BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences

'Clearly, Millipore is investing today in the biotech sector.'

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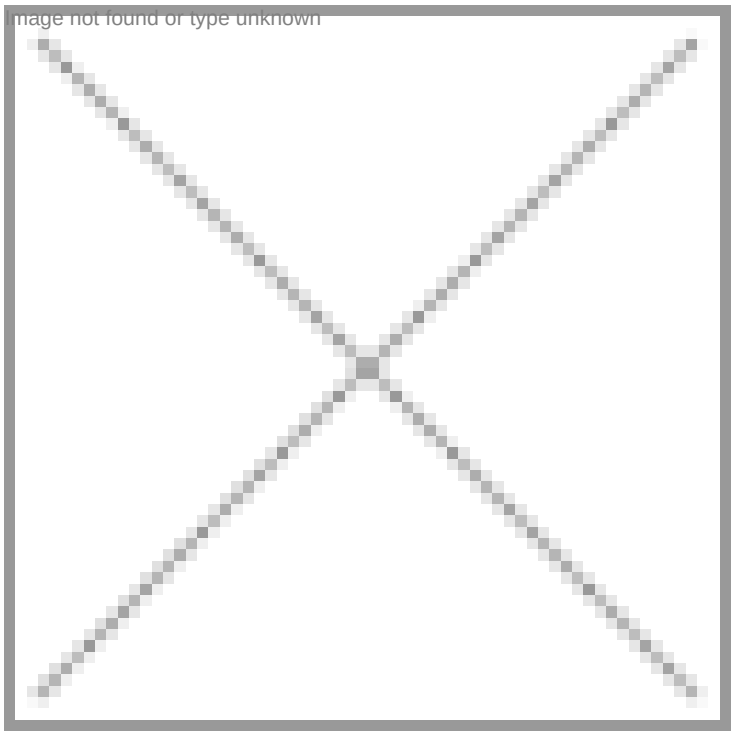

Millipore is a 50-year old bioscience company that is focused on tools and products that help the development and production of new therapeutic drugs. Headquartered in Billerica, USA, it offers solutions to the life science research, biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries. Millipore employs 4,200 people in 10 manufacturing plants and has over 31 offices around the world. And it has been present in India for the last 15 years as a JV company. India is a very important destination for Millipore and its global executives have been visiting the country very regularly. In an exclusive interview with BioSpectrum, Jean Paul Mangeoolle, vice president, worldwide field operations, BioPharmaceutical Division, Millipore Corp.; Julian Alonso, director, Millipore India; Daniel Stamm, general manager, Europe, BioPharmaceutical Division; MS Mahadevan, general manager, BioPharmaceutical Division, Millipore India and share their thoughts on the plans for India as well as emerging technology trends.

Biotech is a very important sector for Millipore. Why is it so and what is the overall focus of Millipore?

The biopharma division in by far the biggest division. We are focused on three key market segments. The core pharmaceutical industry, which is NDDS and NCEs, the plasma and vaccines industry, which is kind of between the core pharma and biotech industry, using some of the biotech processes, although in a much smaller way. Then the biotech industry, which is recombinant vaccines, the monoclonal antibodies, etc. Clearly, Millipore is investing today in the biotech sector. This is because the biotech industry is a very separation intensive process.

L-R : Jean Paul Mangeoolle , MS Mahadevan, Daniel Stamm & Julian Alonso

Does that hold good for India too?

The transpose of our global strategy holds good for India too. There is not much difference. We do cover the core pharma accounts as this still represents a very large part of our business. But the developments and investments are made to

respond to the demands of the biotech industry. Biotech is in a very early stage in India. In this business, if you do not play very early, then you cannot gain in the latter stages. So the latest developments you have seen in India are the application labs, the process development plans, the verification labs, etc. These have been set up in compliance with the global standards.

You have three key business units? How are these focused?

We have lab water, life science, and biopharma units. Lab water makes laboratory equipment for purification of water. Life science makes products for research in the labs and biopharma makes products, which are used in manufacturing, production and control of drug substances. Biopharma would easily be three-fourth of the total size. Millipore was $800 million in revenues in 2003.

