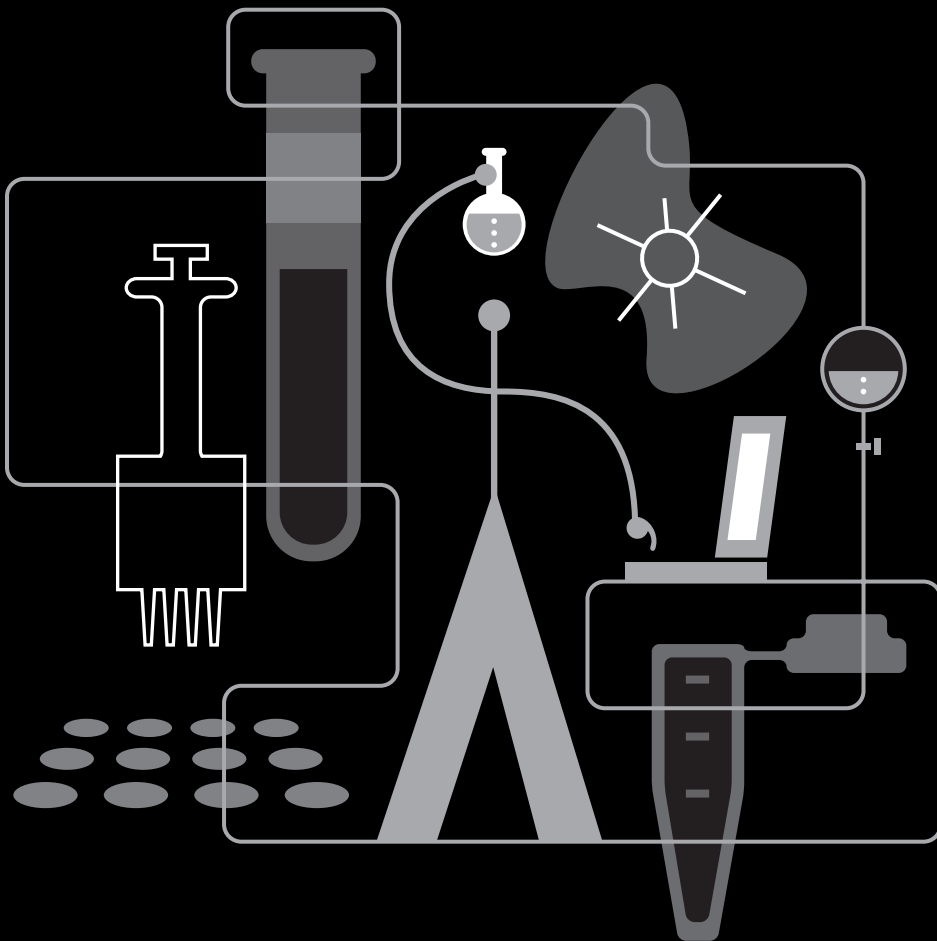
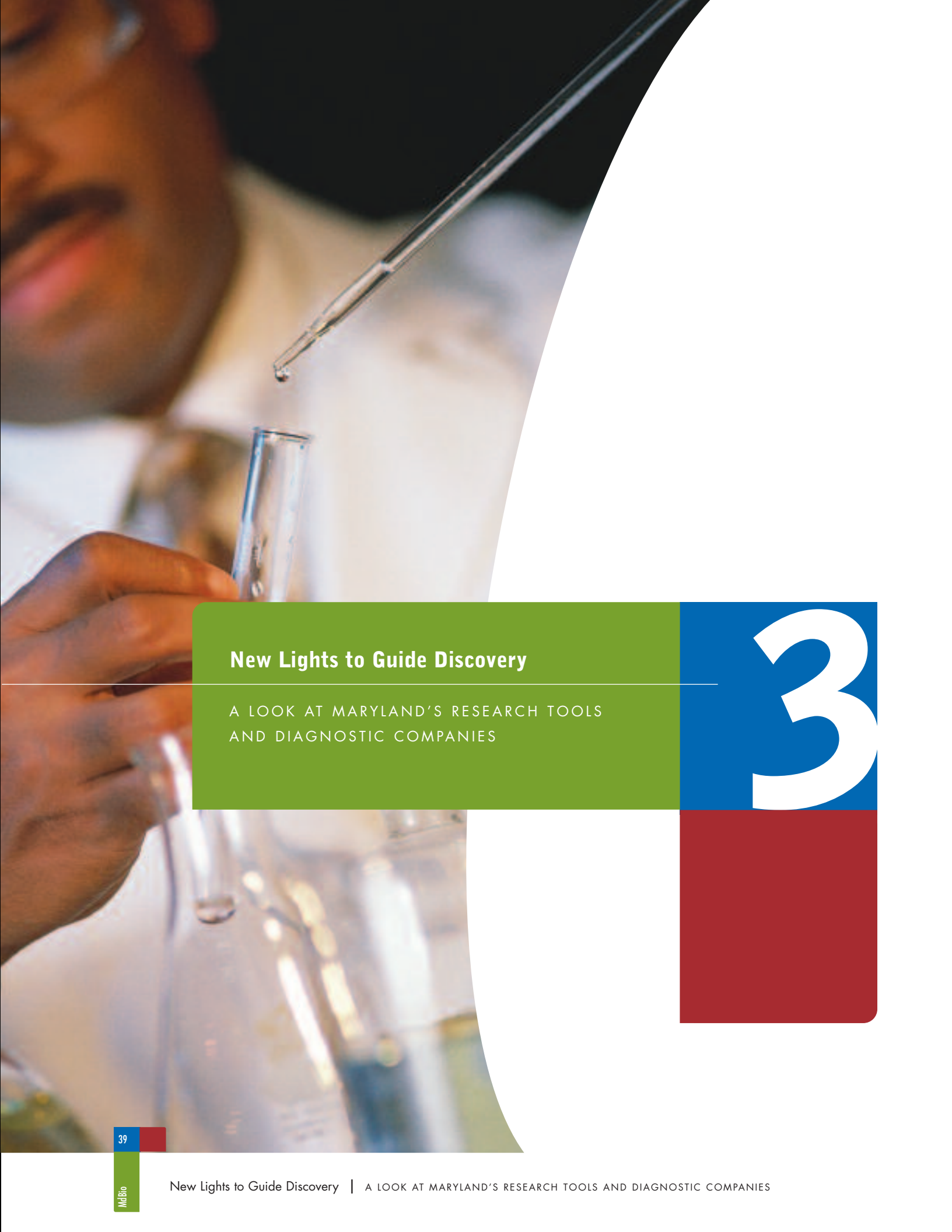


