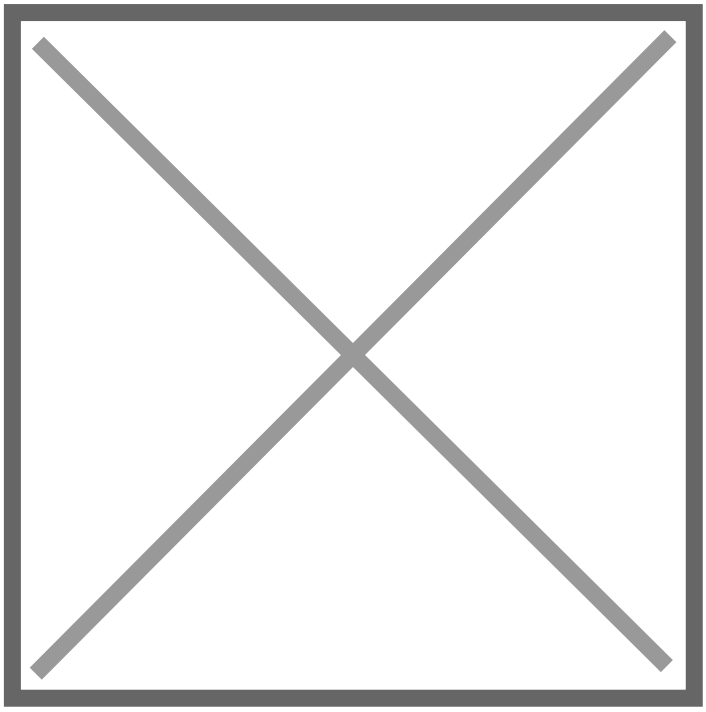
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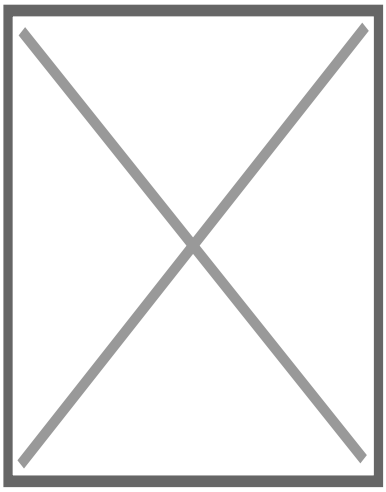
"We are looking at consolidating our business"

04 October 2007 | News



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-Neeraj Gupta, managing director, Imperial Life Sciences



Imperial Life Sciences has been on a growth curve ever since it closed three major deals in the last one year with Agilent in November 2006, Invitrogen (January 2007 and Caliper (April 2007). In an interview with BioSpectrum, Neeraj Gupta, managing director, ILS, spells out the future plans of the company.

What products have been the revenue grosser for Imperial this year?

We have different classifications. In the instrumentation division, we have seen a huge success with our platform for bioanalyzer from Agilent and another platform will be microarray systems, complete workstation. With Caliper we have seen huge success with kinase profiling. These are the three product classifications which have done very well for us in the last six months. We have done a lot of work in stem cell research but the leading one would be cell culture business where we have seen huge growth in our turnover. A large part of it came from bioproduction because the cell culture is used in the vaccination industry, which is growing very rapidly in India. Molecular biology reagents have also seen a growth. They comprise chlorine kits and PCR enzymes. Imaging business has also done well.

We are looking to double our turnover from the last financial year. Almost 100 percent growth has already been achieved in the first six months of this year (2007). We are planning to close this financial year with a 30-40 percent growth over our last year's performance. A month back we have collaborated with Xenogen. They are partners worldwide in live in vivo imaging. Live in vivo imaging is a very important technology for drug discovery for pharma companies because here we do studies on live animal models, we infect them with a specific disease and then give them therapeutics. This is a more advanced technology and we are entering into it in a big way

How do you differentiate yourself from your competitors?

We have divided our business into two divisions-instruments and reagents and consumables. These have separate teams of people but they work in tandem with each other and this is what gives us an edge over any other competitor we have. For example, an instrumentation company in India will just have an instrumentation portfolio and they will have a relationship with the customer only at the time when the need is there. On the contrary, we being a reagent supplier as well, have a relationship with each and every customer in some or the other way and hence come to know about those needs much earlier than our competitors and hence we can do a satisfactory customer relationship. So this complete blend of instruments and reagents business gives us a definite advantage. They complement each other. We count this as the biggest strength of ILS.

What are the new innovative methods being adopted at ILS?

ILS is bringing ILS-Invitrogen Day and ILS-Agilent Day into the market which is something that we started as recent as last week. But it has been so successful that we are thinking of replicating the model in the coming months in rest of the country. We had a technical team of 10-12 people from Invitrogen and a sales team of 4-5 people from ILS spend the whole day at a couple of institutions in Bangalore and Hyderabad doing a lot of demonstrations and technical interactions with different customers and positioning products. This was extremely appreciated by top leading scientists at these institutions and also got us a lot of good prospects.

Can you elaborate on the marketing strategy of ILS?

It is a three-pronged strategy that includes:

Sales team: We have a very strong network of sales team and a few distributors working for ILS. They are basically technical people with scientific and research background who have been trained about the products. They are in the frontline and interact on regular basis with our customers.

Product management: This division has application scientists and product specialists. Application scientists work in close proximity of the customer at his/her location. So they have a focused account and can understand the needs of the customer better. This is an innovative marketing strategy.

Bioservices: The customer comes to our facility to get the sampling done and brings a lot of business for us and we can position a lot of different products to the customer.

The company entered into many deals last year. Are you looking at any more deals this year?

We are looking at consolidating our business because Invitrogen itself brings with it 9-10 companies which they acquired last year. So we are in the process of consolidation. We are trying to strengthen our product segments which are complementary so that we are able to reach our common goal which is to become a one-stop shop. Our partnerships have helped us achieve this to some extent and we are in the process of strengthening our partnership with other vendors with the same vision.

Are you looking at other markets as well?

We are purely concentrating on business in India. There are some parts in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal. We will be expanding our business segments in the Asian subcontinent, in the SAARC countries particularly.

What is the vision of ILS and how have you been working to achieve it?

The vision of ILS is to be partners in research module. We don't just want to be a supplier of products but also sell the customer the technology to use it. We do a lot of workshops related to our products. We have PhDs, a project management group that helps in several promotional activities as well. They technically support us in terms of the application of the products. Since the last six months we have been working on our application support and logistics group, invested heavily in it, streamlining the process and working on a roadmap to be able to deliver the product to the customer in the shortest possible timeframe.

We also are looking at providing training modules to our customers and providing bioservices to our customers who want to get more friendly with the technology using our platform. Majority of our instrumentation has already been arrived at and they have already started doing services for some of the sub components like real time PCR, bioanalyzer and we looking forward to providing microarray services in November.

Shalini Gupta