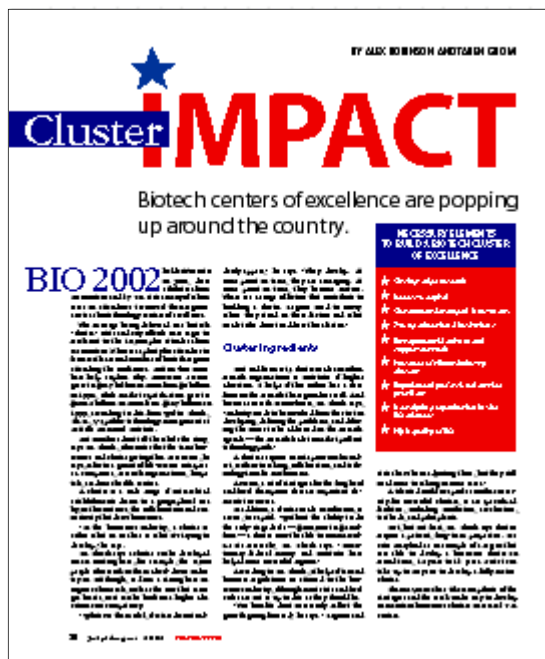


LETTERS



The BIO Boom

Is it worth the investment of time, money, and personnel these groups are making, not just on the BIO show itself but on the larger effort to develop strong bio-related clusters in their communities? Or are many of them swinging for the fences in an effort unlikely to yield them a single or double, let alone a grand slam home run?

— Rob DeRocker

DEVELOPMENT COUNSELLORS INTERNATIONAL

Council (IDRC, now CoreNet). But if the recent BIO 2002 conference in Toronto is any barometer, the International Biotechnology Convention and Exhibition has quickly become an even greater draw. Is it worth the price of admission or are too many communities just “betting the pharm” on the latest version of dot-coms?

Economic development groups big and small have always regarded attendance at the semi-annual meetings of the IDRC, and now, after its merger with National Association of Corporate Real Estate Executives, CoreNet, as essential elements in their marketing programs. Whether it has been a \$2,000 investment to simply attend the show or \$200,000 to stage a lavish hospitality suite, many groups have regarded participation in these world

congresses as all but non-negotiable. But virtually overnight, another trade show has captured the attendance and big-dollar investment of hundreds of economic development organizations throughout the world. At the recent BIO 2002, the number of sponsoring and exhibiting economic development groups jumped to 130 from 80 the year before. At least half of the 50 states were represented, in addition to scores of local communities throughout the U.S. They were joined by exhibitors from as far away as Norway, China, and Australia. One economic development professional from western New York said it seemed like more than 50% of the 15,000 attendees were other economic developers.

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That more pessimistic view was one supported by The Brookings Institution, which during BIO 2002 released a report entitled “Signs of Life: The Growth of Biotechnology Clusters in the U.S.” The report stated that just

U.S. metropolitan areas held a “nidable lead” in the effort to build the critical mass needed for commercialization of biotechnology clusters, and most of the success was due to the efforts of economic development groups.

At the BIO 2002 show, were reported in stories in both the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*.

As for next year, when BIO 2003 will be held in Washington, D.C., we’ll see how much competition will be there.

Rob DeRocker

EXECUTIVE VP, DEVELOPMENT COUNSELLORS INTERNATIONAL

Worth the price of admission

For years, economic developers have flocked in droves to the semi-annual World Congress of the International Development Research

What’s Your Opinion?

MEGA-MERGERS: BOON OR BUST?

The recent news of the merger between Pfizer and Pharmacia is just the latest mega-deal to redefine the pharmaceutical landscape. Strategic mergers, take-overs, and divestiture of non-core businesses to leverage R&D, eliminate duplicate R&D, leverage differing geographic sales and marketing strengths, and streamline administrative support functions are some of the arguments that economic developers say these mega-mergers don’t work. In fact, have decreased the productivity of the pipelines and have led to behemoth entities that are already too slow to adopt to a rapidly changing environment.

PharmaVOICE wants to know: can mega-pharmaceutical companies manage to navigate the obstacles in an ever evolving life-science environment?

What’s Your Opinion?

Please e-mail your comments to feedback@pharmalinx.com

