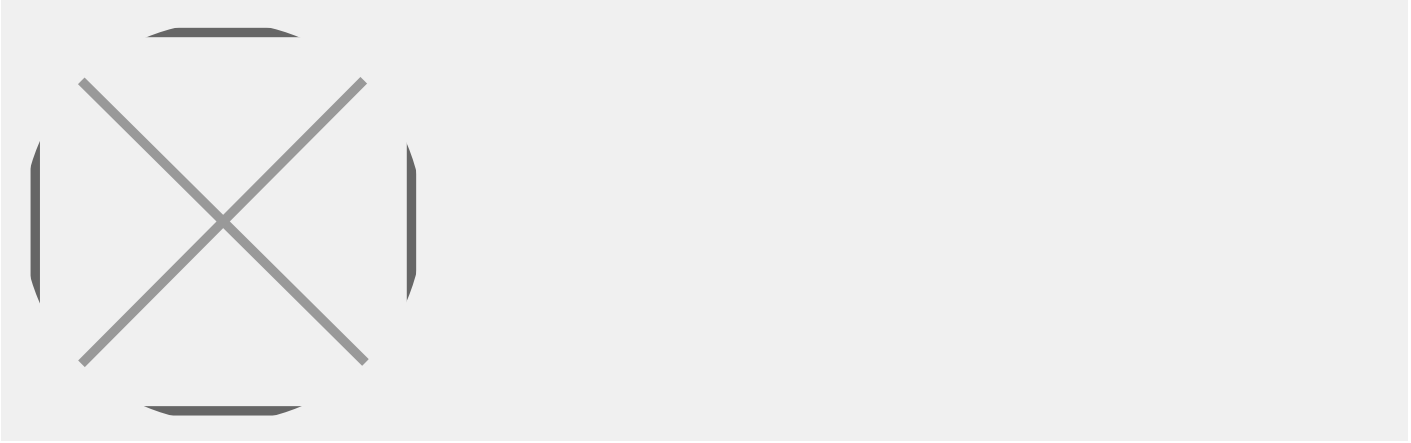
Interview with Jennifer Wong, Business Unit Manager, Cegedim Strategic Data Malaysia



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Nowadays we can talk of an abundance of information coming from companies like Frost& Sullivan, IMS and even consultancies who are producing their own data. As a leader in market research how can CSD find a space within this picture and what strategies does it employ to stay ahead of the pack?

CSD is a leading market research company with over thirty-six years of experience in the healthcare industry. Our focus on healthcare and our experience are therefore two factors which put CSD ahead of its competitors. We are able to transfer this experience to our operations here in Malaysia.

Within the CSD portfolio there are five main product lines: Promotion Audit, Patient Database, Communication Tracking, Primary Market Research, as well as Medical Research whereby we provide the services of a clinical research organisation including Post-Marketing Studies, Pharmaco-Epidemology, Health Economics, Outcomes Research, Regulatory Affairs, Clinical Studies, Registries, Medical and Biostatistics Expertise. The additional advantage that CSD therefore has is the fact that it can provide integrated solutions to its clients with the above mentioned product lines. CSD is not simply about providing ad hoc solutions but can use its secondary databases and established relations with doctors to provide an informed service to its clients.

Would you say that there were any specific challenges to obtaining data in Malaysia that you would not find in other countries?

There are definitely issues in obtaining data in Malaysia. This becomes evident if we just compare the situation in Malaysia and its neighbouring country, Singapore. In Singapore you can easily access information on the healthcare system via the internet. This information is not just accessible but is also properly organised. In Malaysia the same type of research represents a much greater challenge. It is therefore necessary to go through the proper channels to obtain this type of information. However the difficulty of accessing this information is what helps make the work of CSD invaluable to the pharmaceutical industry.

In terms of these proper channels, how do you cultivate strong relationships with the healthcare industry?

We have built up strong relationships with doctors over the years and have been able to use this to reach out to the right government contacts and establish relations with the Ministry of Health. In addition, often our clients also assist CSD in providing their own contacts.

How do you attract MNCs to work with you in Malaysia?

