

# Introducing David Martyr

Just a few weeks into his new role, Tecan Group CEO Dr David Martyr took some time out of his busy schedule to talk about his previous roles and experience, and look ahead to a challenging and exciting future with Tecan.



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**Please tell us a little about your background in technology and life sciences.**

I actually studied naval architecture and ship building at university, which is a bit of a strange route into life sciences, but I have always been fascinated by all forms of technology and engineering. After a year working as a naval architect – there are a few ships still afloat which I had a hand in designing – I went back to university to do my PhD, and took the opportunity to change disciplines slightly, looking at the applications of laser technology in ship building and heavy industry. This eventually led me into the laser industry, where I found that I really enjoyed interacting with customers and learning about their applications. I have

switched fields several times since then, but throughout my career I have always been drawn to learning about new applications and technologies.

My background in lasers and optical technologies eventually led me into life sciences, when I joined Leica's confocal laser microscopy and image analysis business in 1998. I did not have a huge amount of experience in the life sciences sector at that time, but was fascinated by the sheer breadth of technologies and applications, which ranged from cutting-edge microscopy hardware for academic centers to genotyping software development for clinical applications. This was also my first exposure



to Tecan, as part of a collaborative project to develop an early version of the GenePaint™ software.

#### **What was your initial impression of Tecan?**

I have developed a huge amount of respect for the Company. Tecan has a much larger market impact and reputation than most companies of its size, and that was something that interested me from the start. I have had extensive dealings with Tecan's OEM business over several years – Leica Biosystems is one of the biggest customers of Tecan Cavo® brand components – and I have always found it a fascinating company. Tecan has continually focused on innovation and has built a strong reputation for quality, both attributes that are very important and attractive to me personally. I have followed the Company's progress with interest, knowing that I would be very proud and pleased to perhaps one day be involved in its future development.

#### **You've had many successes in your previous roles. How do they resonate with the challenges you see at Tecan?**

The market has changed significantly over the last few years, becoming more and more application focused. Where companies may previously have been structured around separate, semi-autonomous geographical territories, there is now a need for a more integrated, application-driven approach. Customers are looking for far more than a straightforward purchase of capital equipment; it has become a consultative selling process, with manufacturers now expected to provide exceptional hands-on technical and applications support. This requires a change of business culture similar to that which my team and I achieved at Leica, restructuring companies not just to reduce costs, but also to break down internal barriers. Combining this with an open and trusting environment allows people to take

ownership and responsibility of projects, safe in the knowledge that senior management will not seek to blame individuals if something goes wrong, and enables a company to better focus on delivering on its brand values.

#### **Finally, what are your short- and long-term plans for the Company?**

Tecan has always been a pioneer in laboratory automation, but the market does not stand still, and we need to reaffirm our reputation as a leading supplier of best-in-class equipment. We already have a good sense of the opportunities within the market, how we can develop and what products and technologies we need to focus on and expand into. My challenge is to raise the organic growth of the business by bringing successful new products to the market in a repeatable, consistent way. It is always difficult to put structured management processes in place without killing the innovative spirit within a company, and rapid growth can become a very tiring environment, as a large part of any success is down to hard work. However, when you start to see the results of that effort, it is very motivating, and I hope to create new momentum – a wave of innovation – which will challenge and inspire our staff. Our ability to work in partnership with other companies will also be key to this. Open innovation, collaborating with other leading technology companies, will help to drive forward development of new technologies and provide new opportunities. Finally, a lot of enthusiastic and talented individuals have joined Tecan in recent months and years, and we need to make sure that we harness their skills to complement the Company's established team, striking out ahead to develop strong technologies and innovative products which will make Tecan the obvious choice for cutting-edge laboratory automation solutions.

