

Healthy mobility

From its early years, Opto Circuits has made a name for itself in the field of high-tech healthcare products that doctors inside the intensive care units of hospitals everywhere have come to depend upon. Its first big leap in this direction was the 2001 acquisition of Advanced Micronic Devices Ltd (AMD), at that time a distributor for several multinational companies.

AMD's customer base includes major corporates; defence establishments; software technology parks; state & Central government hospitals, as well as research institutes; super-specialty hospitals; private & public sector hospitals; and nursing homes. It also serves individual doctors spread across the country.

A few years later, Opto Circuits acquired Criticare Systems Inc, a \$68 million deal in March 2008 that gave the company a strong foothold in the steadily growing market of patient monitors used in the operating room.

Now AMD and Criticare have come together to design a product known as eTraQ, which can monitor the ECG (electro-cardiogram), blood pressure and other vital signs of a critically ill patient – a facility that can save the lives of such patients. What is more, they have tied up with Research In Motion (RIM), the owners of the ubiquitous BlackBerry, to make the eTraQ available on a BlackBerry Playbook.

"This would prove critical when a seriously ill patient is being rushed to a hospital, because the emergency room physicians could then monitor his condition on the move," says Arindam Sen, CEO, AMD. It could also prove quite useful for watching over a patient, while he is being moved from one department within the hospital to another, he adds.

For the time being, the new service would be available only through the BlackBerry Playbook, and not the regular BlackBerry phones because of two reasons: first, the Playbook has a seven-inch screen, which makes the display of the patient's vital signs quite easy to view; second, the Playbook is equipped with an encrypted service, which enables doctors to keep the patients' data confidential. For the time being, however, eTraQ would not be accessible through other tablets, PCs, or even through devices like the Apple iPhone or iPad, Samsung Galaxy Note, and so on.

Though the new device might take some time to catch on, Sen is confident that it will only grow with the passage of time, particularly because it will be priced at less than ₹1 lakh. "Its potential is immense," he claims.

With a sales turnover of ₹72 crore, which has the prospect of 10 per cent CAGR (compounded annual growth rate), AMD is today at the same threshold of growth that Opto Circuits was at the time of its IPO in 2000.

In May 2009, Business India reported that Opto Circuits had grown rapidly through a widening basket of high-tech healthcare products. Now, it has joined hands with RIM, the owners of BlackBerry, for a mobile-based healthcare monitoring system