive sales and service network.

Several global life sciences instrumentation players have set up subsidiaries in India. Are you satisfied with the distribution channel model?

At MDS AT our strategy is to support customers throughout India. We believe our distributor partner Spinco is doing a splendid job in achieving that and intend to work with it to grow our business in India, as it has one of the largest network of sales and service offices here to support customers. At MDS AT our focus is to support our distributor partner in India by providing extensive training to the staff.

We have observed that, in markets like India, it can be challenging to operate effectively with direct presence alone. To reach out to every city and to every client one needs a very effective network. Some of the companies that have gone direct are also taking assistance through the local partners.

How do you compare the Indian life sciences market with the US or EU?

If you would have asked me this question several years ago, I probably would have said that new technologies that were being launched in the US and EU were getting accepted in India few months later. However now it is pretty much a level playing ground. Though there could be some pricing challenges, as far as technology acceptance is concerned it is a very global market. The market here has grown astoundingly in the last years. Consequently, we have been focusing on the Indian market and putting in increased resources to reach out and meet customer needs effectively.

Is MDS AT planning any acquisitions in the near future?

One of the key strategies of MDS AT is to grow the company both organically through development of innovative products and through acquisition and licensing of novel technologies. We recently announced the acquisition of Blueshift Biotechnologies. Blueshift Biotechnologies' cellular imaging technology platform, based on Dynamic Fluorimetry, enables true high throughput screening (HTS) of cell-based imaging assays and is an ideal fit within the MDS AT family of cellular imaging products. The technology provides scientists with information on how potential therapeutics affect cells and cellular processes and allows us to deliver a more enabling and novel product to our customers by leveraging our existing ImageXpress cellular imaging technologies. In short, yes, in order to remain competitive in the markets we serve, we are always looking for opportunities to invest in growth and innovation.

Jahanara Parveen