



"The time I spent with my CRT mentors was very rewarding. Their advice was invaluable, and covered everything from guidance on fundamental management issues to the detailed terms of a complex technology transfer deal. I was truly touched by the spirit of this mentorship. When I have sufficient experience behind me, I would like to pay back this gift by serving as a mentor as well."

- Lin Wang, Co-CEO
Allele Biotechnology

About Chairmen's RoundTable

The Chairmen's RoundTable is a non-profit volunteer organization comprised of successful Chief Executive Officers with diverse industry backgrounds who provide businesses in San Diego County advice on how to manage and grow their businesses through a well-defined mentoring program. CRT members provide this service free of charge to qualified area businesses as a way of giving back to the community.

www.chairmensroundtable.com

MENTORING SERVICES CASE STUDIES

Allele Biotechnology

The Business of Discovery

The executives of Allele Biotechnology were researching something far outside their usual field of study. They were seeking the answer to a seemingly simple question - how can we grow this business successfully? The team had plenty of theories and hypotheses, but no concrete answers. Clearly, these biotech experts needed coaching from business experts.

The quest for the appropriate mentorship proved to be as challenging as the work in the lab. "Finding someone who understood our business proved to be very difficult," said Lin Wang, Ph.D. co-CEO, Allele. "The biotech industry is not only highly complex, but also relatively young, making seasoned expertise difficult to find. I approached the SBA and SCORE, but they didn't have anyone appropriate to assign to us at the moment. There aren't too many retired biotech executives out there waiting for a coaching assignment."

Discovering CRT

Undaunted, Wang and her team continued to network. Their efforts led to the San Diego Regional Technology Alliance, who in turn referred them to the Chairmen's RoundTable (CRT), a diverse group of experienced executives who offer free strategic counsel to growing businesses.

After completing the review process, Allele was approved as a CRT candidate for mentorship. "I was amazed by our mentor's understanding of our business," said Wang. "His depth of understanding of biotechnology and the challenges faced by an emerging company made it easy for me to communicate with him. As a result, the learning experience was very efficient and highly rewarding."

Doing the Deal

The most immediate challenge facing Allele was a technology transfer agreement that the company was just beginning to negotiate. "After we started working with CRT, we had a

Strengthening SAN DIEGO, One Company at a Time

Company Profile

Allele Biotechnology and Pharmaceuticals is a San Diego company with a passion for life sciences discovery. Privately owned, the company has three lines of business: Oligo manufacture & molecular biology services, genomics and proteomics research, and RNAi-based gene silencing kits.

Allele was incorporated in 1999 as a biotechnology discovery company. In 2001, Allele's R&D effort has yielded a breakthrough in ease-of-use for the broadly applicable RNA interference technique: the LineSilence™ platform, the basis of Allele's core technology. Allele has been awarded 5 SBIR grants from the NIH. It also has a profitable oligo manufacture and molecular biology service business that augments its research activities. The Allele team has used this as a base from which to extend research operations, allowing the company to explore further in the extremely active RNAi field. Ongoing projects include novel transfection tools, RNA signal amplification, and antibody selection.

Annual Revenue: over \$700,000
 No. of Employees: 5 full-time/2 part-time
 No. of Clients: over 100



www.allelebiotech.com

revelation about our team,” said Wang. “We realized we were all fresh out of the research institute environment. Our perspective on what went into a deal was skewed to our background. Our CRT mentor provided valuable insight into deal-making, and pointed out opportunities and pitfalls that would never have occurred to us.”

CRT provided hands-on coaching throughout the deal-making process. “We were negotiating with a large company and a CEO who had a great deal more business experience than we did,” said Wang. “This could have made for a very intimidating experience, but after careful scrutiny of the terms and strategic coaching by our mentor, we were able to conduct the negotiations with confidence.”

A Once in A Lifetime Opportunity

Since October 2002 when CRT submitted its recommendations, Allele has selected a business model that best fits its team and resources, successfully concluded negotiations on the technology transfer deal, and continued to build the infrastructure for a stronger business.

“Working with CRT is a once in a lifetime opportunity for an entrepreneur,” said Wang. “If you take it seriously, communicate openly and commit to the process, you will really benefit from it. I have grown both professionally and personally from my CRT experience.”

Key Challenges:	Recommendations:	Results:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifying business model for the company • Negotiating first technology transfer deal • Fundraising strategy for growth • Establishing operational and managerial procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate alternative business models and formulate a business plan around the adopted model • Coached through each step of the technology transfer deal – making very specific recommendations throughout the deal-making process • Based on current climate, fund through grants, research support payments and product sales • Suggestions and guidelines for working processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected a business model that best fit team and resources • Successfully concluded negotiations on technology transfer deal • Continued to grow organically • Gradual implementation of processes into daily operation