

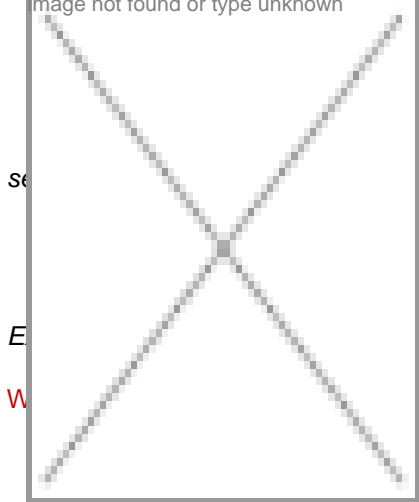
“Biopharma market is consolidating”

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—Anurag Gupta, MD, GE Healthcare Lifesciences, Chennai



GE Healthcare Life Sciences provides cutting-edge technology products and processes to pharma, biopharma and biotechnology companies and major academic and research institutions globally. Over the years the company has increased its focus on its life sciences business in India, driven largely by the growth in the domestic biotechnology

BioSpectrum Top 20 BioSuppliers Survey 2009 ranked GE Healthcare Life Sciences as seventh with the company churning out a total life sciences business revenue of Rs 120 crore in the last fiscal. Anurag Gupta, MD, GE Healthcare Lifesciences, India, tells us more about the company's business initiatives in India and its growth strategies.

What fueled the growth of GE Healthcare Life Sciences?

We were able to grow our sales in India successfully in 2008. It is a result of our crucial investments in the market and the bright prospects of biotech sector in India. The growth was through acquisition, such as Whatman, and infrastructure development as well. Throughout the year, we made significant investments to increase our commercial

footprint. By staying very close to customers, we have maintained a good growth rate despite the market slowdown. Of course, the global economic situation has affected the Indian biotech industry, but we are confident that we'll emerge stronger with the help of all the investments we have made in India in the past 18 months.

What are the major steps taken to boost the biopharmaceutical offering of the company?

We have established ourselves firmly as a start-to-finish bioprocess supplier for the customers in India and a strong partner in drug discovery and development. Our research portfolio includes a complete range of leading-edge protein analysis tools and consumables and our bioprocess offering includes state-of-the-art chromatography portfolio, backed by a solid footprint in after-sales service. We have also opened our Fast Trak customer education and training center at GE's Global Research Center in Bangalore. During the last few years, we have expanded our offering significantly through acquisitions like Wave, Biacore, Whatman and MicroCal. These additions provide an extremely compelling solution to customers whether they are pure research and academic customers or industrial customers engaged in cutting-edge biotech research and manufacturing.

How is the company withstanding adverse economic situation?

India is a definite growth market for GE Healthcare's Life Sciences business and we are here for a long time. Throughout this adverse economic and business environment that is prevailing for the last 18 months, we have continued to make investments in expanding commercial footprint, strengthening dealer channel, focusing on training and development, extending our service strength, technical capabilities and marketing. We believe these investments will position us uniquely in the market in India.

To what extent will the new alliance with Fujifilm benefit GE Healthcare Life Sciences?

Fujifilm will develop, manufacture and supply advanced biomolecular imaging systems to GE Healthcare. The products will be sold worldwide under the GE brand in the life science research and drug discovery markets. GE Healthcare's global presence as a supplier of reagents and instruments, and our competence in biological applications within the life science market coupled with Fujifilm's leading imaging technologies, R&D and manufacturing capabilities will provide complete system solutions for research, drug discovery and bioanalytical applications.

How encouraging is the state of global biosuppliers market?

For global biopharma the issues of cost, quality and access to technology are important. The market is consolidating, key drugs will soon be coming off patent, everyone is working hard to drive cost out of their businesses, but R&D departments still have to deliver results. We are seeing an increase in productivity demands, more outsourcing of routine services and an increase in regulatory scrutiny.

The advantages India holds over other markets is what is generating so much interest in the BRIC countries. India is one of the few markets which offers a very strong double digit growth in the biotech space.

Pradeep Kumar