

INNOVATION from the Inside Out



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In November 2018, Cognizant was proud to introduce two new products into the Life Sciences market. Both came out of our Accelerator LaunchPad program, which solicits ideas, creates internal startups, and launches only those products that can survive and thrive throughout its rigorous process.

But what makes a company known for its systems integration and outsourcing services believe it can develop innovative new products?

Cognizant has long been at the forefront of fostering innovation. Beginning more than a decade ago, we structured contracts with commitments to optimize our clients' operations and enhance their return on investment. This motivated all associates to focus on our "Innovation Index," which measured how Cognizant not only solved immediate challenges but also transformed the overall operational model over time.

From Innovation Index to Funded Ventures

Delivering complex digital solutions at scale gives our associates unique insights on how today's systems need to morph to handle future needs. They develop extensive domain expertise and are able to synthesize multiple disparate problems into logical solution areas to bring compelling value to the clients they serve. Thanks to our LaunchPad innovation contest, these subject matter experts can now take their contributions even further and help shape solutions for an entire industry.

Painting the White Space in Life Sciences

Pharma companies have embraced many popular solutions across the R&D value chain and have gained individual efficiencies, but the siloed approach to data and systems have restricted the flow of information that drives business insights. It's not surprising, then, that the very first products to advance from LaunchPad to become marketed products are in Life Sciences:

- **Cognizant Lab Insights™** paints the white space between legacy investment protection and the latest in IoT enablement and advanced analytics to optimize lab processes and power data-driven decisions across the enterprise. Companies are finding they can now measure the time to run experiments in hours rather than days.
- **Cognizant Protocol Creator™** is giving the all-important clinical trial protocol document - and the entire authoring process - the attention it deserves, with collaborative creation, template-driven content, and downstream automation. The metrics available from every step of the process are identifying the bottlenecks for companies, leading to faster document completion and trial start-up.

By backing the ideas that come from our associates who analyze and solve problems every day for our clients, Cognizant will continue to paint the white space in Life Sciences with the colors of innovation. ●

The Innovators in Science Award grants two prizes of \$200,000 each year: one to an early-career scientist and the other to a well-established senior scientist who have distinguished themselves for their creative thinking and the impact of their research.

"The main goal for this award was to recognize and foster careers of scientists working in areas of focus for our R&D organization," Dr. Alesci says.

The 2019 winner of the Senior Scientist Award is Michele De Luca, M.D., professor of biochemistry and director of the Centre for Regenerative Medicine. Dr. De Luca has dedicated his career in translational medicine to developing stem cell therapies and is a leading authority on human squamous epithelial stem cell biology.

The 2019 winner of the Early-Career Scientist Award is Shruti Naik, Ph.D., assistant professor, departments of pathology, medicine and dermatology, NYU School of Medicine. Dr. Naik studies immune cell, epithelial cell, and microbial interactions to inform therapeutic strategies for conditions such as psoriasis, chronic wounds, and cancer.

Some competitions aim to help researchers gain skills. For example, last year, Certara partnered with faculty at the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy to launch the Model-Informed Drug Development (MIDD) Gran Prix at the 2018 American Society for Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics Annual Meeting.

The MIDD Gran Prix was designed to test teams' abilities to analyze a complex pharmacokinetic/pharmacodynamic data set, agree upon a drug development decision, and then clearly communicate both their response and rationale. The teams were tasked with formulating a drug development decision, supported by their data analysis, and submitting it for peer review.

Participating teams were granted access to pharmacokinetic/pharmacodynamic data from three simulated clinical trials on Oct. 31, 2017. They were asked to develop dosing guidelines for "Drug D," including individual dosing strategies where appropriate.

They also needed to decide whether to conduct another Phase II or a Phase III study next. The best two professional and two student teams competed in the finals at the 2018 American Society for Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics (ASCPT) annual meeting in March.

The competition was a way to boost the communication skills of those who work in pharmacometrics, says Nathan Teuscher, Ph.D., VP, integrated drug development at Certara Strategic Consulting.

"We wanted to have an opportunity for people to hone or improve their communication skills and be rewarded," he says. "The competition was less about how to do the actual technical analysis, and more about how to communicate their findings. The teams that were successful were the ones who were more effective at communications."

Mark Lovern, Ph.D., VP, integrated drug development at Certara Strategic Consulting, says there is a need to teach people in the industry to be better communicators.

"Our competition is one way of facilitating this goal, but I think there's a lot more that can be done," he says. "I have been conducting a straw poll among senior members of our discipline, including CEOs of competitor consultancy firms, and across the board they say the difficulty in finding staff is not about finding people who can analyze data, but finding people who can actually craft a story around the results. Communication comes up again and again as a limiting factor." PV