In Europe and the US you have a strong manufacturing base. What is the scene in Asia Pacific?

There is not much manufacturing in Asia. We have some manufacturing in India. We are in a very early stage strategy of sourcing for products from India. The level of suppliers' service we can get is increasing and we are looking at procuring more products from India. But we do not have full-fledged manufacturing operations from India.

What is your India strategy?

The biopharmaceuticals business is focusing on core pharma applications, the process and quality control applications. We are focusing on plasma, vaccines, and the so called biotech applications (not as sophisticated as the real biotech like monoclonal antibodies, recombinant proteins). Where are our dollars coming from? Obviously from the core pharma as the biotech sector is just kicking off. We know that it coming. At the moment this is not generating business yet.

The strategy in terms of investment is with respect to the biotech industry. We have a verification lab, application lab, process development lab; we are hiring people and several global executives visit India regularly to support the Indian business. All this has been in view to educate and build awareness. This is important, as classical pharma applications are not as scientific as biotech applications. One may not need the same level of science and support in the former.

Revenues by Geographic Area	2003	2002	% Growth
Americas	$336	$314	7%
Europe	$319	$260	22%
Asia-Pacific	$145	$130	12%
Total	$800	$704	14%

Biotech as a business is potentially lucrative. We continue to support the classical pharma. The revenues generated through this are invested into developing biotech resources. It is a long-term strategy. Honestly, 5-10 years from now, we will see the benefits of making investments into biotech.

We are focusing only on our competency by not moving into providing customers with things that they should not buy from us. In a developing market like India, there is a tendency for a customer to come to Millipore and say do everything for us. There are some things we do well and some, which we don't. We want to focus on what we do well. We want our resources to be used to support separation technology and help the customer use the applications effectively.

How do you position yourself? A product company or a solutions and support company?

We are definitely a technology-solutions company. Today, it is given that the products have to be of very high quality. We are not the only player in the market. The only way to differentiate in the biotech segment is by adding value to the product. There is a need for that in the market place. The customer today has to be standards and regulatory complaint. We can help the customer in deciding a process. The process is very important. We also know how processes are transferred from one site. We help seamless transition. The customer is expecting more than the catalogs and prices. They are looking for advice.

Which are the technologies that will bring you business tomorrow?

Millipore technology is used for a wide range of applications, from protein sample preparation to vaccine sterilization to monoclonal antibody production. Recent new products include new versions of MultiScreen membrane-based multi-well plates for molecular biology applications, and Opticap cartridges for biotechnology drug manufacturing. Millipore lab water systems are essential to research and analytical laboratory work worldwide.

If you see, we are working on the different steps of the process. You have an upstream part, where the media is prepared to grow bacteria, mammalian cells, etc. in the fermentor. Then you have the down stream part where you purify down to molecular level and final sterile filtration of the end product. One trend, we see in the market is disposable manufacturing.

The trend now is to go for plastic products instead of using stainless steel installations, tubings, and containers. This includes filters and filter housings too.

Another area is in quality control. We are looking at faster detection of contamination. Today, it takes two to three days to let the bacteria grow before we get the results. We are looking at methods that give that result much faster. This is called as rapid microbiology and that is the field we are in and you will see newer products.

The third one is the more general one. We bring new membranes to the market place that outperform the actual products in terms of throughput, flow rate. This improves the economy of a process to make it shorten. There are other fields like virus removal. Millipore is looking at that step. Further, we are looking at mechanical retention of a membrane etc.

Millipore has looked at acquisition or alliances to move fast into the market place. For example, in January Millipore and HyClone Laboratories announced the formation of a bioprocessing alliance. HyClone is a global leader in cell culture consumables and disposable bioprocess liquid containment products and a subsidiary of Fisher Scientific International Inc. The alliance will help combine the critical elements required for value-added disposable manufacturing solutions. Biopharmaceutical manufacturers will have one supplier contact for the design, development, and validation support of disposable manufacturing systems combining HyClone bioprocess containers with various Millipore disposable separation products.

