



China's Drugs Companies – Coming to a Pharmacist Near You

Take a moment to think about the global pharmaceutical market and the homes of the world's most successful drugs firms – which countries spring to mind? The United States, Britain, and Switzerland are probably in there, and even India may have given you pause for thought. But what about China? Although the country's pharmaceutical firms are unlikely to have made anyone's shortlist yet, it might be time to take another look at the Middle Kingdom, and not just as a market, but as a supplier. Spurred on by the Chinese government's billion-dollar investment programme designed to roll out a universal healthcare system over the next decade, China's domestic drugs companies are not just raising their game in terms of research and development, but they are also looking outwards with new confidence and ambitions for global market share. And Europe looks set to be amongst the first regions to see this trend take shape, as China's tier-one pharmaceutical manufacturers cast a careful eye over EU market entry opportunities and collaboration options. And that could be very exciting news for many firms in the UK, whose expertise in medical regulatory consulting and clinical research services could add real value to the entry strategies of China's most forward-thinking market leaders.

Cambridge-based China Business Solutions has just completed a detailed study on partnership opportunities and market trends in mainland China's pharmaceutical industry, and has uncovered genuine potential for European firms that have the service complementarities and regulatory understanding of how to help Chinese drugs companies with their market entry ambitions. In particular, the larger Chinese companies are now evaluating exactly which EU member state should host their clinical trials, and which service suppliers have the most integrated market support offerings, with many of China's drugs sector managers describing their ideal solution as being able to locate a one-stop-shop for European market intelligence, regulatory registration facilitation, and phased clinical trial support. Whilst Chinese firms can be inherently risk averse about up-front investment prior to regional entry, the country's most far-sighted pharmaceutical companies do recognise that securing the right partnership is key to building market share and consolidating product success. And it is not just in the areas of generics and bulk drugs that the Chinese stand out, as a number are rapidly expanding their finished products business in subsectors such as cardiovascular, respiratory and oncology, whilst a few are even bringing to the table genuinely innovative formulations that have already proved themselves in US markets.

It now seems clear that there is a lot more to China's pharmaceutical industry than Traditional Chinese Medicine, but making the right connections is still not easy. "Navigating through the myriad of firms and formulations can be a daunting prospect for western technical and commercial service providers", says Ting Zhang, Chief Executive of China Business Solutions, "but real collaboration opportunities with China do exist for those with the persistence and vision to seize the chance, which is where a research report such as ours can be so helpful, as it pinpoints not only companies but also contacts and product owners, who represent the leaders of China's pharmaceutical sector", she adds. Ting also points out that, as the Chinese value long-term relationships, they are prepared to devote considerable time and energy to building trust and securing success for the future, so that effort spent now in establishing a partnership will reap its reward. So, perhaps the real question to ponder is not whether China is ready to compete in the global pharmaceutical market, but instead, to ask when their products will start appearing on a pharmacist's shelf near you.

About China Business Solutions

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