BioSpectrum the business of Bio & Health Sciences ASIA EDITION

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February 18, 2023 | Opinion

The competition to secure quality talent has been increasing in Singapore's rapidly growing biotech sector in recent years and is forecast to increase even more as the number of unfilled vacancies outstrips the supply of talent. According to the report published by SGInnovate in December 2022, that gap is set to widen by almost 30 percent over the next five years. In conversation with BioSpectrum Jobs, Michelle Yeo, Manager HR Business Partner, Asia, at Sartorius Stedim Singapore talks about the company's current hiring plans.



What are the current requirements of the biotech industry in Asia for picking the right talent? How can the quality of talent improve?

At Sartorius, we empower scientists and engineers to simplify and accelerate progress in life science and bioprocessing, enabling the development of new and better therapies and more affordable medicine.

As a leading partner of life science research and the biopharmaceutical industry, we focus on dynamic sectors and highly innovative markets that will continue to grow for decades.

Many of our life science talents are experienced specialists and among the best in their field of expertise. Apart from meeting the professional and technical competencies, we believe that being customer-focused, a can-do attitude, hands-on approach, and having the courage to take risks and make bold decisions to move forward, are vital ingredients to success.

Our customers are facing major challenges. Numerous diseases are still incurable; many are untreatable. New medications need to be developed and be made available worldwide. With its innovative technologies, Sartorius is part of the solution. For our employees, this purpose is both an opportunity and a commitment. To provide our customers with the right tools and

achieve pioneering technological breakthroughs, we need technical expertise and customer knowledge as well as a strong sense of ambition and, quite often, a high level of persistence.

How is Sartorius ensuring the employment of the best talent for the biotech sector? Are there any strategies in place?

Sartorius offers the perfect size and culture for ambitious doers and diverse minds: every voice is heard. Each new perspective has the potential to be the missing piece for the next game-changing discovery. Yet we believe that major challenges are best mastered together: when experienced specialists — many of them among the best in their fields — fuse their expertise and perspectives. That is why we foster exchange across fields, borders, cultures, and social backgrounds. Depending on personal goals and changing priorities in life, they can grow their careers in diverse ways — from technical to geographical aspects.

We want to empower our employees to have a future-ready mindset and own their career journeys. Employees can now choose from be exposed to roles and functions across the organisation in which they want to develop their skillset or acquire experience. For example, someone in the Application Services function could request a stint in the Sales or Marketing function to further sharpen their interaction with customers. This concept is applicable across all our functions, enabling our employees to pick up mentoring, job-shadowing, rotation, as well as short and long-term assignments in an area of their choice. They are also given opportunities to be engaged in different learning offerings as part of their professional development both within and outside of the organization.

Are you planning to hire more talent in 2023, globally or within Asia? Please share details.

The competition for talent in the biopharma and life science sector is increasing globally, particularly in some Asia markets. However, like any growing business, we are always on the lookout for quality talent that has a good fit for our organization and to that end, we are consistently working on making Sartorius an employer of choice to retain existing and attract new talent to join us.

What are the challenges facing biotech freshers in getting the right employment? How is Sartorius addressing these challenges? What is your agenda while hiring freshers?

Being new to the workforce, most fresh graduates prefer to gain some field/customer experience before joining a solution provider like Sartorius. Therefore, for a complete fresher, it is important to maintain an open mind to explore the possibilities from the other end of the value chain.

At Sartorius, we offer opportunities for growth and career development, and our employee engagement plans are designed based on feedback from our pulse check surveys and conversations with our employees. Having a continuous dialogue is one of the key elements in Sartorius' performance development process. Managers and employees regularly have a checkpoint to provide feedback, discuss and update expectations and the development plan.

Understanding how dynamic the biopharmaceutical industry is, we have the graduate trainee programme which is running quite successfully in some of our pilot Asia locations. This targeted 18-month programme allows the prospective trainees to go through a very thorough rotation covering aspects of sales management, technology application, training, quality and so on before they present their final evaluation and have the opportunity to place in either the commercial or technical function to kick start their professional journey. By the end of the programme, they have gained valuable exposure to sales enablement program, essential selling skills, technical specialty know-how, project management and customer engagement.

What are your views on the current salary structure of the biotech sector in APAC? Is it improving in comparison to other high paying jobs such as IT and management etc.?

I have no direct experience in IT and other industries but the biopharma and life science sectors are fast growing and in demand therefore it does offer its competitive edge in terms of remuneration. But it is also a very diverse industry and there are many different skill sets involved there may be competition for those skill sets from other sectors such as high-tech

engineering industries others with manufacturing or even academia; as a result, some skill sets maybe more in demand than others which puts upward pressure on remuneration. However, our own experience has shown that today potential candidates are looking at a lot more than just remuneration, top of the list is flexible or hybrid working arrangements, and others include; ease of commuting, opportunities to grow and learn new skills, opportunities to travel for work, as well as many other considerations beyond basic salary.