

**RESEARCH & Innovation Japan (RIJ)**, located in Shi-roi, North East of Tokyo, is a one-year-old consulting company that helps foreign companies penetrate into the Japanese market. The company offers consultation for Japanese biotech and in vitro diagnostic business in Japan. In 2006, Mr Kiyohiko Hirasawa founded the company after giving up 11 years of his service at Roche diagnostics. In an interview with *BioSpectrum*, Mr Hirasawa explains the RIJ business model.

**Q** *Can you briefly outline your company's profile?*  
RIJ is a consulting company for biotechnology and in vitro diagnostics. RIJ prepares the launch pad for foreign companies to introduce their products in the Japanese market. The company does not have any proprietary products. The main activity of RIJ is to offer consulting services to foreign compa-

cifically designed and synthesized for a given gene construct, the company relies on a library of standardized building blocks that can be combined to any desired sequence by means of a series of standardized reaction steps. This standardization allows the process to be fully automated, yielding high throughput at an affordable cost. RIJ has signed a distribution agreement with this company to market and distribute its synthetic genes in the Japanese market.

The other company is Seegene from Korea. Seegene has developed a technology based on multiplex RT-PCR method that maximizes the specificity, sensitivity, accuracy and reproducibility of PCR and permits high throughput screening of gene expression simultaneously. The company has created a number of preset gene groups that can be analyzed by multiplex RT-PCR. Therefore, researchers and molecular biologists working on PCR need not design primers and optimize the PCR conditions. The technology is applied for multiple patho-



'We bridge manufacturer and wholesaler'

**Interview:** Mr Kiyohiko Hirasawa  
Founder, Research & Innovation Japan

nies who want to bring their products with a unique technology to Japan. RIJ advises the companies on the modalities of the Japanese market and assist in the promotion, marketing and distribution of the foreign company's products in Japan.

**Q** *Can you give examples of foreign companies that have gained entrance into Japanese market with your help?*

Recently, through RIJ's mediation, two foreign companies have gained entrance into the Japanese biotechnology market. One is a German company and the other is a Korean company. Both the companies have an innovative technology that could be well received among molecular biologists in Japan.

Sloning Biotechnology, based out of Germany, has developed a unique in-house molecular cloning technology. The company is one of the leading providers of synthetic genes. Sloning's proprietary innovation consists of a novel way of producing synthetic gene constructs. Instead of ligating oligonucleotides spe-

gen identification and cancer diagnosis.

RIJ understood the value and the acceptability of both these innovative technologies in Japan. In collaboration with local distributors, RIJ created awareness on the technologies and distributed the products to academicians and other biotechnologists in Japan.

**Q** *How would you like to leverage on this consulting business?*

The market in Japan comprises of small-, medium- and large-scale manufacturers of diagnostics and biotechnology products. Japan is also filled with wholesalers who distribute the products to the end-users. RIJ's role is to act as a bridge between the manufacturer and wholesaler. In addition, RIJ advises local manufacturers who wish to expand their technology to overseas market. It is RIJ's responsibility to identify the right distributor both within and outside the boundaries of Japan.

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