“If you steal from one author, it’s plagiarism; if you steal from many, it’s research.”

Wilson Mizner





## New Lights to Guide Discovery

A LOOK AT MARYLAND'S RESEARCH TOOLS  
AND DIAGNOSTIC COMPANIES

3

Research tools and diagnostic companies create the kits, reagents and instruments that enable researchers and clinicians to uncover the molecular basis of disease, develop life-saving therapies, and treat and diagnose patients. Within Maryland, the complement of companies in this sector is diverse. With approximately 90 companies, employing nearly 3,500 people in Maryland, research tools and diagnostic companies play a significant role in the region's bioscience economy. This chapter introduces some of the companies and personalities that are finding success in the sector, as they reveal some of their own "best practices".

### Ariadne Genomics

When Ilya Mazo and his partners founded their computational-biology company, Ariadne Genomics, four years ago, they created the company as much for its promise of self-employment as for its potential for financial reward.

"I guess for us, we just got to the point where we no longer wanted to report to anyone else," said Mazo, the company's president. "We enjoy our independence and to us, that is more important than making money."

This is not to say that the bioinformatics company is not profitable. After a year of product development, Ariadne launched its first product in January 2003. Revenues were quick to follow.

"We started making money by December '03," Mazo recalls. "Not a lot, but it was enough to keep us alive." Since then, more than 1,000 pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies and academic researchers, worldwide, have integrated Ariadne Genomics software into their research methods.

The reason for such widespread acceptance lies in the company's proprietary Natural Language Processing (NLP) technology, which when combined with statistical algorithms, creates user-friendly software tools that provide the flexibility of desktop applications with the browsing power of web-based solutions to give researchers near instant access to huge amounts of scientific data, including the recently completed human genome.

"For centuries scientists have been doing experiments trying to answer the same questions," Mazo said. "The problem is that the information is not in any formalized format." It is spread through a gargantuan array of scientific papers. Researchers who wish to make any inferences from past research via computer algorithms require a database to work from.

Most of Ariadne's competitors create these databases manually. They actually hire between 50 and 100 people for the laborious task of reading and extracting information before manually typing the information into tables that will be used to create a database. "It is a very 19th century approach," Mazo said. "At Ariadne we are working in the 21st century." Ariadne Genomics' technology uses complex linguistics to read and comprehend scientific literature, enabling the system to quickly and efficiently extract pertinent information. "And the fact that all of our competitors use manual processes keeps their prices really high, which is good for us," Mazo said. "With our technology, nearly everything that scientists have developed and researched in the last 100 years is available. And it's not prohibitively expensive."

In addition to strong competitive advantage and cutting edge technology, Mazo attributes much of Ariadne's success to the relationships between the company's founders. "In many ways we are a family business, run by several families," Mazo said. "We have people who have been around for a long time." Mazo and his partners met and developed friendships while working together at a previous bioinformatics company that went defunct after going public.

Whether friends should go into business, "depends on the friends," Mazo said. "It has worked well for us. Especially when we started, because when the times are tough you really need people you can trust."

Based on the company's current financial health, whatever tough times the company suffered were short-lived. The company has no outside investors and no debt. "We have chosen from the very beginning to shy away from any outside investment because we are absolutely comfortable being a small company," Mazo said. "And while for many in the company staying small is a lifestyle decision, it is also a business decision. Bioinformatics companies are not going to

When you have a great new product that impacts the health of women worldwide, has been approved by the FDA, and has no competition in the marketplace, an effective sales marketing and distribution network is paramount to product success.

The Digene® HPV test



generate revenue on the same level as therapeutics companies. You can get to the level where you're generating \$10 or \$15 million per year, but that's about it."

So what happens to computational-biology companies who try to grow larger? According to Mazo, they are doomed to fail, mainly because the market won't support bigger players. "Our previous employer tried to play big, and a number of other companies tried to play big and went public when it was possible; they are all gone," he said. "But small guys, the ones with 10,000 to 15,000 customers selling maybe \$10 million a year, have been around for years. And that's what we want to do... be around for years."

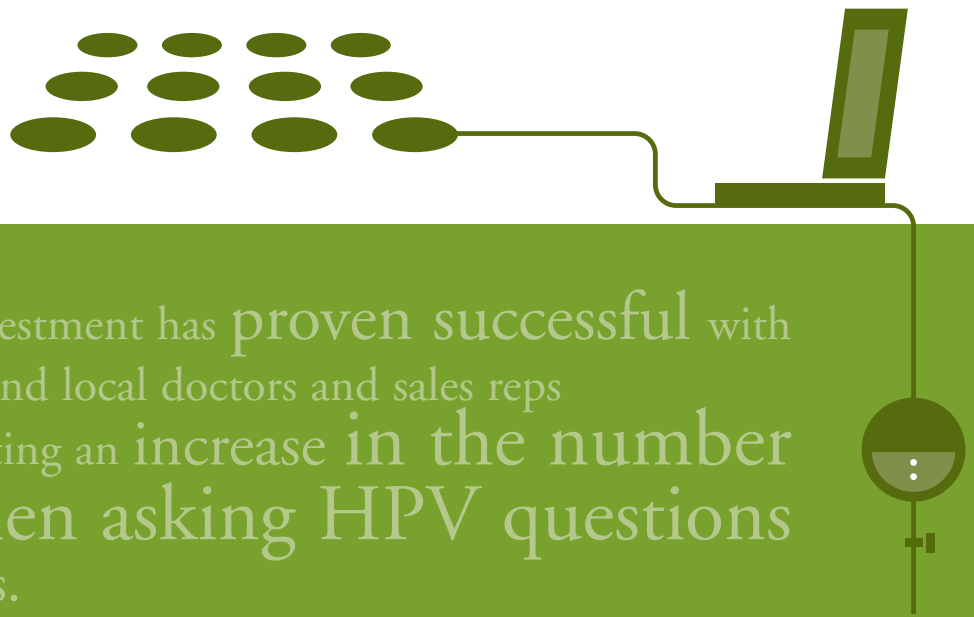
### Digene Corporation

When you have a great new product that impacts the health of women worldwide, has been approved by the FDA, and has no competition in the marketplace, an effective sales marketing and distribution network is paramount to product success. Nevertheless, spreading the word about your product to potential customers and clinicians is never a straightforward proposition. Yet, Digene Corporation of Gaithersburg has faced this challenge, and the company's efforts have yielded impressive results. Starting with a small contract sales force, the company's management has been able to create an effective, in-house sales and distribution dynamo whose effectiveness goes beyond what you would expect, given its modest size.

The company's lead product is the only FDA-approved test for human papillomavirus, or HPV, the cause of virtually all cases of cervical cancer. Prior to FDA approval in 2003, Digene management set out to create a sales and distribution network that would be capable of capitalizing on their product's market opportunity. "We had been setting the stage, so we didn't have to start from scratch," explains Douglas White, Vice President of Digene's Commercial Operations for the Americas and Asia Pacific. "Digene involved leading clinicians and scientists while we were setting out to prove that HPV causes cervical cancer. A conscious effort was made to involve researchers on a global basis in collecting the huge body of data that was required to prove the utility of the HPV tests for cancer screening. This was key to building awareness, enroute to enlisting users."

Reimbursement was another critical initiative. According to White, "There was a great effort to make sure that private and government payers understood the clinical value and health economics of adding HPV testing to a primary health screen. Today, nearly every single major private health insurance group is paying for the test."

It would seem that with support for HPV testing from the scientific community, and buy-in from insurance providers, adoption of Digene's HPV test would be rapid and widespread. However, that was not the company's experience, at least initially. "The product did not move immediately," says White. "We still had to engage the clinical laboratories that would be doing the testing, and the physicians who would



The company's investment has proven successful with sales figures soaring, and local doctors and sales reps reporting an increase in the number of women asking HPV questions of their doctors.

be obtaining and submitting the samples.” Fortunately for Digene, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, recognizing the value of HPV testing and the need to provide info and guidance to its constituents, developed HPV testing and practice guidelines for its members, primarily OB-GYNs who are the primary testers for cervical cancer. Digene also leveraged their sales capacity—by partnering with reference labs and their sales reps. “We went to the large regional and reference laboratories and explained the market opportunity, which they understood immediately. Together we formed plans for increasing their lab capacity to handle what would be many thousands of additional tests and for having their sales organization promote the test.” Digene also sponsored continuing medical education events for physicians and used their own sales staff to help doctors prepare their practice for HPV testing. “To be effective, we really had to help the clinicians,” says White.

From a marketing standpoint, Digene invested heavily in a groundbreaking direct-to-consumer ad campaign, one of the first ever for a diagnostic company. The campaign included a national print magazine ad, and city-by-city TV campaigns, which have now aired in 10 cities over the past year and a half. The company's investment has proven successful, with sales figures soaring, and local doctors and sales reps reporting an increase in the number of women asking HPV-related questions of their doctors. Digene also partnered with professional groups and other associations to create educational initiatives about HPV and cervical cancer for women.

So what can other companies learn about launching a product from Digene's experience? White believes in creativity for amplifying a company's message. “The contract sales organization was very good for getting us started, but eventually, we decided that we needed to bring that function in-house.” Since that point, it's been hard work and inspired thinking that has amplified Digene's message. Physicians recognize the value of HPV testing; and women now know enough about HPV and cervical cancer that they will ask their health care providers for the test. Digene is expecting another boost soon, this time from a big-pharma backed marketing campaign to promote Merck's new HPV vaccine. Digene's hope is that their activity will create a wave of awareness that will bolster the company's ongoing efforts to inform consumers about the link between HPV and cervical cancer.

Personal Thoughts | DEREK WOODS, FORMER VICE PRESIDENT OF  
BIOIMAGING SYSTEMS, BD BIOSCIENCES



Derek Woods, Ph.D., is former Vice President of Bioimaging Systems at BD Biosciences, a division of Becton Dickinson and Company. Less than two years ago he was CEO, President, and Chairman of the Board of privately held Atto Biosciences, Inc., a Maryland-based company he acquired in 2001 from its founder. Woods is credited with taking the unique Atto technology—CARV® confocal technology, a microscopy platform for imaging and analyzing live cells and looking at biological reactions three-dimensionally—from moribund, to worldwide acceptance.

MdBio sat down with Derek Woods to hear his views about what makes for a successful business acquisition, and to hear his thoughts on commercializing research tools in today's market.

**Q: What would you say are key ingredients in the success of a bioscience business acquisition?**

**A:** To me, one of the most important things to the buyer and the seller, whether it involves a big company buying a big company or a big company buying a small company, is integration.

**Q: What did BD do to integrate Atto?**

**A:** One thing BD did very, very well when they acquired Atto was to assign a BD person to head up the integration. That person reported to me as well as to the BD general manager who had responsibility for Atto. He knew the BD organization and spent a lot of time with us at our facility in Rockville—where we still are, by the way—getting to know us and bringing us up to speed on the BD way of doing things.

**Q: You say that integration is one thing BD did well. What else?**

**A:** When I was looking for a good buyer for Atto, I knew I wanted a company where the acquisition would be a combination of technology acquisition and people acquisition. Three major companies were after us, all in the same general price range. The BD top brass who came in to speak to us had been with BD for 5, 10, 25 years. This was in contrast to just one or two years for senior level management at the other companies. That sent a very strong message to me about how the company deals with their people.

The proof of the success of the acquisition is that we lost no Atto employees. BD has a passion for people. They focus on the business, but never take their eyes off what makes a company—the people.

**Q: Do you think BD is unique in valuing people so highly?**

**A:** Life Technologies, where I held a senior management position before moving to Atto, had very much the same philosophy. Our salaries were lower than in most companies in the industry, but people stayed because it was a wonderful place to work. Several of the Life Technologies people came to Atto with me. Remember that Invitrogen had bought Life Technologies by the time we'd formed Atto. My Atto CFO had been comptroller at Life Technologies. We'd worked together for 10 years. My head of R&D had been head of R&D at Life Technologies and had developed millions of dollars in products. Excellent marketing folks came, too.

**Q: The success of the Atto-BD integration must have something to do with the product, too?**

**A:** Definitely. Atto had a unique product that scientists working in the rapidly emerging field of high content cell analysis—in universities, industry, and elsewhere—would be eager to use; BD, in its bioscience division, is a cell analysis and research tools company. There was a lot of synergy.

**Q: Let's back up a little. Was it an early goal of yours for Atto to be acquired?**

**A:** I'd have to say yes. I asked myself, "What is best for the shareholders?" Money was very expensive and the company needed money. I raised \$10 million in two and a half years, but that only went so far. We had some extremely lean times. We booked our sparse travel on eBay and Priceline.com. We did whatever jobs needed doing. I even worked in the machine shop when I had time.