Ch. Srinivas Rao and Rolly Dureha

Thermo Electron ships its 100th Finnigan LTQ to INCAPS

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Thermo Electron Corporation, a supplier of high tech instruments to life science laboratories and industrial customers has shipped its 100th customer shipment of the Finnigan LTQ high performance linear ion trap mass spectrometer to Indiana Centers for Applied Protein Sciences (INCAPS). The system was one of five Finnigan LTQs purchased by the INCAPS, which is a recently established venture between Eli Lilly and Company and leading academic, industry and government organizations.

"INCAPS' mission is to provide both academic and industry researchers of the Indiana community and beyond with the most advanced commercially available and prototype proteomics instrumentation to customers requiring high quality proteomic analysis," said Dr. James R. Ludwig, CEO of INCAPS.

Quoting Dr Ludwig the official release adds: "INCAPS is very pleased to receive the 100th Finnigan LTQ instrument shipped by Thermo Electron. Its objectives are further advanced by the addition of this instrument. We expect the LTQ to become a workhorse for our biomarker discovery effort for many years to come. Thermo Electron has been a very committed and collaborative partner and we look forward to continue validating and implementing their very best technologies."

Thermo Electron has set new standards of performance for proteomics research and metabolic studies with the introduction of the Finnigan LTQ at ASMS 2003. Incorporating novel and patented technologies, the Finnigan LTQ delivers exceptional protein sequence coverage with sub-femtomole full-scan LC/MS/MS sensitivity at breakthrough speed.

The release adds that this instrument is recognized by leading research and government institutions and by major pharmaceutical and biotech companies worldwide for delivering unprecedented performance in the identification and mapping of post-translational modifications. It is also recognized for accelerating early discovery phase investigations, and in the analysis, detection, and quantification of the most minor components in complex biological matrices. Researchers have a powerful tool for characterizing disease states and mechanisms of action with the Finnigan LTQ FT, as well as for developing new diagnostic and therapeutic strategies.

The customer shipment of the 100th Finnigan LTQ marks a key milestone in the adoption of new linear trap technology in the marketplace, and demonstrates Thermo's continued leadership in ion trap mass spectrometry.

Danish supplier opens subsidiary in Mumbai

Chr. Hansen, a Danish supplier of food ingredients with a strong foundation in biotechnology opened its new subsidiary in India. By opening an office in Mumbai it has made its presence in 30 countries worldwide. It is one among top suppliers of ingredients (cultures, enzymes, colors, savory and special ingredients) for the food industry. It develops ingredient solutions for the food, pharmaceutical, nutritional and agricultural industries in close cooperation with its customers and partners.

Its venture in India will initially concentrate on vegetable rennet and bacteria cultures for cheese and yogurt, two areas in which the Danish company already is the world leader. Later this year natural colors derived, for example, from fruits and berries and flavors for soups and sauces, among other things, will also be added to the menu.

"The six personnel who will initially staff the office in Mumbai will be responsible for sales, marketing and providing technical advice, while most of the actual sales work will be taken care of by a nationwide network of distributors," said Tansukhlal Jain, managing director in Mumbai.

Hansen is already a partner in AKAY Flavor and Aromatics, situated in Cochin in southwest India.

Prof Chandrashekhar receives Chemito Award of Excellence

Prof. TK Chandrashekhar, Regional Research Laboratory, Trivandrum (formerly with IIT, Kanpur) received the Chemito Award 2003, for excellence in applied research in the field of analytical techniques. The award ceremony was held at Gujarat University, Ahmedabad and was presided by Prof. V Krishnan, former President, JNCASR. The ceremony was preceded by technical sessions on gas chromatography and chemical reactors.

Constituted in 1998, in the memory of BD Toshniwal, the Chemito National Award of excellence are presented to recognize significant contribution in the areas of applied research carried out using an instrumental technique (preferably chromatography or spectroscopy)/applied research in the field of chemistry and life sciences.

The award carries an endowment of Rs 20,000, a certificate and a citation. BD Toshniwal was a pioneer in analytical instrumentation in India and the founder of Chemito Instruments Pvt Ltd.

The Chemito National award of excellence for 2001 was conferred to joint winners, Dr Lallan Mishra, professor of chemistry, Banaras Hindu University and Dr Shobhana K Menon, professor of chemistry, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad.