

"India is an important market for us"

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-Dr Ben Hwang, senior director, Asia Pacific, Invitrogen Corporation.

Dr Hwang visited India in February to announce a marketing and distribution agreement with Imperial Life-Sciences (P) Ltd, Gurgaon (ILS). Dr Hwang shares with BioSpectrum, Invitrogen's plans and strategies.

What do you intend to achieve in India through the tie-up with Imperial Life-Sciences?

Invitrogen started in the US in 1987. Its purpose has always been to provide the technologies and products to allow the researchers to do research much faster and with greater efficiencies. This supports our company's quest to provide best quality products and services to help improve human conditions. We believe in the quest and actually participate in work that saves life and improves people's quality of life.

In 20 years, Invitrogen has grown to \$1.3 billion in revenues and to 70 countries and provides a broad array of products and services. We have been on the top in terms of products, quality of service, innovation of business processes and technologies. The overall strategy has developed in such a way that Invitrogen wants to lead the industry in providing world class suite products that helps scientists do their jobs much more faster, efficiently, and effectively. They are not one off products. The essence of the strategy is to provide the scientific solution to a problem. We have a broad array of products from genome exploration to protein analysis, and to all the discovery stages in-between. With the acquisition of major industry

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players like Biosource, Caltag, Dynal Biotech, Gibco, Molecular Probes, and Zymed, Invitrogen serves the scientists around the globe to advance their discoveries.

Though Invitrogen is a global market leader, it did not serve the Indian market. We wish to do that and this partnership is a step in that direction. Imperial Life Sciences, formerly known as Imperial Bio-Medics, is one of the fastest growing biosupplier companies in India and has been successfully serving the Indian scientific community for the past 17 years. Imperial Life Sciences' (ILS) ambition is to provide world class support and services and be the most preferred and leading supplier in India.

How important are Asia-Pacific and India markets for Invitrogen?

In order to deliver value to shareholders, Asia Pacific becomes very strategically important region for Invitrogen. This is because of the simple fact that a lot of scientific endeavors today, both in terms of biopharma outsourcing and academic research, are done in the region. The talent that countries like China, India, and Japan is unparalleled. Second, Asia Pacific has the distinction of having the fastest growing markets ever anywhere in the world. Further, there are several public health concerns in the region that are being taken up very actively. This is why Asia Pacific is exciting for us as a company and critical for our success.

India, in particular, is hugely critical for Invitrogen for several reasons. One, we have not done our part in serving the Indian market in the last couple of years. This is the reason why we have taken this big step with ILS. The Indian market is growing and exploding for three reasons-talent, cost, and patent protection.

If you look at the trend of bioproduction, a lot of the bioprocessing is migrating to India. It is driven by the generic drug manufacturing trends. Further, as technology advances, India now has the ability to develop connoisseurs of therapeutics that are not chemical bases but biologics. That manufacturing process needs a lot of life sciences reagents like media, cell lines, sera, and vectors. That is being done hugely in India and the pharma companies are putting their emphasis on it. Further, India has tremendous traction in the worldwide scientific community. Indian scientists are populating around the globe and that talent would not be underutilized in the India market. All those factors drive a tremendous confidence in us that India is a market that will explode. And we want to participate in the market.

Why did you select ILS as a partner?

We did a lot of due diligence to find partners in India and we found ILS most suitable. Since our goal is not only to support the scientific community and actually be able to achieve our quest, but also to lead in a conversation around technology and how to solve a scientific problem and that requires a very special go-to-market model. It requires a partner that not only can understand the market and business transaction process but also has the ability to have the conversations on our behalf. ILS is very strong in that area. Second, ILS has a very strong logistics, infrastructure support and sub-dealer network. I am confident that ILS can fulfil the customers' expectations. Third, ILS brings a history of relationships in India. This partnership is more around my vision for India that Invitrogen products, technologies, and services are viewed as a critical scientific partner to the scientists the way scientists think. And the only way to accomplish that is to elevate the conversations to some of the most important leaders in the scientific community in India. Lastly, we feel Invitrogen is the market leader and what we do is to invest in the people so that they become better professionals to serve the scientific community. And Invitrogen and ILS are very much aligned in that regard. And if we execute well, which I am confident about, then our dream in India will be realized and that vision is that the entire scientific community be proud of us.

Ch.Srinivas Rao