

SPOTLIGHT: INNOVATION

Taking a revolutionary approach

By Melissa Bennett

Innovation. Seemingly a ubiquitous term in business, it can be challenging to determine what's truly original in our modern workplace. Fortunately for this community, a couple of businesses are taking unparalleled strides in their attempts to implement new ideas. Mito Sciences, Inc., Oregon Eye Associates and Growing Solutions are very different companies that nonetheless share similar quests to revolutionize their fields. All three finalists for an Emerald Award in Innovation focus on quality of life through technology, research and original problem-solving.

Founded to better understand the role of the organelle (a specialized sub-unit within a cell) in human diseases, Mito Sciences, Inc., provides tests and services for studying mitochondrial-related disorders. For instance, recent research has shown that people with autism display indicators of mitochondrial disease. The life science and biotechnology company is developing diagnostic tests to address these autism-like symptoms in children.

"Mitochondria are increasingly recognized by drug companies as primary targets for developing new drugs," says John Audette, president of Mito Sciences. "These companies' primary interest is in finding alternatives that are not toxic to mitochondria, and we have the tools and resources to safely evaluate these drugs."

Alternatives to current agricultural practices are another challenge the human race faces in the coming years to feed an increasing



John Audette, president of MitoSciences, in one of the research company's laboratories.

PHOTO BY DAVID LOVEALL

**EMERALD AWARD
FOR INNOVATION
FINALISTS**

- Bulk Handling Systems
- Growing Solutions
- MitoSciences, Inc. – winner

population without destroying the environment. Growing Solutions, a company striving to promote sustainable agriculture by producing crops without environmental harm,



Dr. Mark Packer of Oregon Eye Associates

is addressing the issue of fertilizer shortages and skyrocketing prices with an alternative to chemical fertilizers: compost tea, a liquid extract.

“The continued use of chemical fertilizer and pesticides in all sectors of agriculture are having a direct negative impact on human health,” says Michael Alms, president and founder of Growing Solutions.

The company provides the products and services needed for their clients to easily make the switch from fertilizer to compost tea. The company’s innovative system is receiving worldwide attention for its potential to greatly reduce dependence on synthetic chemical approaches to plant and soil management.

Technologically advanced services are also at the heart of services by Oregon Eye Associates, which has dedicated itself to improving and offering services cost effectively and with the highest quality of professionalism and innovation.

The Oregon Eye Surgery Center located on the premises is one of the most modern eye care facilities in the nation, featuring three operating suites with state-of-the-art equipment and a team of highly trained nurses and technicians. It has more cataract removal technology than any hospital or teaching institution in the world. Ophthalmologists go to the Eye Center to learn the latest tech-



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niques and observe the newest technology.

“In today’s flat earth, with worldwide interconnectedness and competition, it has become crucial to success that every business identify and focus on providing uniquely innovative and creative solutions,” says Dr. Mark Packer, an ophthalmologist at Oregon Eye Associates. “In our business we are committed to meeting the challenges of

eye disease and vision correction by offering the benefits of cutting-edge research and global insight to our community.”

Indeed, it is the approach of all three finalists of the Emerald Award for Innovation that has earned them reputations for original thinking and improving the lives of others through technology and forward-looking research. ❖