Atto was a full service company, from R&D to manufacturing to shipping. Some people in the company were living on salaries that took them week-to-week. If I didn't make the payroll, their families weren't going to eat. I made a commitment to myself that I would never miss a payroll, even if it meant paying out of my own pocket. It gets your attention when you're writing \$100,000 checks to make payroll.

After three and a half years I went to my Board about finding a buyer. They said, "Let's look at it." In about nine months we'd successfully sold the company.

**Q: What was it like to be in negotiations with BD?**

**A:** For a big company, they moved very fast. I've learned that identifying a champion in the other company is always important. This is someone who wants to get the deal done, who leads the deal, pushes it, and drives it. Otherwise it never happens. It was the BD president and head of research and development that championed our deal. The negotiations were never nasty, and everyone felt that they walked away from the table with a good deal. That's important.

**Q: And then?**

**A:** BD was realistic that we would not be a profitable unit in the first or second year. They understand how to grow a business. Together we established a realistic timeline to develop our product as a new business for BD.

**Q: Were there any mistakes?**

**A:** In business in general, I've made plenty of mistakes, mostly when I was unrealistic about what could get accomplished with the financing or time I had. I've learned that most things take two to three times longer and two to three times more money than you expect.

Overall, though, I've been right more times than I've been wrong. A good day is when you're above your forecast. A bad day is when you're below it. It's important for everyone in this business to understand that there will be tough times. You have to expect setbacks.

**Q: How do you recover and learn from setbacks?**

**A:** The key thing is to admit mistakes to yourself and to the people around you, and realize that things need to change. Recover by making the change. Think about why things aren't working and come up with a solution, even if it's completely against your initial vision and mission. Don't keep going down a track with fuzzy results. Rethink and re-chart. It's not easy, especially when you're far down the track.

**Q: When you started out, it must have been challenging to sell a product so cutting edge, and at \$400,000 per unit, to an audience who hadn't even conceived of it yet. Can you give us a hint about your approach?**

**A:** Good question. First, you have to have confidence in your vision, which should be based on what you believe your customers' technology needs will be in two years time. Then, you market to the thought leaders among your customers. These are the people who are the typical early adopters of a new technology. You educate them about the assets of your technology and you show them what it can do for them. Once they start producing valuable data with it, others follow. At first we approached pharmaceutical companies with our CARV<sup>®</sup> technology, although now we're selling more to academia. Again, rethink and re-chart.

**Q: Could you summarize the five best moves on the part of BD that led to the success of the Atto acquisition?**

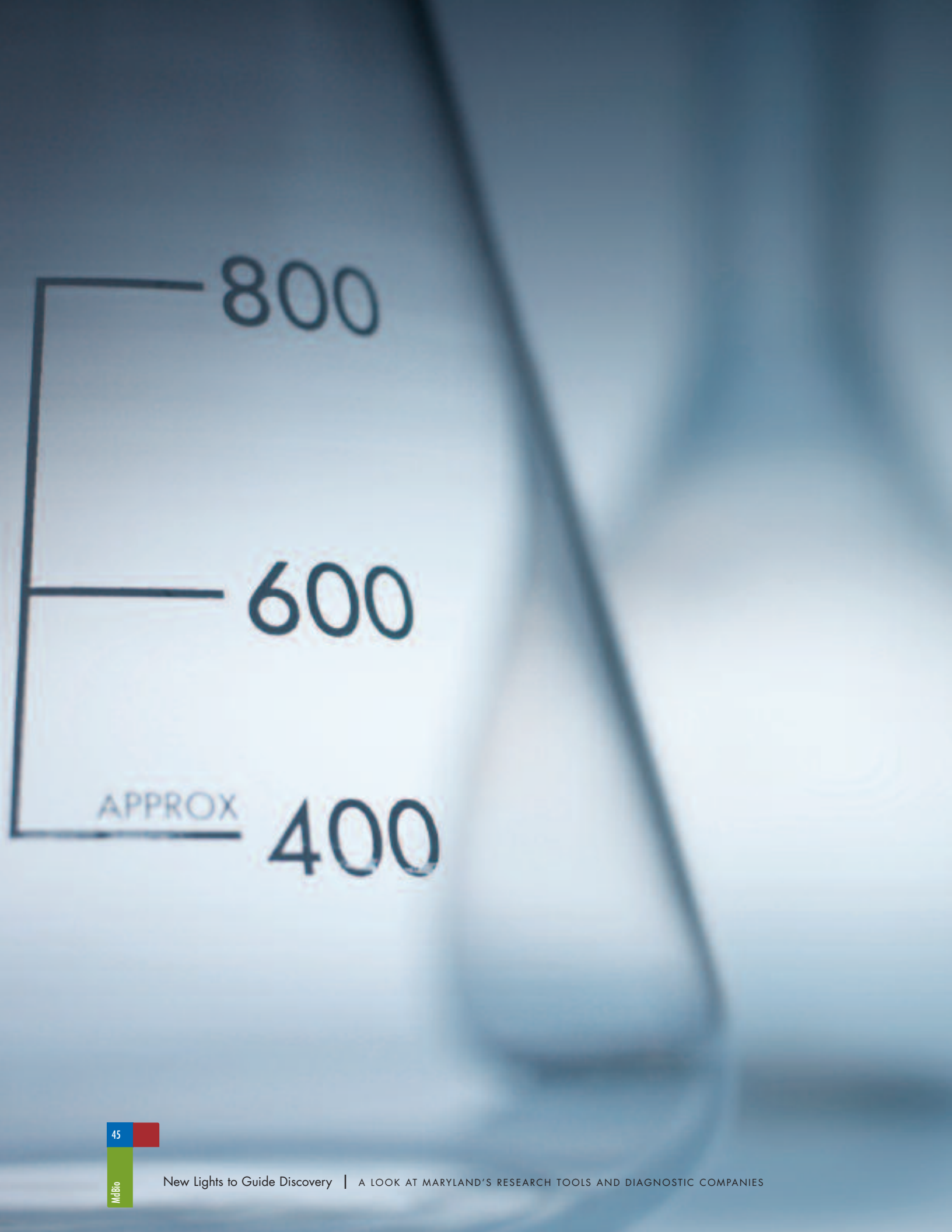
**A:** Sure. One, BD did an excellent job of due diligence. They came in and got to know the Atto people and product.

