

“There is a huge contract research outsourcing incline towards China rather than India”

...observes Ganesh Sambasivam, Co-Founder & CSO, Anthem Biosciences. Here, he sheds light on the current scenario of Contract Research Organisations (CROs) globally and the urgent need to innovate in this sector.

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Ganesh Sambasivam

What was the reason behind setting up Anthem Biosciences?

In our previous assignment we (the founders of Anthem) were in the top positions and had reached a point where there was no vertical growth. So, we wanted to see if we could do something more challenging and creative. That led us to setting up Anthem.

What got your interest in contract research?

Contract research is an area that we know best as we have years of experience in this field. Due to the experience we have, we realised that there are a few things that we could do in certain

areas which could be good differentiators in the industry. Thus, at Anthem we set up platform technology in the area of biology. Today, many of our clients have conveyed that the platform we offer to our clients for discovery services is unique. This definitely is a great achievement for us. When we set up this company our sole purpose was to come up with unique offerings for our clients, which no one can provide besides us. Also, unfortunately contract research has a negative connotation attached to it as clients give you the protocol and you do exactly what has been asked. But we have started creating Intellectual Property (IP) in areas that do not conflict our client, and there are IP solutions that we have created which would serve as tool for drug discovery.

Where do you see Anthem going with this new concept?

The market is not doing very well at the moment; a lot of people are losing their jobs as a result of which the outsourcing opportunities have faced a downfall from the West to India. Many experts also feel that there is a huge contract research outsourcing incline towards China rather than India. Thus, companies that can be creative and innovate are the ones that would stand through time. With this concept, we have an upper hand and are sustaining this downfall.

What is the reason behind the tilt to China?

Today, China has many positives; its infrastructure is a big plus and there are many incentives that the Chinese government is offering to the pharma and biotech companies to come to China. This clearly is a big deciding point for the companies of the West to go to China. More importantly, most of the big pharma and biotech companies have been working with China for the past decade or so and have invested a lot of capital.

What changes need to be made to strengthen the contract research segment in India?

We have to make changes within ourselves, and one of the ways is by creating IP; important and novel aspects we need to bring in. The moment we do that, we will be noticed in the global scenario and there will be companies knocking at our doors.