

GSK Pharma to raise headcount to support product roll-out

Our Bureau

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For the third year on the trot, multinational drug-maker GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals has said that it would hire people to support the promotion of its products in the vaccine, branded generics and speciality segments, among others.

The company looks to increase its field-staff by about 500-600 people this year, to take the head-count to about 3,700, GSK Pharma's Senior Executive Director, Mr Mehernosh Kapadia, told *Business Line*. Vaccines, for instance, had grown at 24 per cent in the year ended December 2010, he said, adding that it accounts for about eight per cent of sales.

Among the products lined-up for a roll-out this year, are Votrient (to tackle kidney cancer) and Revolade (to boost blood platelet) expected in the next few months. Pneumococcal vaccine Synflorix, high-end antibiotics through in-licensing arrangements with other companies and branded generics in the cardiac and central nervous system segments, and speciality products in dermatology - are among the other products lined-up for the year, he said.

Drugs under the Government's price control policy account for about 26 per cent of sales, he added.

INFLATION CHALLENGE

Though imports are small, the challenge this year will be managing costs, Mr Kapadia

Q4 REPORT CARD

	2010	2009	% change
Sales	490	444	10
Net profit	115	103	11.6

(in Rs cr)

said, against the backdrop of rising inflation and increasing crude prices. Material costs will have to be off-set by good procurement and sourcing strategies, besides other internal efficiencies, he said. Nevertheless, GSK expects its topline to grow at about 15 per cent, with a 33-35 per cent margin in operational profits, he said.

In fact, the company's performance in 2010 was supported by broad-based growth across segments including mass-markets and mass speciality, besides specialities including dermatology, oncology, critical care and vaccines, the company said.

Dr Hasit B. Joshipura, GSK's Managing Director, said in a statement that the mass market and mass speciality businesses registered good growth aided by the launch of branded generics, increased extension of rural coverage and focussed efforts in the hospital segment.

The company's board also recommended a dividend of Rs 40 per equity share for the year (previous year - Rs 30). GSK Pharma shares closed marginally down on Monday at Rs 2,201 on the BSE.

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