Two, they negotiated civilly. Negotiations were even fun.

Three, they kept the Atto people on. That's key.

Four, BD brought people from across the company to meet us, which meant that there was buy-in from all sectors.

Five, BD made one person responsible for facilitating the integration of Atto into BD. Fortunately, many of us had previous big-company experience so the transition from small start-up to multinational corporation was a relatively easy one.



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“I went to them and said I don’t only want to make you a licensor,  
I want to make you an equity holder and give you a piece of this”

Joe Hernandez is not a typical Maryland bioscience entrepreneur. He hasn’t worked at the NIH, and doesn’t have a Ph.D., in fact, he’s spent little time in a lab coat since graduate school. What he does have, aside from a Masters degree in molecular genetics and an MBA, is Innovative Biosensors, a company he founded in 2003 after several years spent successfully commercializing other people’s technology.

Innovative Biosensors is a diagnostics company with a revolutionary technology that allows for near-instantaneous ultra-sensitive detection of pathogens. The company recently secured \$3.5 million in venture capital to develop and manufacture its technology.

Unlike many of the area’s bioscience companies, which are often founded by scientists, Innovative Biosensors’ founder considers himself a businessman who says he “genuinely enjoys science but knows his strengths and weaknesses.” After years of sharpening his business skills launching products and growing divisions for companies ranging from large pharmaceutical houses to Silicon Valley chip manufacturers, Hernandez sought to take control of his career by going into business for himself. Seeking not just any opportunity, but the right opportunity, Hernandez began researching the marketplace to first identify a need and then find a technology that he felt addressed that need.

“Rapid diagnostics, particularly portable diagnostics, was an area that I felt was underserved,” Hernandez said. So after an exhaustive review of more than 25 technologies, Hernandez found CANARY, a revolutionary diagnostic technology developed by MIT scientists that delivers extremely rapid detection of pathogens at previously unseen levels of sensitivity and specificity.

“This technology really was, in my opinion, a disruptive technology,” Hernandez said. “It really did something that the current technologies just couldn’t come close to doing. I saw applications very quickly in areas of bio-defense, food testing and human clinical.”

Having found what he was looking for, Hernandez now faced the challenge of convincing MIT to license CANARY to him, a difficult proposition given his position as the company’s sole proprietor with limited capital. “It was a very tough negotiation,” Hernandez recalls. “The technology had a lot of potential and they knew this. It could have been sold or licensed to one of the major players.”

Not one to be deterred by a challenge, Hernandez devised a strategy for selling himself to MIT. He started by presenting the MIT licensing office with a detailed model of how he planned to exploit the technology to recruit capital and ultimately build a business. “My goal was to create a vision for the technology, outlining exactly how I thought it was going to be deployed,” Hernandez said. “I showed them that my core competency was in commercializing new technology. It’s what I’d done my whole career.”

Knowing that it was a tough sell, Hernandez took his pitch a step further by offering to make MIT a partner both financially and scientifically.

“I went to them and said I don’t only want to make you a licensor, I want to make you an equity holder and give you a piece of this,” he said. “At the end of the day, you’re going to make more money giving this technology to me because I’m going to go recruit capital and build a company and you’re going to get an equity component of a company that is going to be successful.”

He also offered to keep the scientific team that developed the technology involved, helping to nurture the technology through collaborative research and development agreements. Hernandez says this is something too many companies don’t do, but should, when licensing technologies. “It’s so important to bring those guys into the fray however you can,” Hernandez said. “A lot of these inventors, they invest their careers in this technology, they’re going to know more about the mechanics than you are.”

