

"We believe in doing well by doing good"

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-Gregory L Summe, chairman and CEO, PerkinElmer

PerkinElmer India recently unveiled its latest generation of products as part of its expansion plan for the fast growing Indian life sciences and instrumentation market. In an exclusive interview with BioSpectrum, Gregory L Summe, chairman and CEO, PerkinElmer, who was recently in India, highlighted the company's India specific business plans. Excerpts:

What is the contribution of the Asia Pacific market to the global sales of PerkinElmer?

Asia Pacific makes for about 20 percent of our revenue and about 40 percent of our people are based in the Asia Pacific region. We have more of our manufacturing activities over here. The percentage of people will grow because we are investing ahead of the demand, and this area is growing faster than the rest of the world. So it is extremely important for us to continue our investments here.

How has the growth been in the Asia Pacific region?



Asia Pacific has been growing double digit for us and we expect this trend to continue. It has a higher growth rate than Europe or the Americas and so it is climbing as a percent. India has been a strong performer within the Asia Pacific region, more than 20 percent a year for us.

How do you look at India as a market?

We are looking at India as a developing marketplace. India is a growing resource, a business offsite. We have been in the market for about 25 years and we continue to step up our investments. We originally started as a group of distributors and then we had a joint venture structure. We now have a wholly owned subsidiary and we have invested millions of dollars. That was from a point of view to move faster and quicker. Today we have nine major offices in India.

What are your major businesses in India?

Today we are looking at three major businesses in India. One is environmental and health sciences that includes air and water, food safety, quality, biofuels and pharma QA QC. The second one is our life sciences business, which is a tool of discovery. This is helping identify targets in evaluating compounds against cells, like for example biochemical screening. The third is genetic screening and we are the world's leading provider of testing for newborns for inborn errors of metabolism

How successful have you been in tapping these three areas in India?

I think these are still early days. In all cases these markets are just at the beginning because the economic growth here is phenomenal and is continuously growing with an equal measurement of growth in terms of analytical scientists. The pharma industry is continuing to develop and become more sophisticated. Twenty percent of the world's babies are born in India, but there is almost no genetic screening as compared to the US where there is 100 percent screening on 29 conditions on every baby. So we have some early efforts with public and private people towards this end. I think these markets will continue to grow owing to globalization and industrialization. India is industrializing and this is being done through globalization. The case in point is the development of Indian multinationals that are reaching out and establishing themselves in the world market. We are in such early days. In a decade, this will continue to grow.

PerkinElmer acquired the remaining minority interest in PerkinElmer India making the Indian arm a wholly owned subsidiary. What was the strategy behind it?

I think it is about speeding capability. If you have to be successful in the Indian market, you have to be an Indian company. This means knowing the country's culture and customs so that you're quick to respond to the customer's needs and develop exactly what they need. Otherwise, you are just an exporter, a visitor to the market and we don't want to be a visitor to the market. We want to be a part of the market .

You have said "our products will help Indians improve their quality of life". Kindly elaborate.

Absolutely, and we are very proud of that. It's a mission for all our employees. It is not just that point. We have said in over a thousand countries including India and Australia, that these are the conditions that you pick up in the UK and treat them with medicines and diet and if you don't they resolve in severe handicaps. That's an example I think of the quality of life. We believe in doing well by doing good. They go hand in hand. It also creates demand for the product. If you are delivering clear benefits to the society, you can have sustainable demand in the market. So, it is rewarding for people to work.

Are you looking at any partnerships?

We are certainly in discussions with people to partner and develop value-end of the instrument market. And we have also got some partners on the business processing side.

The company went on a buying spree in 2006 and acquired six companies? Are you looking forward to any more acquisitions?

We continue to be active in the acquisition marketplace. We have a robust pipeline of deals and we will continue to do that. What we are looking for is specialty companies with high growth rate with technology that fits across our various business lines.

What are the new markets you're looking at?

I think India, Eastern Europe and China are growing markets that we are looking at.

Shalini Gupta