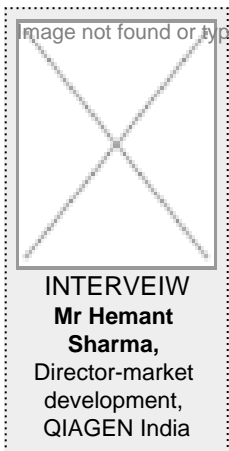


'We are looking for exciting opportunities'

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INTERVIEW
Mr Hemant
Sharma,
Director-market
development,
QIAGEN India

In 1984, QIAGEN was founded as a spin-off at the University of Düsseldorf, Germany. Today, it is the world's leading provider of innovative sample and assay technologies for research in molecular diagnostics, applied testing, pharma and academic research. QIAGEN employs more than 3,700 people in over 35 locations, worldwide. The company directly entered India in January 2011 and is active in its business here.

In an interview with Mr Hemant Sharma, director-market development, QIAGEN India, *BioSpectrum* tries to find out the reasons behind the company's direct entry in India, the challenges before it, its future plans and more.

Q What is the history of QIAGEN in India?

QIAGEN products have been in the India market for the last 18 years. Earlier, we were working through channel partners. Now, with a direct presence in the market, we have appointed new channel partners and are working with over 30 distributors. After joining QIAGEN in 2008, when the company representative office was set up in Delhi, I was involved in the registration process of the company in India. With the establishment of a subsidiary in New Delhi and the expansion of our team, we officially entered the India market in January 2011.

Q What were the reasons behind your direct entry into India? How has it helped you and did you face any challenges?

We always say that India and China are the two big upcoming markets. Approximately 12 percent of our global revenue comes from the Asia-Pacific market. Our presence in China, since 2004, helped us consolidate our base in these markets.

There has been a huge growth in China and we consider the dynamics of this market similar to the Indian scenario. Therefore, to have more interactions with our customers and provide them timely and quality services, it was important for us to have our direct presence in the market.

When starting a new venture, you are bound to come across various difficulties. However, I would not like to call these hiccups or challenges. Rather, it is part of the normal process. Currently, we have 36 employees, besides having sales and marketing professionals. The company provides technical service too. There are hotline numbers and Indian customers can call directly and are directed to the global technical team for help. Moreover, we have our own warehouse in New Delhi and, in a short period, we have managed to assemble a very good team. Now, we are looking for a great start and plenty of exciting opportunities.

Q What kind of product range are you offering? Which are the future potential opportunity areas for your company?

QIAGEN is a leading provider of sample and assay technologies. We have developed and market more than 500 consumable products and automated solutions. The company provides these products to molecular diagnostics laboratories, academic researchers, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, and applied testing customers for purposes such as forensics, animal or food testing and pharmaceutical process control. QIAGEN's assay technologies include one of the broadest panels of molecular diagnostic tests available worldwide. This panel includes the digene HPV test, which is regarded as a "gold standard" in testing for high-risk types human papillomavirus (HPV) which is, the primary cause of cervical cancer, as well as a broad suite of solutions for infectious disease testing and companion diagnostics.

The molecular diagnostics markets in China and India are growing rapidly, approximately 15 percent on a year-on-year basis. Similarly, the next big area of opportunity is the PCR market, which, in India, is growing by 22 percent every year. From these numbers, it is easy to see that the Indian market has great opportunities in these areas.

Q How has been your financial performance and which areas of opportunity are you looking at?

As of now, we can't give specific figures as far as revenue is concerned. Since we have set up our offices only recently, it will take some time for us to reach a considerable revenue figure. Since Asia Pacific contributes close to 12 percent of the global revenue, we are looking at China and India to further fuel this growth.

We are solution providers and are looking forward to providing the best services to local customers. Our Asia Pacific region has been growing at double digit rates. By expanding geographically and extending services over the next three to five years, India will become a substantial part of our revenue.

Q Can you compare the markets in India and China to those in the rest of the developed world?

We started our operations in China in May 2004 with eight employees and, since then, we have grown to be a 350-people company there. Currently, we have offices at all the major locations in China and we want to see the same example being replicated here in India.

Although China differs in various aspects, such as regulations and infrastructure, but there are few similarities too. Given the burden of disease, there are huge opportunities in healthcare. We have vital technology to tackle the same and are thus in a unique position to address this burden. We are also working with pharma companies and CROs to drive innovation in drug development. Therefore, there is a plenty of scope in both these markets.

When India and China are compared with the markets in the West, there is surely a difference. For example, the healthcare needs of Germany and the UK are different that of India and China. Similarly, our R&D in Germany is to address the specific needs of developed healthcare economies and our R&D in Asia is to address the unique needs of the Asia Pacific markets. We are trying to come up with innovative ideas.

— **Rahul Koul** in New Delhi