To further his case, he brought a list of references to the meeting. “I looked at it like a job interview and said, ‘Here, these are my references. Call these guys and they’ll tell you what I’m about,’” he recalls. “It was selling. I was selling an approach and I think that helped me to close the licensing deal.”

MIT accepted his offer, and in October of 2003 Innovative Biosensors was born. Hernandez’s first responsibility as the newly formed company’s president and CEO was to raise enough capital to get the business up and running. A firm believer in the value of networking, Hernandez began attending biotech-related networking sessions. It was at one of these sessions that he learned of three Maryland state-based funding sources that were potentially available to Innovative Biosensors, and which the company eventually received. Like many entrepreneurs, Hernandez also raised money from friends and family.

Seeking to mitigate some of the potential complications that can arise from mixing money and friendship, Hernandez set criteria for which friends he would, and would not, accept money from. “I told everyone that put money into the company early on, ‘I want to be friends with you even if this company doesn’t go anywhere, and if you can’t do that, I can’t accept your

money,” he recalls. “And there were instances where we couldn’t. To me the friendships were more important than the capital.”

With several hundred thousand dollars raised, the company was now in need of a home. The most logical choice, according to Hernandez, was an incubator. The question was, which incubator? Hernandez approached this question with the same analytical thoroughness he applied to selecting which technology to license.

“We were very strategic,” he said. “We looked at the data and said, ‘out of all the incubators out there, where is most or at least a significant amount of capital raised from? And of all the companies that raised money in those incubators, what is the rate of success? How many of those companies actually become viable companies five years down the road?’”

After reviewing the data, Hernandez decided on an incubator at the University of Maryland College Park, a decision Hernandez has been pleased with. In addition to helping solidify and crystallize the company’s business strategy, the incubator has provided tremendous networking opportunities with potential employees as well as investors and bioscience leaders from the area.

“In any endeavor, finding best-in-class service providers and best-in-class employees, managers and executives is important,” Hernandez said. “I think this incubator has built a reputation for itself such that the best employees and service providers are available to companies here.”

By summer of 2004, Innovative Biosensors had a technology, a home, a staff and a finite reserve of cash, but to sustain itself beyond a few more months would require venture capital. So once again applying his

trademark methodical approach, Hernandez began to research and identify a list of 10 to 15 venture capital firms that he felt would be most interested in Innovative Biosensors.

“We were really selective about who we talked to,” he said. “We weren’t just going to get out the megaphone and say ‘here we are’. One thing you don’t want is overexposure. That’s a little known fundraising secret, but a very important one.”

Viewing this as a sales process, Hernandez was resolute in not approaching investors until he was comfortable with his pitch. “We wrote a book, which we called a business plan, and then revised that book, refining our story along the way.” By December, Innovative Biosensors had received its first term sheet, which was soon followed by others. The company raised \$3.5 million in VC money, and while Hernandez knew it wouldn’t be enough to fuel the company forever, he was comfortable with the start.



**Innovative Biosensors’ patented, self-contained CANARY system consists of engineered biosensors expressing membrane bound, pathogen-specific antibodies and a calcium sensitive bioluminescent molecule. Cross-linking of the antibodies by even minute amounts of the specific pathogen leads to elevation of intracellular calcium and light emission. The amplified light output is detected using an easy-to-use luminometer.**

“I had great help from very skilled friends.

They helped me set up the financial models, business plan, and the manufacturing facility, none of which I’d done before.”

### **Marligen Bioscience, Inc**

For most research tools companies, the road to profitability begins in the lab with an idea. After years of patent filings, beta testing and promotion, the sales begin to trickle in. For Marligen Bioscience, Inc., of Ijamsville, Md., the experience has been quite different. From day one, the company has been generating revenue, drawn from a loyal customer base.

Marligen’s short path to revenue began in late 2001, at a time when company founder Sherry Challberg was still director of research and development at Life Technologies, Inc. (LTI). A year earlier, in the fall of 2000, LTI had been acquired by Invitrogen, which had decided to discontinue several LTI product lines. One of those product lines, LTI’s CONCERT™ gene purification system, was one that Challberg had been responsible for and believed in, and for good reason. Not only did the product have a positive reputation, but it also had a substantial customer base, a major asset that Challberg knew would enable her new company to hit the ground running. “It didn’t take too long to determine that there was a good business opportunity here, and we approached Invitrogen to negotiate the rights to CONCERT™,” says Challberg.

Moving forward however, even with a marketable product in hand, proved to be a challenge. Challberg explains that it took more than six months to plan out a strategy. During that time she took an honest look at her limitations and made moves to address them. She did not have a business partner, although in retrospect she thinks it would have been a good idea. She did seek advice from experienced people. “I had great help from very skilled friends. They helped me set up the financial models, business plan, and the manufacturing facility, none of which I’d done before. They gave me courage. Some of them eventually demonstrated their commitment and passion by joining the company!”

