Singapore: Gateway to Asia

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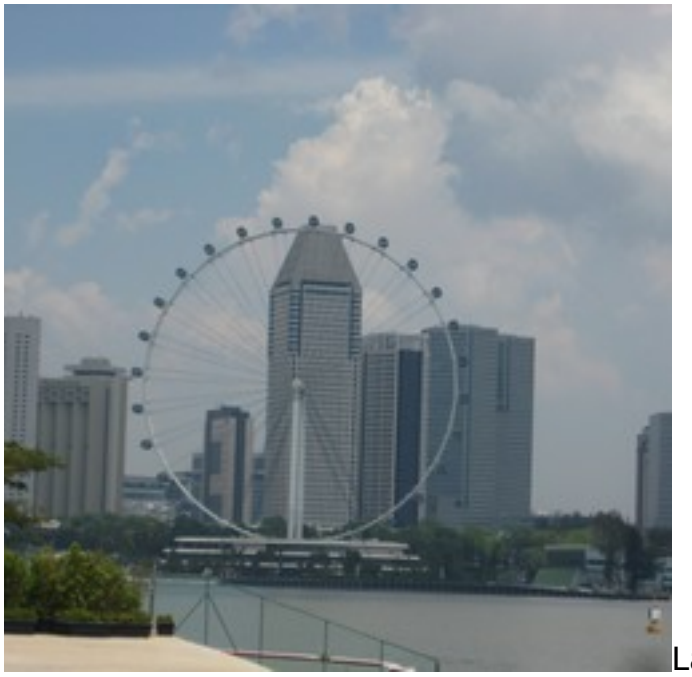

Last month, I had a fantastic opportunity to visit Singapore to see several medical device suppliers and outsourcing service providers. It was a country I knew very little about and had simply grouped in with the rest of Asia as a low labor market for manufacturing. It wasn't long before I discovered how wrong I was.

Singapore is truly a gateway to Asia. That could mean different opportunities to different companies. Some might take advantage of Singapore as a location for outsourcing or product development. For others, using Singapore to house a "base of operations" from which to launch product into the rest of Asia is an attractive concept (Singapore's numerous trade agreements makes this easier for companies without a location in the region). Either way, companies benefit from the advantages Singapore offers that make it unique in the region.

Those advantages are numerous too.

- The primary language of Singapore is English. For U.S. medical device manufacturers, this means the language barrier that can be encountered with other Asian countries is eliminated.
- Infrastructure is already solid but still being improved further. Public transit enables easy access to most of the country while still being expanded and improved.
- IP protection is considered a very serious matter. The fear and uncertainty many medical device manufacturers have in dealing with the Asian market is the concern of their product design going in the front door and being sold illegally out the back door as a counterfeit/competitive product. Singapore

recognizes this and has implemented tight oversight to prevent this.
- Government support for industry is strong. There are several government organizations in Singapore with the purpose of supporting industry and technology development. All tasked with different roles but all in support of business in Singapore, IE Singapore, SIMTech, A*STAR, SPRING Singapore, and EDP are a few of the organizations medical device manufacturers would be interested in speaking with to see what opportunities they can offer to support initiatives.

With a strong infrastructure, government support for industry, IP protection, and a lack of language barriers, Singapore makes for a very attractive location for medical device manufacturers to establish a presence in the Asian community.

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