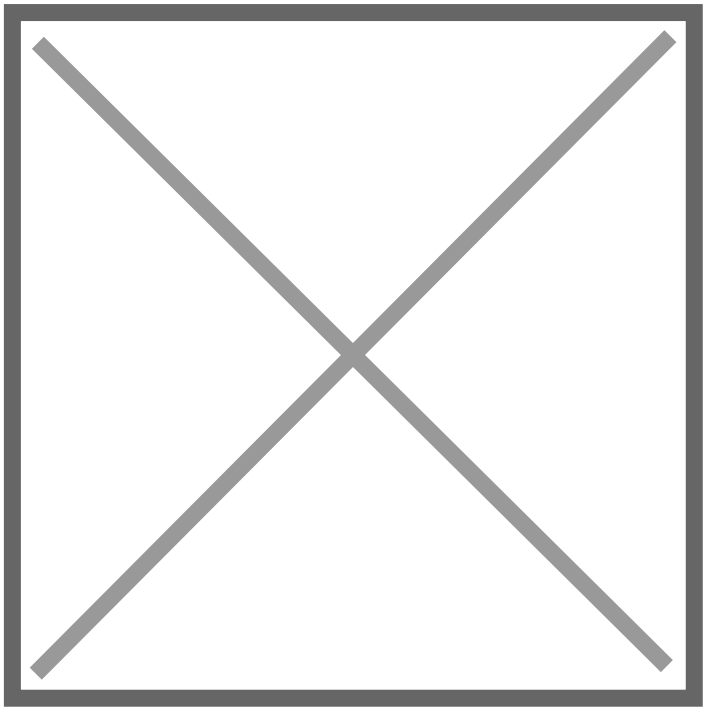
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Taking Indian bioIT to US

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Dr Vijay Chandru
Chairman & CEO, Strand Life Sciences



Having set the trend of establishing a biotechnology venture by a team of academicians in 2000, Strand Life Sciences is taking Indian bioIT to the global level

Strand Life Sciences (formerly known as Strand Genomics), a premier life science informatics innovation company, entered the US market for the first time by entering into co-marketing agreement with CombiMatrix, a US-based DNA arrays provider. After six years, Strand Life Sciences opened a subsidiary in the US in 2010 to commercialize its scientific intelligence solutions around the world. Strand Scientific Intelligence is based in the San Francisco Bay area and offers products and services based on its Avadis software platform for biologists, chemists and toxicologists. It helps life and health scientists to solve problems in their complex, data-rich work. The US operation has five full time and five part time staff.

“Though we have not established ourselves with huge investments in the overseas market but we do have a big presence there. With marketing partners, distribution channels spread all over, the company has grown to create an image of its own abroad,” says Dr Vijay Chandru, chairman, co-founder and chief executive officer, Strand Life Sciences.

Global plan
About the company’s global strategy, Dr Chandru says, “In bioinformatics, we expanded our market by having various channel partners. In the US and Western Europe, one needs to have big channel partners to create a mark in the market. We collaborated with companies like Agilent, thereby helping us develop the market there. In Japan, China and Hong Kong, we needed local distributors to develop on the strategies in the market. Support and backing from big companies gives the push in the market.”

“In case of other consulting and research services, where we focused on pharma and biotech companies, there was the need for high end modeling. Specific research based on predictive science was needed. In these cases, the physical presence of the company was not so significant, main aspect was the business development, which could happen even when company delegates visited India,” he added.

On having direct presence in the US, Dr Chandru says, “The US market has been our prime focus as it is where our major share lies. Japan is also one of the markets where we have good presence. In Europe, the market is not concentrated at a single location. Hence in these countries, presence in the form of distribution, sales and marketing offices would only help.”

“In terms of growth, there has been steady market growth in North America, West Europe and Japan. Genome sequencing, understanding of toxicity of molecules in liver are the key areas where the company is growing. In terms of investment,

roughly about 25% of our expenditure is spent on the maintenance of the subsidiary abroad, which is also related to traveling and marketing," Dr Chandru says.

In the niche bioinformatics market, brand building and maintenance of the relationship with the strategic partners remain the key issues. Sharing his thoughts on the challenges Dr Chandru says," We need to have good brand building, maintaining visibility by attending lectures, seminars, exhibitions abroad. We need to build good relations with channel partners so that one could convince the customers. Maintenance of the relations is also very important to develop in the market. Market research and product research should be done in detail before entering a market."

About the future plans, he says, "We would expand our market in Europe in the near future. Moreover, we want to expand more in India as we see it as a growing market on par with the other global markets."

Suchitra Pillai in Bangalore