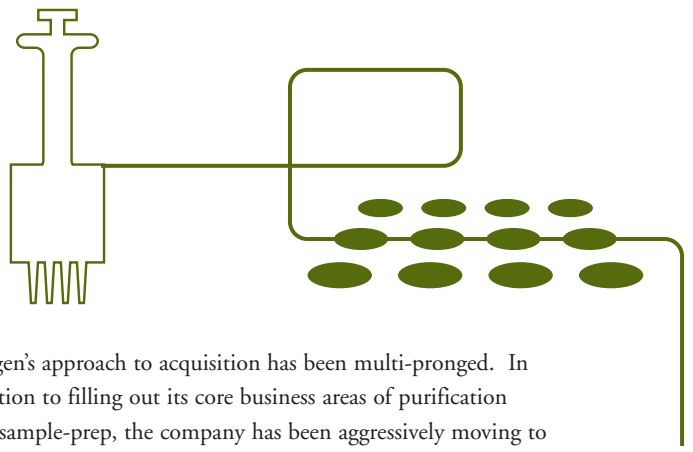
They joined the company not just because they believed in the product but also because Marligen offered an attractive work environment, including flexible work schedules and job variety. “Marligen could offer part-time work and, because we were a

small company with a lot of needs, people could work on jobs outside their usual routines,” explains Challberg. “This has been mutually very beneficial. We’ve used this approach with a number of people who were in the middle of their careers and interested in participating in a variety of roles. For example, our CFO had already retired once. Part-time was perfect for him and for the company.” Marligen started with four people who, says Challberg, “were willing to jump off this cliff with me.” The company now has more than 20 employees.

Today, Marligen develops, manufactures, and distributes products for purifying genes, identifying genetic variability, and for studying the transcription factors involved in the control of gene expression. “We started with about 18 CONCERT™ products, added our own, and now have about 30 in that line,” reports Challberg. Marligen now offers about 70 products to customers worldwide.

Deciding which products to develop was another challenge. Challberg had to be certain that there would be emerging markets for the company’s upcoming line of “Marligen-developed” products. “I believed that there were genuine needs for the tools that the company would be working on,” said Challberg. Financing the development of the new products, of course, came from the sales of the CONCERT™ line.

Asked what advice she would pass along based on her experience with Marligen, Dr. Challberg does not hesitate to say that the biggest challenge is overcoming fear of failure. “Starting and running Marligen has undoubtedly been the most fun and rewarding five years of my life. What I would pass along is that it is much worse to not try than to fail at something.”



## Qiagen, Inc.

Research tools companies often get a bad rap. Because their growth potential is more limited, they often fare poorly when investors make head-to-head comparisons with therapeutics companies. Tools companies in the US that have market caps in excess of \$1B are few and far between and the sector, once fueled by the genomics boom, has all but fallen off the map with many investors. The vast majority of tools companies are small specialty shops whose revenue is in the \$5-10M range, with modest prospects for annualized growth. But that trend is starting to change, and this time it's the biggest players that are showing the way.

Recently, Maryland's giants in the tools sector, Invitrogen and Qiagen, have been acquiring companies at an unprecedented pace. In fact, in 2005 alone, Qiagen made 8 acquisitions. According to Cheri Walker, Vice President of Mergers and Acquisitions for Qiagen North America, "It's very strategic. The tools market is maturing, and many of these businesses have real revenue and great margins."

A maturing market often leads to commoditization, and subsequent pricing pressure, but it can also provide opportunity. "You can drive earnings through improving your cost structures. If you are able to find fast growing niches, and acquire a company operating within that niche, you can leverage those cost structures, often resulting in a business that is better run than it was before," says Walker.

Qiagen's approach to acquisition has been multi-pronged. In addition to filling out its core business areas of purification and sample-prep, the company has been aggressively moving to build a comprehensive portfolio of products in new growth areas of applied testing and molecular diagnostics. "In addition to new products for our portfolio, acquisitions bring in new R&D focus, and, typically some intellectual property protection or barrier to entry," adds Walker. "For example, consider our acquisition of Artus. They had already paid for a license from Roche to sell PCR and real-time PCR assays. That's a great example of a barrier to entry, and it's still a barrier to entry for many companies."

What is Walker's advice for emerging tools companies looking to exit through acquisition? "Make sure that they have their intellectual property in order, and they need to show principal sales via the web or catalog, maybe even using distributors outside of the U.S. But I would caution them not to enter into long term agreements with domestic distributors. If you do want to be acquired, you want to be sure that the acquiring company will be able to sell direct."

Of course, companies also need to be realistic about valuation. And that means understanding what a proper multiple is and what the real growth potential for their business is. According to Walker, "Often, entrepreneurs and investors miss an opportunity to sell their company at a higher valuation because sales don't come in as quickly as anticipated, and projections are not met. You don't want to be put in the position of holding a fire sale for your company."

Qiagen's Germantown headquarters

