

Measure and be Measured

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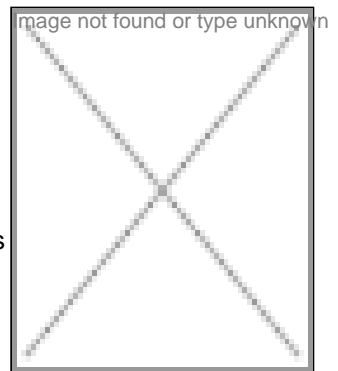


There is an old Chinese saying which roughly translated says "what cannot be measured cannot be improved".

This issue of BioSpectrum is the first attempt to put a measure on an industry that is changing shape rapidly. Not only that, its potential to shape the world of tomorrow is even more immense. This issue is the first attempt to measure this industry in India. We believe that this will become a benchmark for checking out the future growth of this industry. In many other industries, trade bodies, industry associations or government agencies collate and present this data. These sources do not exist for the biotech industry. So we decided that we would not remain mere reporters but will also turn into market researchers. Not that this is the first such task that we have undertaken.

Some eighteen years back when CyberMedia published the first survey of the information technology industry—actually it was called the computer industry then—there was a high degree of scepticism. Questioned were the utility of the exercise to its credibility. For the researchers there was no past data to fall back upon and most of the companies were small and unlisted. So there was no published data available. In many cases, the computer industry was the least computerized and it did not have the breakups that we requested. In fact, at least, half a dozen marketing chiefs and CEOs confided in me that Dataquest's (the magazine that published the reports) information collection helped them understand their operations once a year.

The industry was so busy in growing that it had no time to measure itself. The driving force behind many of the companies



was a little more than having a spare room to do business from. The classifications and categories were fuzzy. Nevertheless, with the help of dogged determination and plain cussedness, the DQ Top 10 emerged. It made people sit up and take notice. Not because the industry was hugeâ€“Rs 100 crore or some such figureâ€“which today is lost in the rounding off of a Rs 75,000 crore industry. But because it had been given a size, a shape and an identity. Based on this, the magazine earned the title the Bible of the Indian IT industry. From then that issue of the magazine Dataquest has been a sellout each year. It has grown along with the industry and today spans 4 issues in the months of July and August.

With this issue, we hope to give the biotech industry in India a shape, a size and an identity. By contrast, the BioSpectrum Top 20 is starting on a much stronger footing. The industry has some 150 serious players and revenues of Rs 1,830 crore. It has some defined segments like biopharma, bioagri, bioindustrial, biosuppliers and bioinformatics. The investment in the industry during the past year was Rs 650 crore with upwards of 6,000 people employed in it. And it has data to share. Certainly more than what IT had!

The data has been compiled from questionnaires that were sent out and through extensive discussions with experts in the industry itself. Not everyone responded to our data requests and some of those who did provided only partial information. Nevertheless the overall response has been very positive. Once the utility is established, we are sure we will have a much higher level of participation.

We do hope that the biotech industry will appreciate that this is the first effort of its kind and there could be omissions. We are measuring the industry and are completely ready to ensure that we measure up to the task. We will be grateful that these are sent to us in as many numbers as possible so that the quality of data can be improved for the future. In the meantime please treat the omissions as they areâ€“sins of omission rather than commission.

In future issues we hope to carry more and more industry related information which will help our readers keep themselves updated and informedâ€“and ahead.

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