

'Exceptional service needed to compete'

28 May 2014 | Features | By BioSpectrum Bureau

'Exceptional service needed to compete'



Here are some of them, describing what they do, their offerings and how they can help Indian companies get a foothold in the UK.

"We can help Indian companies understand who is in Cambridge, what research they are doing, including drug discovery, what drugs are in the pipeline, what phases they are in, whether or not they have clinical candidates and so on. Companies in Cambridge are very busy. One thing that we want from the Indian companies is better articulation of their USP, and fortunately Indian companies are able to articulate very quickly," said Ms Jeanette Walker, project director, Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

According to Ms Walker, Cambridge companies are very open-minded and are open to innovation.

"In the past, companies were doing things on their own through closed innovation. Today, they are outsourcing most of the

work to India and China. That gives them two things potentially: cost advantage or savings and the flexibility to turn a service off when the project is over," she added.

Ms Walker advises Indian companies to be patient until companies understand the offerings. "Do not expect to get business on the first meeting itself. Indian companies need to have at least one representative office either in UK or Cambridge. This will allow us to manage a relationship since there has to be someone who is available locally. Collaborations in science are no different from personal relationships. They have to be built on loyalty, respect and trust. This cannot be achieved through electronic means only."

Ms Walker emphasized that service is of absolute paramount importance.

"Exceptional service is needed if they are going to compete. It is also significant to do everything in a timely fashion and as well as keeping the customer informed about basic things," she said.

She sees competition as a major challenge since Cambridge is quite a crowded marketplace.

"It is in persuading Cambridge companies that they can deliver on their promises. There is a lot of support in Cambridge in terms of Indian companies setting up their offices. It is easier to find people who can help you with funding, find accommodation, and there are network meetings where you can get integrated in the community easily and quickly. All of this happens within a 20 mile radius. Hence Indian companies become known very easily. If your work is exceptional then those companies will talk about you to other companies in a good manner," she said.

There is an element of maturity and longevity in Cambridge, believes Ms Walker, since the Cambridge cluster has a track record.

"Companies have been successful and they are raising funds and doing good licensing deals which give Indian companies a degree of comfort. For example, if you are a service company and you want to expand, there are 220 organizations in this cluster within a 20 mile radius of Cambridge," she expressed.

"For any company which has not done any business in Europe can come in to the Cambridge cluster because it is an easy and soft landing for them. They can try their projects in the Cambridge cluster and then move to the rest of UK, and use UK as their platform to go to Germany, France and other countries. It is an easy place to do business for newcomers," concluded Ms Walker.