

OS03-5 Experience as a Scientific Entrepreneur: How to Start a Drug Discovery Biotechnology Company

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I will discuss experience gained as a result of starting seven biotechnology companies: Lipex Biomembranes (1985), The Canadian Liposome Company (1986), Inex Pharmaceuticals and Northern Lipids (1992), Protiva Biotherapeutics (2001), AlCana Technologies (2009) and Precision NanoSystems (2010). All of these companies develop some aspect of lipid nanoparticle (LNP) drug delivery technology. Lipex, which sold a device for making LNP, is now merged with Northern Lipids, which is a leading contract research organization for producing LNP drugs. Northern Lipids now employs over 25 people. The Canadian Liposome Company became Inex Pharmaceuticals in 1992 and developed an LNP drug (Marqibo) to treat non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. In the early 2000's, Inex employed nearly 200 people, subsequently merging with Protiva Biotherapeutics in 2009 to form Tekmira Pharmaceuticals. Tekmira is now a leader in the development of LNP formulations of siRNA for gene silencing and employs over 70 people. I also recently co-founded AlCana Technologies to pursue additional objectives for LNP delivery of genetic drugs as well as Precision NanoSystems, a company that is manufacturing a microfluidic formulation device. The presence of these companies has established British Columbia as a leading hub in the nanomedicine community worldwide.