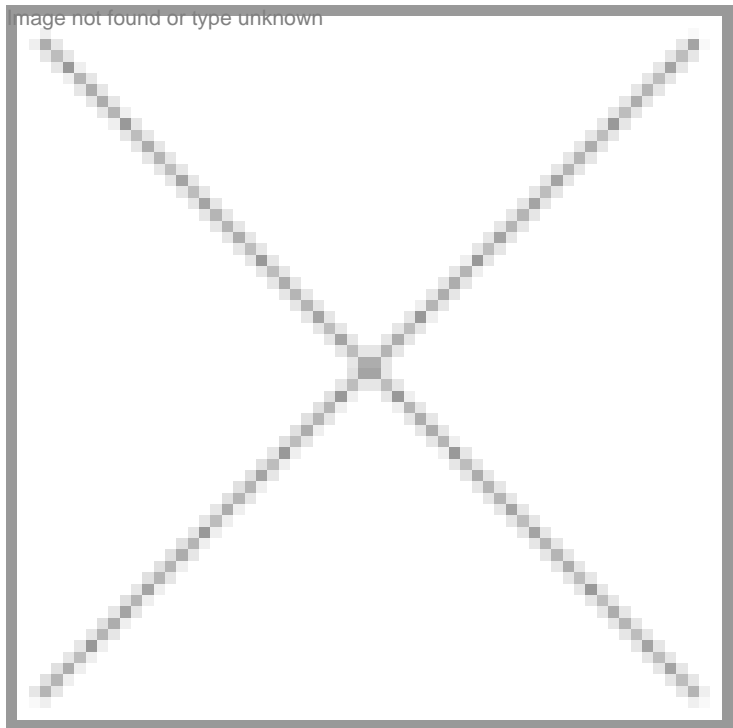


"3M plans to launch application development and filter validation services in India"

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-Cyril M D'Souza, general manager, Cuno Filtration Business, 3M Electro & Communication India Pvt Ltd

On August 1, 2005, 3M acquired Cuno, a leader in filtration products for the separation, clarification, and purification of fluids and gasses. This acquisition was to leverage the strength of 3M in advanced materials innovation with Cuno's strengths on separation and filtration. Post acquisition, 3M-Cuno has strengthened its leadership position in the market by extensive market coverage and new product launches. 3M-Cuno is associated with most of the vaccine, therapeutic, and monoclonal antibody manufacturers in the country.

Cyril M D'Souza, who is responsible for the Cuno Business in India, and has over 15 years of experience in the filtration business, played a pivotal role in the smooth integration of Cuno India business with 3M India. Under his leadership, the Cuno division has adopted the Six Sigma methodology, which is followed by 3M, and launched several new products. 3M is also setting up a state-of-the-art process development and filter validation services laboratory to cater the process development and validation services requirement from the biopharmaceutical customers. Cyril D'Souza shares with BioSpectrum the divisions plans and goals.

3M is a global technology company. What are its key business units in India and how are the businesses structured here?

3M is fundamentally a technology-driven company. We produce thousands of imaginative products, and we are a leader in several market segments—from health care and highway safety to office products and optical films for LCD displays. Our success begins with our ability to apply our technologies, often in combination, to an endless array of real-world customer needs. Of course, the people of 3M and their singular commitment to make life easier and better for people around the world make all of this possible. 3M India has manufacturing facilities in Bangalore, Pondicherry and Ahmedabad and employs over 700 people. In 2006, 3M India had a turnover of Rs 510.3 crore with profits of over Rs 50.42 crore. Over the past years, 3M India has built an exhaustive list of satisfied customers and a reputation for unmatched quality with over 2,000 diverse products serving a number of markets like industrial, transportation, electro and communications, healthcare, display, graphics and safety, protection, security and construction, consumer and office, and fluid purification.

3M acquired Cuno, a leading player in the separation and filtration business, in 2005. How has this acquisition transformed 3M?

3M and Cuno expect to take advantage of Cuno's expertise in liquid filtration and 3M's complementary capabilities in air filtration, along with its broad presence in markets where demand for filtration solutions is growing, to serve customers around the world more effectively. 3M has strengthened its core technology of filtration, separation and purification, by acquiring Cuno. Cuno can leverage the traditional 3M sales and distribution network in the biopharmaceutical industry for promoting Cuno products and vice versa.

What are 3M's focus areas in the life sciences and healthcare sectors--specifically in Asia and India?

"Filtration, separation and purification" is one of 3M's core technology, apart from its medical and dental technology related to life sciences and healthcare. Cuno is a world leader in the design, manufacture, and marketing of a comprehensive line of filtration products for the separation, clarification, and purification of liquids and gases. 3M with its wide range of filtration products is closely working with the biotechnology, pharmaceutical and food and beverage customers catering to their filtration requirements. In India, Cuno is geared up to consolidate its leadership position in filtration by various programs like new product launches, building healthcare organization, customer prioritization programs with Six Sigma methodology, extensive promotional campaigns and by offering customized services to its customers.

What are 3M's India plans in the healthcare and life sciences side?

3M conducted a comprehensive portfolio-planning workshop for Cuno business with its senior India and APAC leadership team last year. The team identified opportunities where Cuno can serve its customers better in India. The leadership team is excited about the opportunities in the growing biopharmaceutical market in India and wants the team to take new opportunities and challenges in this segment. As part of the plan Cuno shall enhance its operation by means of investments in manufacturing, services and strengthen the Cuno organization.

What are some of the key products that 3M has introduced in India for the life sciences and biotech companies? What do you estimate the size of your products in India to be and how do you see competition in India?

Zeta Plus range of positively charged depth filters is traditionally being used by the major vaccine manufacturers India. The new Zeta Plus EXT Maximiser with ZA media is excellent for cell clarification application for biotherapeutic products and can easily replace tangential flow filtration (TFF) systems for clarification applications. Cuno BioASSURE PES sterilizing grade membrane filters have shown better performance in terms of filter life and quality of filtrate compared to any other competitor's product. The superior performance is attributed to Cuno's patented technology of Advanced Pleat Technology

(APT). The pleats are designed in a way that the effective filtration area is increased and region near the core of the filter is more open compared to the conventional pleat design. The customer's benefit from this technology includes longer service life of filter due to increased area and less pressure drop, which eventually boils down to effective cost of filtration.

What are some of the new products that you plan to introduce for the biotech sector in India and when are they likely to be launched?

We plan to launch Zeta Plus EXT Maximiser with SP media, "Generation 2" housings and high-end hardware systems for the biopharmaceutical manufacturing applications immediately. The other major launches include the application development service and filter validation services and large-scale disposable capsule filters (Biocaps) with Zeta Plus media in the near future.

What are your distribution, sales, and technology support strategy in India?

We have well-established sales team in all regions with local distributors in specific regions. Microfilt India Pvt Ltd (MIPL) is our channel partner in western India. Cuno has a full-fledged technical wing called the Scientific Application and Support Services (SASS) which works with our customers to optimize their processes. Currently the SASS personnel conduct feasibility and process development trials.

Ch. Srinivas Rao