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• • • Business + Strategy

Taking Care of Business

SOFTWARE TOOLS • New solutions from Artemis, IntraLinks catch on in biopharma boardrooms

By Malorye A. Branca

ACTELION APPEARS TO HAVE everything going for it. Less than seven years old, the Swiss pharma already has drugs on the market, profits, and a slew of development projects.

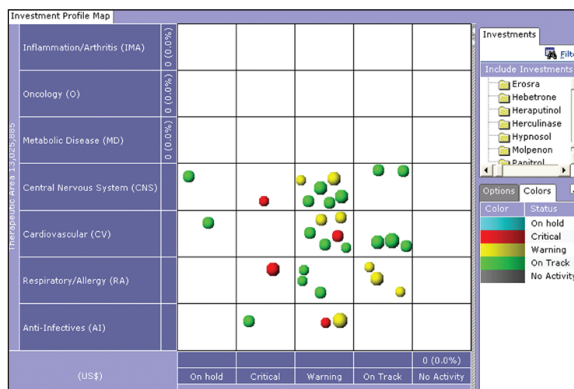
But a bulging pipeline can become a liability as a company grows. So when the company's board issued a mandate to pull together portfolio management processes, the staff responsible faced a daunting task. Those processes were spread "all over the company," explains Pasi Piitulainen, Actelion's planning manager, clinical development. And business software was not the first option that sprang to mind. "You always start a project like this using Excel," Piitulainen says. "Then you realize you don't have the knowledge or power you need."

Piitulainen turned to Artemis International Solutions, which specializes in investment management software. Artemis' engineers delivered a completely new tool, which became the prototype for its recently released New Product Development solution for pharmaceutical R&D.

The developers began by "capturing" the precise steps involved in the process, Piitulainen says. Once all the pieces, players, and milestones were mapped out, they modeled Actelion's business practices in only one week. The most difficult part was then refining it and making sure people were using it correctly. "The goal is to ensure that investments are made efficiently on those drug candidates that return the most value to the organization," says Mike Metcalf, vice president of U.S. strategic marketing at Artemis, which has more than

2,000 clients and 500,000 users.

"Usually, we find people are using a fairly ad hoc set of systems — spreadsheets here, some resource management tools there, and a few high-level analytical applications," Metcalf says. Artemis hands them an enterprise system that lets them work more quickly and with greater



RISK ANALYSIS: Artemis tailors its investment planning & control software to the needs of pharmaceutical firms.

transparency. In addition to its New Product Development tool, the company also has Investment and IT Management tools designed specifically for the pharmaceutical industry.

Newcomers Welcome

Artemis has been catering to life science users for more than 20 years, but even newcomers such as IntraLinks are finding a good niche for products initially developed for financial

services and other sectors.

"A lot of work goes into getting people's trust," says Rich Jenkins, general manager of life sciences at IntraLinks. It helps that IntraLinks has been providing "trusted information exchange" tools to the financial services industry since 1996. "Every major bank trusts us with loans, mergers and acquisitions, and investments," Jenkins says.

IntraLinks now has life science-targeted products for clinical trials, licensing and collaboration, and mergers and acquisitions. These processes are all "document intensive, highly confidential, and global," Jenkins says. Whether it's financial services or life sciences, "the users are all highly educated, with a low tolerance for technology and change," he says.

Attracting the first few clients was the biggest hurdle. Now IntraLinks boasts six of the top 10 pharmaceutical companies as users of its clinical trials software. For mergers, IntraLinks' software "speeds up the process, expands the bidder pool, and makes due diligence a lot less painful," Jenkins says. However, he says, "selling licensing and alliances software was much easier, because that business is just like the rest of Wall Street." Still, IntraLinks did find that its pharma customers are "much more risk averse and regulated," he says.

Given the growing emphasis on efficiency, business software will likely become even more popular. IntraLinks recently sold its third-party hub for the pharmaceutical industry to Novo Nordisk Pharmaceuticals. The tool lets Novo share marketing, scientific, and research information on multiple development projects, securely and with different partners around the globe. ●

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