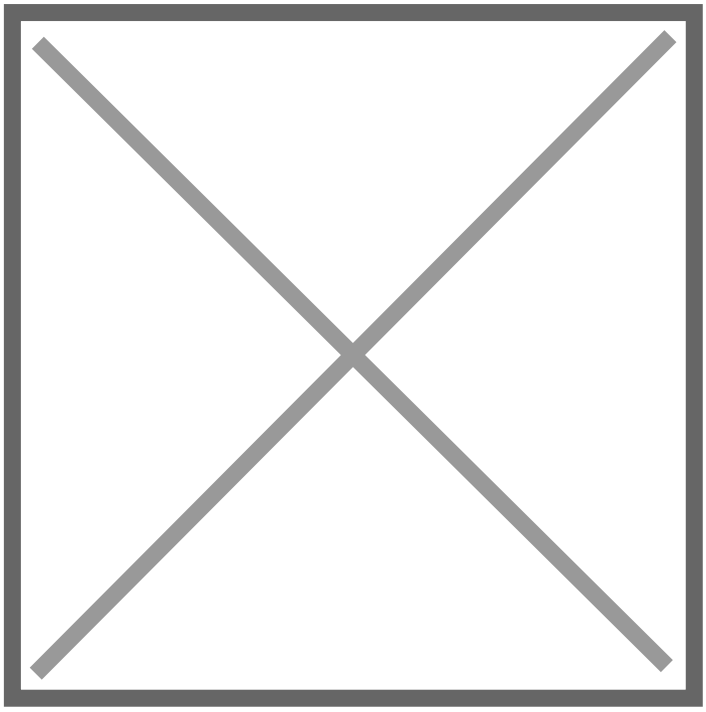
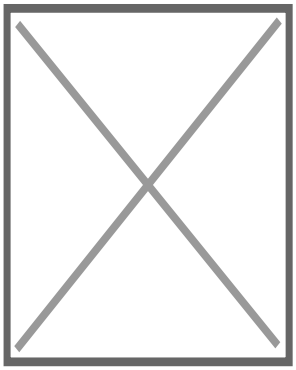


Genaxy Scientific targets automation and proteomics

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—Navneet Trehan, CEO, Genaxy Scientific, New Delhi



Genaxy as a biosupplier company has generally been known for its plasticware products. But thanks to the new tie-ups, the company has expanded its product portfolio, to offer many new products.

In an exclusive interview with BioSpectrum, Navneet Trehan, CEO, Genaxy Scientific, throws light on the company name change, collaborations, challenges and strategy for the company's future.

Q What prompted the change in the name from Axygen Scientific to Genaxy Scientific?

The change in the name was actually oriented towards having a slightly different identity from Axygen, US. There was some confusion in the field, with Axygen, India, and Axygen, US, being considered as a single entity. We used to receive many queries meant for Axygen, US. Although we started as an offshoot of Axygen, US, we always had a distinctive identity and have not claimed to be the subsidiary of Axygen US. However, our relationship with the company remains the same, and we continue to market the entire range of products of Axygen, US.

Besides that, inspite having diversified into instrumentation and other wide range of products, we were not being recognized for anything but plasticware. That alerted us and we, Genaxy, do not want to be known only as a plasticware company, but as a one-stop shop or full-lab solutions provider.

Q What kind of collaborations do you have with other companies, worldwide?

We have a collaboration with Corning and take care of all their government businesses. We also have also collaborated with Qarta Biotech, US, for marketing their PCR products in India. The uniqueness of these products is that they are room-stable products, and have a long shelf life. These products are very innovative due to the fact that despite being on the shelf for as long as 20 years, 90 percent of the activity of these products remain unaffected. These products have no competition currently in the Indian market.

Genaxy has also tied up with a company, GVS, and for the first time, have entered the chromatography area, following a tie-up with the US company, Atiji and we market their range of solid phase extraction (SPE) columns, in India.

We are also marketing the filter membranes, syringes and filter papers, besides water purification system with ion technology.

Our principal company, Serva, has no competition in India. The specialty of Serva products is that they are customized according to the needs of the scientists.

Q What is the nature of Genaxy's relationship with the academia?
We are closely associated with the industry, and are also involved in providing career guidance to the biotechnology students. Last year, I conducted an orientation program at Amity University. We have been urging the academia to bring in some changes in the curriculum. To give them a better overview of the industry and to help them understand the industry requirements better, we have started recruiting professionals from the industry. At the same time, I feel that if we do not provide the right path to our biotechnology students, the future growth of this industry in India could be affected adversely. I believe that there is a need for standardization in the biotechnology education in India.

Q What is the current situation of biotechnology in India?
What we see today in the biotechnology arena in India is more of biopharmaceuticals. The contribution towards the pure biotechnology sector is more from the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) funding.

Innovation seems to be the only key for the future of this industry. There should be a strong bridge between the industry and the academia. The role played by the DBT has been very encouraging, and they have taken the significant steps for the advancement of biotechnology in India.

Q What kind of presence do you have to reach out to your clients within the country? How do you provide technical support?
Presently, we work with 200 distributors across India. We have established regional offices across India in Bangalore, Pune, Kolkata and Mumbai; and a customer support team.

We also have two separate teams for product and brand management. Dr Anita Kapur heads the product management team at Genaxy. Besides having PhDs in our team, we have about 130 post-graduates in biotechnology.

Our team is well-trained for new products, and we constantly conduct product seminars at various venues. We have service engineers across the country to provide maintenance of heavy instruments. For any specific queries from the scientists, we get support from our principal companies.

Q What are the current challenges in the biosupplier industry?
As a biosupplier, we feel that the applications part is increasing, and this is the golden time for biotechnology. All multinational companies see India as a multi-million dollar market. That is the reason for increased competition, with the entry of a large number of companies. However, Government of India should bring restrictions on the products below acceptable quality, that are in the market.

The DBT should set and monitor standards for the biotechnology industry, as it is directly related to the research outcome.

Q What is the strategy for strengthening your business in the future?
Until now, all products that have been launched by Genaxy, have been successful in the market. Our next areas of focus are automation and proteomics.
We are now trying to enter the area of heavy instruments such as huge refrigerators, centrifuges. Besides that, as we are already associated with many big hospitals in India, we are focusing on blood banking (healthcare).

We will be launching our own low cost-range of electrophoresis equipments targeted at colleges, for the benefit of the students. Most colleges cannot afford such equipments because of the high procuring costs.

Also, in the future, we are planning to focus mainly on the proteomics, as we see a huge potential in this area. Our business principle is to provide high quality products to scientists.

—Rahul Koul in New Delhi