The fundamentals to acquiring and maintaining our customer base are service and quality. Ultimately we are participating in a service industry and our services have to surpass those of our competitors. In view of this, we do not only provide data to the client but sit in during the implementation of the strategy stage and help them to interpret these data. In the past it might have sufficed to simply provide a report, whereas nowadays to remain competitive, it is necessary to work more closely with our clients. We engage in both pre-launch studies and post-launch studies to give clients a good overview of their marketing strategies and work with them to establish the next steps to improve their approach.

The only problem we encounter is that a few companies are unwilling to let CSD in on their marketing strategies. However the larger players in the pharmaceutical industry have more experience with this and work with CSD to achieve good results. I also see a trend within the pharmaceutical industry moving away from in-house research towards the services of companies such as CSD. Companies are beginning to realise the potential for bias when conducting in-house research and in order to stay up-to-date with their competitors they must engage with third parties to achieve more objective research.

More and more we are observing companies allocating budgets for thorough market research. Following the recession in 2009, we are expecting rapid growth in the Asia-Pacific region and Malaysia is an integral part of this.

The Ministry of Health is also actively supporting the generics markets and this demands that companies increase their market attentiveness and keep abreast of what changes are occurring. The growth potential for CSD is therefore promising because of these trends. Multinational

companies such as Novartis with Sandoz and Sanofi-Aventis with Winthrop are moving into generics and CSD can help them in this regard. Indeed, CSD is receiving increasing requests from companies to conduct studies on the generics market. The patent cliffs affecting the big pharma industry mean that there is an increasing call for studies into the competition posed by generics companies.

We have so far discussed the growing tendency for big multinational companies to engage the services of CSD in understanding the generics companies. How would you convince local generics players of the need for your services?

It is true that our partners so far have been the MNCs and local companies have been more reluctant to engage in market research through external companies. However I do not expect this situation to remain the same. Up until now generics companies have been able to simply win the price war with big pharmaceutical companies and low profit margins on their drugs have sometimes precluded investment in market research. Now with the number of players entering the generics market these local companies will have to conduct more thorough market research using the services of companies like CSD. It is therefore not so much a matter of convincing these companies as a basic need evolving due to increasing competition in the generics market.

In the fast moving technological sphere, how can CSD stay ahead of its competitors in providing for this increase in demand?

CSD benefits from its proprietary tools such as: INES© an online study management and e-CRF tool (originally developed for Clinical Trials), CSD Advance powered by Reportive which facilitate the production of customised reports from different data sources. CSD has recently launched CSD Analyser powered by Reportive an easy-to-use data analysis and dashboard tool. CSD Analyser has been designed with pharmaceutical professionals in mind, to provide them with flexible direct access to dynamic data. It is due for implementation in Malaysia very soon. I believe these technologies allow CSD to differentiate itself from its competitors.

With growth in APAC and increasing competition in the generics market, what sort of growth is CSD projecting in Malaysia?

For CSD we have experienced a 20% growth from last year. High hopes are placed in this country and we are expanding here in terms or resources and technology.

The company is also seeking to invest in personnel. Indeed training is a key target area for the company. We constantly send our employees for further development either in our regional office in Singapore or to our head office in France. In this way we are learning from our mature markets in Europe. Many of the changes Asia is experiencing have already been observed in the mature pharmaceutical markets and with CSD’s heritage we are fully able to capitalise on this experience

here in Malaysia.

You started in April this year. What would you say was your mission statement when you arrived and what do you aim to achieve in the coming years?

My objectives are simply to keep growing the company and bringing in business. We have so far seen healthy growth and moving forward in 2011 CSD aims to be known as the number one market research provider in the pharmaceutical and healthcare industry. This is my personal aim and I understand that it is ambitious. It may not be achievable in one year but at the very least we aim to have the CSD name known among all the pharmaceutical companies in Malaysia.

Many pharmaceutical companies are undergoing a process of decentralisation. Their headquarters used to be in places like Hong Kong or Singapore. However because of the high cost-nature of these business environments companies are increasingly looking to establish themselves in Malaysia. This represents good news for CSD and this is why Malaysia is a valuable investment for the company.

In my previous position we had to build the company's reputation. This is my aim here with CSD. CSD Malaysia is focused on finding the right people with strong knowledge of healthcare. This is essential for the company.

What would be your final message on behalf of CSD to the pharmaceutical industry here in Malaysia?

The bottom line is that CSD aims to be the number one market research company, we focus on quality and service and we provide an integrated one-solution approach combining our five products to provide value for money.

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