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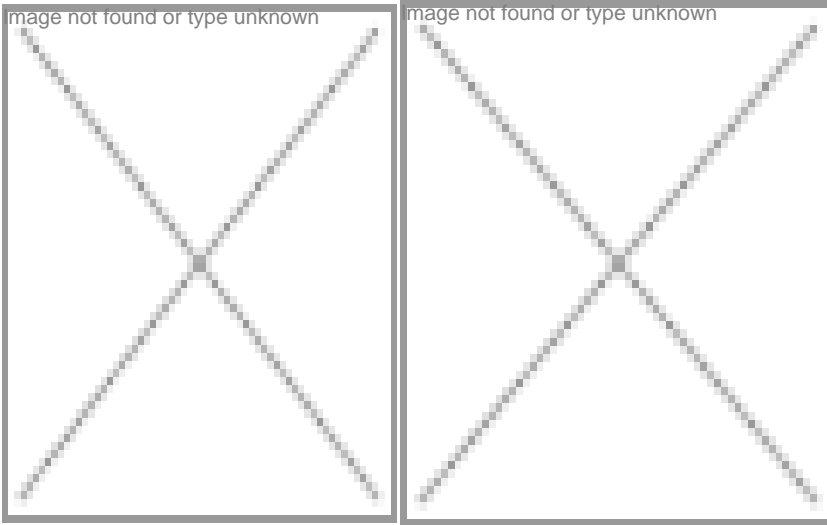
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PerkinElmer India, a wholly owned subsidiary of US-based \$1.55 billion PerkinElmer, a global technology leader in health sciences and photonics, is in the process of expanding its base in India to help scientists advance the pace and precision of research and testing in a wide range of markets. The company has tied up with the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR), whereby research on genetic screening of newborns will be conducted at five centers spanning Kolkata, Chennai, Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad.

Dr Lapo Paladini, vice president, global sales and marketing and president, Asia for PerkinElmer life and analytical sciences and Jai Shankar, president, PerkinElmer India, share the company's India specific plans with BioSpectrum. Excerpts of the interview:



Dr Lapo Paladini

Jai Shankar

How do you see the difference between the Indian and the US market?

There is not too much of difference between India and the US market. And the reason is that India is not an emerging country. There are a lot of well-established multinational companies in this country. Clearly we know that there is a factor of labor cost that has encouraged investment from manufacturing companies in the past, shifting capabilities from western companies into India. So you may find little difference of applications and customer needs, but the expectations of the customer, which for us is an important factor, is exactly the same. Our standards in terms of quality of service and products is exactly the same.

What is the strategy behind operations in the Indian market?

We wanted to make massive investments here to take advantage of this market's potential. And to do that we distinguish often between an opportunistic approach, i.e. a one value selected approach so that we enjoy the revenue as they come or you play personal in that market place and you have to learn from and about the market that ways. Considering that, here you have an easy access to very highly skilled people for all types of profiles that we need within our business and operations. So we need to bring in expertise and practice from outside, not people. Our customers here can have access to world class practices like in the western countries. We have set up India as the next supplier of best practice.

The marketing strategy for us is very simple. First of all we want to list all the marketing segments that we want to address with our products. One of the major competitive advantages that we have versus our competitors is that none of them is a competitor on the lines that we have because only a few of them have the same range of portfolio that we have. This provides us an opportunity of knowing different market segments and sometimes also being a little selective in segments that we want to focus on.

Also we want to know what the requirements are to succeed with those customers, to serve them in a way that is according to their expectations. We elaborate on the customer's requirements making sure that we can offer both in terms of technical and application support. We want to be recognized as a solution provider rather than an instrument seller. We also identify what is the best channel to deliver customer's expectations versus our commitment. We are planning to develop all the channels that operate in the West such as the E-channel, giving customers fast access to the consumables business and planning to have a huge coverage across the entire country leveraging the nine offices that we have.

How do you differentiate yourself from your competitors?

Competitiveness is one of the areas why this company is stronger than the others. It is difficult to make a comparison because it may range by application, by geography. In a country, there are different competitive positions, north versus south for instance. Our objective to be competitive goes around three main concepts:

- Products: We try to select products from the premium suppliers, the top three major players in any market we play. For

a company, with our brand reputation this requires us to be very conscious to be innovative enough to stay ahead in the game.

- People: This is one of the reasons we decided to take ownership of an important country like India, shifting from a more opportunistic approach to a more planning and management kind of approach. Then you get in control of your people. Then you can export here to the benefit of the local market and then as a competitor have an advantage versus other competitors having the best practices and values that characterize our company.
- Processes: Processes are important because they translate into an easier way of doing business with us. Any country has its own challenges like logistics, distribution or geography. This can be solved by knowing the local situation, how we can serve those customers and meet their expectations and deliver our commitment.

So a combination of high quality products, world class people and processes is what makes us competitive in the marketplace.

What is the USP of PerkinElmer?

One of the stark features of our organization is that we have a wide portfolio that cuts across various segments including pharmaceuticals, polymer and packaging. We have products across a wide range. If you look at other organizations and the products that they have, you can see that they are not planned out. So, one of the key strengths that we see is a product that cuts across 30 segments.

PerkinElmer India has entered into a project with the Indian government for genetic screening. Kindly elaborate on this.

The incidence of genetic disorders in India is not fully tabulated as yet. We have the database of the incidence and occurrence of genetic disorders. So our first endeavor is to have statistical data within India as well. We made a presentation to the government. We talked to the ICMR with whom we have a tie-up whereby in the next two years we will get 1 lakh babies tested in terms of incidence of occurrence of various genetic disorders. With this, we will present a white paper to the government to institutionalize genetic screening in India. Most of the countries have mandatory screening processes and in India we still have to work on it.

What are the other plans for India since the operations were started recently?

There is a huge amount of potential here. We have opportunities in each of the segments that we have. With the proliferation of drug research and CRO companies, we are going to see further growth for our company. We are executing plans for our genetic screening business, which is again a huge opportunity for us to tap.

Shalini Gupta