



The Strategic Choice Founder and President Wins Innocentive Award for Innovative Ideas to Accelerate Medical Research

Challenge Sought Ideas to Encourage Investment and Collaboration in Biomarker Research, Leading to Faster Medical Solutions

March 15, 2009

Susan Levinson, Ph.D., Founder and President of [The Strategic Choice](#), a life sciences management consulting firm, provided a winning solution to an Innocentive challenge sponsored by *Faster Cures*, The Center for Accelerating Medical Solutions. In order to solve this challenge, *Faster Cures* sought novel approaches or incentives to reduce the first-mover disadvantage for companies to invest more in biomarker identification, development and qualification, while not limiting their availability to others.

Biomarker development is an increasingly critical element in accelerating medical research. Medical professionals use biomarkers to determine the proper diagnosis and treatment for patients and they are seen as an important component of biomedical research, as they can eliminate years of effort and millions of dollars of cost from the R&D process. Biomarkers are also an example of a classic “first-mover disadvantage” where the first mover spends all the time and money to discover a biomarker, and its competitors reap the benefits. As a result, companies often patent the biomarkers they discover and utilize them in their own research, which can limit their benefit to the rest of the research community, despite the fact that biomarkers frequently have a very broad range of potential clinical and non-clinical applications.

Dr. Levinson commented, “Having a broad set of experiences across the value chain of the pharmaceutical industry, as well as completing many problem-solving consultancy projects was key to addressing this Challenge. In addition, I have a passion for seeing the barriers to healthcare innovation reduced, so responding to this Challenge was simply fun! Being part of the solution to a problem like this is its own reward for someone who loves to solve problems.”

The experience which enabled Dr. Levinson to provide this solution included her leadership roles in marketing, licensing and business development, project management, drug discovery, development and strategic planning in the pharmaceutical industry. Most recently, she held executive positions in Business Strategy and Marketing for Novartis Pharmaceuticals.

This Challenge was posted in InnoCentive’s [Global Health Pavilion](#), a section of the Web site that focuses on Challenges that contribute to finding treatments and cures for some of the world’s major diseases. It was also posted on the [Public Policy and Citizens in Action Pavilion](#),

which contains Challenges that seek creative approaches to current civic and political issues, from local community Challenges to those with far-reaching global impact.

Gregory C. Simon, President of FasterCures commented, “The submissions we received to our biomarkers challenge on InnoCentive have given us food for thought about how to address a thorny challenge that is in many ways inhibiting innovation in biomedical research and slowing progress toward personalized medicine. One of the winners takes an idea that has met with some success in other spheres, a patent co-op, and thoughtfully applies it to this area of research. The other carefully addresses some of the challenges of existing public-private partnerships to foster biomarker research. We look forward to further developing these proposals and discussing them with other medical research stakeholders.”

About The Strategic Choice

[The Strategic Choice LLC](#) specializes in strategic projects and business planning for life sciences companies. The firm’s partners bring an intimate knowledge of the healthcare industry and breadth of life sciences experience to solving today’s complex problems. Experience from executive roles in big pharma and emerging growth companies, as well as involvement in healthcare venture capital are brought to bear in engagements to address complicated issues across the life science value chain, providing:

- Business acumen matched with technology expertise
- Expertise spanning all therapeutic areas; e.g. Cardiovascular and Metabolic Diseases, Oncology, Neurology
- Network of contacts extending across pharma, biotech, and the investment community
- Experience in hands on operational management, as well as corporate strategy.
- Experience in functional areas from Research through Marketing and Lifecycle Management.
- Experience in large established corporations, as well as start-up and emerging growth companies
- Experience in many areas of life sciences: pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, diagnostics, vaccines, generics, healthcare IT/ehealth, managed care.
- Experience leading teams in large project implementations.

About *Faster Cures*.

FasterCures/The Center for Accelerating Medical Solutions is committed to saving lives by saving time in the research, discovery and development of new treatments for deadly and debilitating diseases. FasterCures, a center of the Milken Institute, is nonpartisan, nonprofit and independent of interest groups. For more information, visit www.fastercures.org.

About InnoCentive

Founded in 2001, InnoCentive built the first global web community for open innovation, enabling scientists, engineers, professionals and entrepreneurs to collaborate to deliver breakthrough solutions for R&D-driven organizations. InnoCentive Seekers, who collectively spend billions of dollars on R&D, submit complex problems to the InnoCentive Marketplace

where more than 170,000 engineers, scientists, inventors, business people, and research organizations in more than 175 countries are invited to solve them. Solvers who deliver the most innovative solutions receive financial awards ranging up to US\$1,000,000. InnoCentive's Seekers include commercial, government and non-profit organizations such as Avery Dennison, Procter & Gamble, Pendulum, Eli Lilly and Company, Janssen, Solvay, SAP and The Rockefeller Foundation. For more information on InnoCentive, go to: www.innocentive.com.