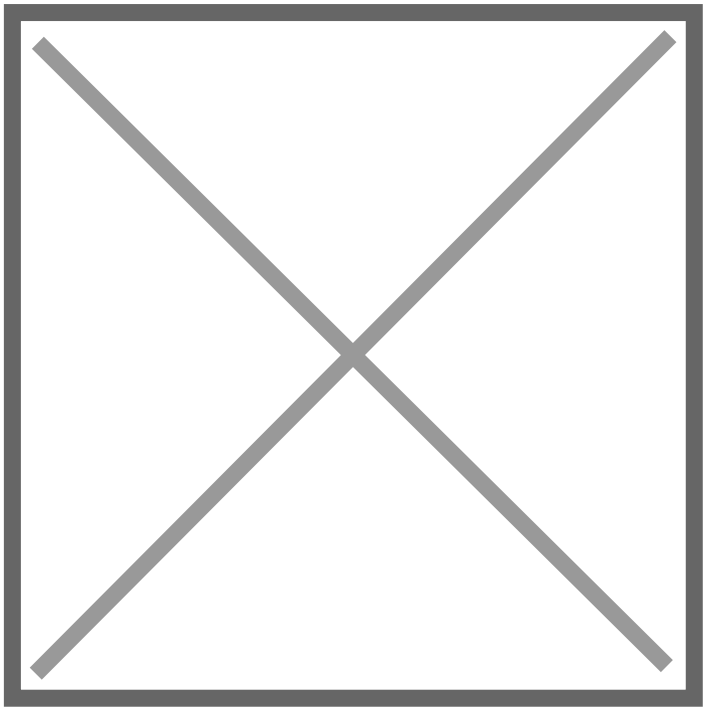
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'We are a complete solution provider'

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Mrdeepakparabmetrohmin **Mr Deepak Parab**
CEO, Metrohm India

Interview

A key player in providing solutions in analytical chemistry, Metrohm has been catering to the electrochemistry and ion analysis needs of various industries in India, including pharma and biotech, through its subsidiary Metrohm India. Metrohm started its operations in India in June 1997 as a joint venture with Micro Devices. In June 2008, Metrohm India was launched as a 100 percent subsidiary of Metrohm AG, Switzerland.

Headquartered in Chennai with over eight branches in the country, Metrohm India, in addition to supplying different instruments for titration and chromatography has also collaborated with other companies to supply instruments for spectrophotometery (from Analytik Jena AG) and colorimetery (from Applikon Analytical B V) for the life sciences industry.

Mr Deepak Parab, CEO, Metrohm India, talks about the company's recent collaborations with Sigma Aldrich and factors leading to their success.

Q Tell us about your collaboration with Sigma Aldrich? How will this collaboration benefit your customers?

The collaboration with Sigma Aldrich is between Metrohm AG Switzerland and Sigma Aldrich Europe. According to this agreement, all Metrohm customers who procure Metrohm ion chromatography system will get 25 percent off on the list price of all chemicals and standards required for operations of Metrohm instruments.

In India, Metrohm and Sigma decided to take this initiative further by not only giving 25 percent off on all chemicals required for operations of Metrohm IC but also all the chemicals and standards required for Metrohm titrators. In short, whenever anyone procures Metrohm instruments, or if they are Metrohm users, Sigma will extend 25 percent discount on all chemicals. Further, Sigma has taken another initiative wherein they will give a starting kit for Metrohm KF Titrator free at the time of installation. The idea behind various collaborations are basically to bring down the cost of ownership of the instruments.

At Metrohm, we work with one goal that the instruments should not only be affordable, but also simple and easy-to-operate with minimum cost of ownership. After extending three years warranty to drive down the cost of ownership of Metrohm instruments, this is another initiative to bring the cost down.

We are also looking for an association with Sigma Aldrich India to use its distribution channel to strengthen the bond with the company.

Q What are the key features of your business model in India?

One of the key features of Metrohm India is that we try to be a complete solution provider instead of just selling the instruments. We offer quality after-sales support in terms of installation, warranty service, preventive and routine maintenance and application support.

The application laboratory serves the customer free-of-cost in terms of application support and also develops and analyses samples for free. We have more personnel in customer support, application laboratory and service support than in sales. Every branch office has a resident chemist assigned as customer support for problems concerning chemistry and applications.

We also try to keep costs of instruments and costs of ownership low and be close to customer location. It is evident from several branches and resident offices and all activities in terms of customer support are monitored through a web-based server.

Q How much time gap is there between introducing a product in the US or Europe and in India?

I think India is one of the big and growing markets and all manufacturers are introducing their products elsewhere in the world and in India simultaneously. Metrohm as a policy always introduces products simultaneously in the world and in the India market.

Metrohm always looks for products that complement our product range for distributorship. We are basically catering to a segment of ion analysis, electrochemistry, particle characterisation, spectroscopy and process analysers.

Q What are the strengths of Metrohm in India?

Metrohm India is known for quality after-sales support and this is our strength. We get a lot of repeat orders from customers who have patronised Metrohm for over a couple of decades. Probably, Metrohm India is one of the few organizations where the service and support team is larger than the sales force.

Q What is your vision for the next two years for Metrohm in India?

In the next two years, we would like to explore new areas of applications where we can establish Metrohm India as a preferred supplier. We plan to do major investments in the area of application laboratory and customer training center. All our activities will be customer-centric, and we will like to ensure that all our customers are satisfied.

Q Can you tell us about special initiatives such as the biofuel brochure?

When the biofuel industry was in its nascent stage in India, we came out with the biofuel brochure to showcase applications using Metrohm instruments for the biofuel industry in the areas of in-process, quality control and finished product analysis.

Since we had a range of instruments for complete biofuel analysis, it was easy for customers to have a one-stop solution from one vendor.

Manasi Vaidya in Bangalore