



Medicines Manufacturing Industry Partnership



Securing Skills in Medicines Manufacturing – reality or pipe dream?

Over 300 Industry leaders from 160 leading organisations met in Cardiff last year at the 14th Annual bioProcessUK Conference. Top of the agenda, which focused on the latest news, updates and developments within the manufacturing and biologics arena, was the topic of skills, highlighted by many as one of the key drivers in building a stronger UK medicines manufacturing basis.

“The critical importance of getting the right talent and skills sets in the R and D environment has to be seen through a new lens” commented **Andy Evans, Chair MMIP and Astra Zeneca Macclesfield Site Head**, “it’s no longer about making simple molecules that get compressed into tablets and then put in a blister pack. High levels of innovation are required in our manufacturing capability otherwise we may well never be able to make at scale at reasonable costs the medicines that show promise in the clinic”, added Andy. “As the boundaries between development and commercial manufacturing blur, there is a squeeze on access to the quantity of the people at the calibre we need to translate the great R and D we do in the UK into enduring commercial manufacturing with the economic values that brings.”

“At Oxford BioMedica (OXB), catalysed by strategic partnerships with companies like Novartis and more recently Orchard Therapeutics, we have had to grow our capabilities in many specialist areas, including manufacturing, analytics, process development and quality – for example, leading up to the August 2017 FDA approval of a new advanced therapy for a key partner we played a significant role in providing input to the Biological Licence Application (BLA) sections related to the vector” said **James Miskin, CTO at Oxford BioMedica**. “The tremendous pace of development in cell and gene therapy has been catalysed by several products with unparalleled levels of efficacy in diseases which are otherwise very difficult to treat, and often life threatening. To keep up, the UK must continue to invest in the training and skills at all levels of the business that are required to ensure ongoing success.”

At Ipsen, Alistair Kippen, VP Pharmaceutical Development commented “Although we’ve not had notable concerns in recruitment of highly skilled employees through our growth over the last 18 months - as the UK pharmaceutical manufacturing industry, there is certainly more we can and should do to attract and maintain the required talent.”

“Since the UK is a ‘hub’ working closely between academia and industry we have great opportunities to better educate and train the right staff needed in our industry for the future. One easy step is for all of us to encourage engagement and participation in cross-academic industry sharing networks such as the BIA and STEM for example. It’s about showing the exciting and rewarding career opportunities available in our sector and supporting people who join us, through their careers.”

“Drug development is a team sport, only a team comprised of diverse disciplines and skills can convert a great medical concept into a marketed biologic” commented **Crawford Brown, SVP Biologics & Small Molecule (API), Allergan**. “We continue to

invest in our scientists and engineers, to enhance the skills the team can bring to the challenge of developing all major classes of Biologics, investing across the spectrum from apprenticeships to supporting doctoral studies.”

“Our view is that it’s better to invest in development regardless of technology. Upskilling key areas in the UK required for the microbiological quality control and right first-time manufacture benefits both emerging areas such as gene therapy and as well as classical small molecule drugs.”

“Some of the key UK achievements we should promote include investments to support translation such as the Cell Therapy Catapult or early stage process prototyping at National Biologics Manufacturing Centre.”

“MMIP and the BIA have been strong advocates of Biomanufacturing in the UK and the recent Life Science Strategy papers reflect their success in an increased understanding within government of the opportunity. Let’s promote our competitive advantage here in the UK and ensure the new cohort of trained staff have high quality opportunities that encourage them to remain in this country. “

Ends

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