

Bio Technology / Life Science

Best Practice: Successful Founding

Biotype Diagnostic GmbH: From Furniture Construction to Bio Technology

In 1998, the former furniture production complex of the German Workshops Hellerau located north of Dresden was transformed into a Center for Innovation that houses 40 companies and 500 thinkers, artists and scientists. One of these innovators is Biotype Diagnostic GmbH, which develops and produces high quality testing systems for DNA analysis.

Sometimes things just have to happen fast: the prosecutor needs evidence to convict the offender; a paternity test brings clarification in family disputes; a cancer test leads the way to fast treatment. Biotype Diagnostic GmbH test kits put an end to grueling waiting periods. The biotechnology company, with a staff of 30 employees, specializes in the production of testing systems with the highest quality standards for DNA analysis. A unique characteristic is the multi-parameter analysis, which enables quick and precise diagnostics specifically for complicated forensic issues and complex diseases. "All of our technologies and products are developed and produced in Dresden," Managing Director Wilhelm Zörgiebel says.

Building Complex for Innovations

Biotype is located in the legendary 'Screw Clamp' building, a historic building complex north of Dresden that is considered the symbolic landmark of the Garden City of Hellerau. From 1909 to 1990, the building was a production site for high quality furniture. When Wilhelm Zörgiebel bought the complex of the German Workshops Hellerau in 1998 he wanted to preserve the tradition of furniture construction while at the same time create a center for innovation. In 1999, Wilhelm Zörgiebel and Jörg Gabert founded Biotype Diagnostic GmbH, which laid the cornerstone for the Center for Innovation. The center has attracted many up-and-coming enterprises in the fields of science, architecture and art, which opened offices, workshops, laboratories and studios in the building. The 'Screw Clamp' building as a technology center managed by entrepreneurs has established itself as a magnet for high technology, an attractive conference center, and an art and cultural venue – an excellent environment for new ideas.

Dresden DNA-test turns Four-Week Waiting Period into Certainty within a Single Day

Since its foundation, the high-tech medical enterprise has established itself internationally. "We are profiting from our proximity to Dresden's semiconductor industry and the excellent resources of scientific expertise such as Dresden University, Dresden's research institutes and the Carl Gustav Carus University Hospital," Zörgiebel says. "Cooperating closely with these scientific partners, we not only develop new molecular genetic testing systems, but also transfer them into high-quality and customer-oriented applications." Together with Dresden's Carl Gustav Carus University Hospital, Biotype Diagnostic GmbH has developed a new type of genetic test that makes it possible to analyze and exactly diagnose skin, hair and nail funguses extremely fast. Within a single day -- instead of four weeks -- the patient receives clarity and can be treated immediately. Saxony has supported the cooperative project, which also honors Professor Michael Albrecht, Medical Manager of the University Hospital, as an

example for the outstanding cooperation between research, development and immediate patient care in Saxony's state capital.

Strategic Partnerships for Personalized Medicine

"We have grown with the enormous demands in forensics and have now shifted our dedication to personalized medicine," Zörgiebel says. "In order to achieve our goals we are counting on strategic alliances with enterprises that have a proven track-record of established technology platforms."

New projects are in the fields of urology and oncology, Zörgiebel says, and the company is realizing them in cooperation with the bioinformatics enterprise Qualitype, also located in Hellerau, Dresden's ROTOP Pharmaka AG, which stands for radiopharmaceutical expertise, and Görlitz's Partec GmbH.

"If we want to keep the added value at our location, we need highly qualified experts, production facilities and distribution channels to close the chain to the customer," Zörgiebel says.

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