

Meet Avidity, The "Connection" Company



Avidity finds creative fuel at Fitzsimons Innovation Community. An expert in bioluminescent technologies, the company develops molecular affinity tools for connecting molecules. Avidity products are sold worldwide, including to research institutions investigating treatments for COVID-19. CBSA President & CEO Jennifer Jones Paton asked Avidity CEO Millard Cull CBSA's six questions for life sciences innovators.

Q: Tell us about your company or organization.

A: Avidity was founded on April 1, 1996 utilizing an enzymatic biotinylation of recombinant proteins technology that was developed and licensed from Affymax (AviTag technology).

Avidity is a "connection" company that enables researchers to immobilize proteins on surfaces, or attach detection reagents to their proteins. Our work connecting molecules led to a collaboration utilizing fluorescent and luminescent reagents in conjunction with our AviTag technology and over time, we developed an expertise in bioluminescent technologies.

Avidity sells its products worldwide to over thirty countries and we sell to research institutions currently investigating COVID-19.

We generated revenues early and we applied this revenue to develop innovative diagnostic platforms. We are currently working on a bioluminescent lateral flow technology that incorporates our patented technology (Nucleic Acid Proximity Assay or NAPA) that we believe will be fast, inexpensive, and extremely sensitive.

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Q: Describe your team culture in three words. How does your culture shape what your company or organization produces or offers?

A: Our company culture can be described as relaxed, innovative and nimble. We have been able to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, such as the COVID-19 challenge.

COVID-19 challenged us to innovate our shipping procedures as we discovered many shipments were not being delivered due to customs slow-down, or distribution disruption.

When we saw the current crisis approaching, we adapted our product to be shipped at room temperature rather than shipping product with dry ice. Many of our overseas customers have chosen this new formulation to eliminate the risk of undelivered shipments.

Q: What are you working on right now?

A: Currently we are focusing on two forward-looking projects. Avidity is developing additional enzyme-based attachment of reactive, or detection chemistries, to a single site on a recombinant protein. As mentioned above, we are constructing a highly innovative diagnostic platform based on our experience with sample preparation, reagent lyophilization, nucleic acid detection and bioluminescence.

Q: How will your work save or change lives?

A: Our connection technology has become an important tool for companies in drug screening and development. Looking ahead, the diagnostic technology under development will address the major shortcoming of lateral flow tests by dramatically increasing the sensitivity of such tests.

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Q: How has COVID-19 impacted your company or organization?

A: We have become acutely aware of the diagnostic challenges posed by the COVID-19 outbreak and we have multiplied our efforts to offer solutions improving the cost, speed, accuracy, and sensitivity of diagnostic testing.

Q: CBSA champions a collaborative life sciences ecosystem because we are #stongertogether. How has being an active participant in our life sciences community supported your success?

A: The Innovation Community of small, creative companies here at Fitzsimons Innovation Community exposes Avidity to different scientific perspectives, challenges, and solutions that fuels our innovation and inspires our creativity.

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