

Is it possible to pitch the full potential of discoveries without spilling the secret sauce?

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On Tuesday October 2, Guenter Huhle, Head of JLABS EMEA, Johnson & Johnson Innovation shared key insights on the art of pitching in front of a packed audience of researchers, entrepreneurs and professionals mainly from the Heidelberg area.

Guenter gave an introductory overview on best practices for developing an effective non-confidential pitch and moderated a panel discussion. In a very pragmatic way, he provided tips and tricks to pitch the full potential of discoveries without spilling the secret sauce.

“Arguably the most important element of any successful investment or partnership is the team. Spend a few minutes to describe the key individuals and their background!” was a key recommendation from Guenter.

The audience had the opportunity to question and challenge a many-sided panel. They heard suggestions, opinions and advice from an investment perspective with Maciek Drozdz (Principal of Venture Investments for Johnson & Johnson Development Corporation - JJDC) and Varun Gupta (Associate, Wellington Partners Life Sciences), from the entrepreneurial perspective side with Hans Constandt (CEO & Founder, ONTOFORCE) and from Julia Schaft (Managing Director at BioRN) and Katharina Ladewig (Managing Director at EIT Health Germany), representing organisations supporting partnering and early business development in the region.

All panellists agreed that it is a good time now to be an entrepreneur, especially in Europe. Although the availability of venture capital is low, startups, innovators and SMEs have the passion and scientific content, and can count on a strong and tight network, public funding and supporting organisations such as BioRN and EIT Health.

The take-home messages and most common points from the day have been: do not oversell, pitch and learn from your failures, gain trust, know your audience, become visible and talk to people. After all, part of the recipe for success is to remain enthusiastic about your project and the potential for a valuable partnership.

BioRN – Life Science Cluster Rhine-Neckar

BioRN is a life science research and industry cluster dedicated to the development of cell-specific, molecular and personalised innovative treatments. The BioRN Cluster stands for the development, networking, representation and promotion of the life science region into one of the leading life science clusters in Europe.

The cluster-members include renowned academic research institutions such as the Universities of Heidelberg, the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) and the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) and global health care companies such as AbbVie, Boehringer Ingelheim, Johnson & Johnson, Merck, Roche, und Sanofi-Aventis, and about 80 small and medium-sized biotech enterprises. Beyond the members registered in the cluster, BioRN gives access to a wider network via partnerships and collaborations.

In terms of the use of clusters for the internationalization of companies, BioRN has founded, together with Leuven (Belgium), Maastricht (Netherlands) and Copenhagen (Denmark), an alliance for the enforcement of biomedical innovation in Europe, called the Health Axis Europe.