

Meet **Nelson Khoo**, Fluicell's Chief Business Development and Sales Officer



Dr. Nelson Khoo joined Fluicell as Chief Business Development and Sales Officer in April this year, bringing with him more than fifteen years of experience from project management and business development in the biotech and life science sector. We spoke to Nelson about how his time in Fluicell has been so far and what his plans are for creating new business opportunities for the company are.

Nelson Khoo, you joined Fluicell as Chief Business Development and Sales Officer in April this year. What has the first months in the company been like?

It has been a great five months of learning and really getting into understanding the great technology in the company. The people working at Fluicell have a tremendous creativity and unfathomable energy to advance microfluidics, which together with the the Biopixlar and Biopixlar AER bioprinters contribute to the strong foundation of Fluicell.

I have been able to see the depth of knowledge of technical and research development teams that support our dual strategy of instrument sales and regenerative medicine. The latter focus is tremendously exciting for the near future in defining new models for pharma and biotech companies and academic key opinion leaders.

As the newest executive to join the management team, this is an exciting mission that I am happy to be a part of. It has been rewarding for me to see the strengths of the sales team, and we have been fielding an increasing number of enquiries from end users from conferences we have attended and from the people we have reached out to.

You came into the company with a mandate to strengthen Fluicell's sales organization and improve sales. What has been your primary focus since you started and what are your plans for Fluicell's sales organization going forward?

My primary focus has been to assess the strengths of the sales team and our message to our customers and to our distributors. Clarity of the requirements for the distributors means clearer guidance for the relationship and transparency for all parties.

A cornerstone of my focus is to increase our interactions with other departments like marketing and technical department as these units deliver new campaigns and instruments for our customers. Another key focus is to look for ways to enable our team to drive the pipeline with influx of qualified new customers to the sales representatives. It also means making sure the sales team brings

in information from the customers that can help our R&D team to create new products. Our CEO and I believe that as we regularly increase the internal interactions among divisions, our sales team will be provided with product launches from R&D as early as possible, and with marketing support, will create one unified drive to growth.

To fulfill my mandate, our process in the sales unit and for the business development side are aligned to deliver on the three pillars of being impactful, complementary, and enabling. This approach drives the internal business units. First, we consider our customers. If we cannot achieve any one of the pillars, then we must step back and focus on those where we can deliver on these ideals. Furthermore, it means our customers can be our champions who are willing to refer us to others and provide insights when we reach out to them.

Second, the three pillars also address our own internal needs. The pillars apply to our customer-centered application development. Does an application complement and enable Fluicell's goals? If not, then can resources and energy be used on a different product? This guiding procedure focuses on the breadth of needs, from which sources of cells we should use to which substrates that can advance tissue-based therapeutics.

Third, we will continue to expand our product lines for consumable products to include reagents, plastic ware, etc that we use internally to provide boxed solutions. One such offering in development for our instrument customers is the starter kit package that allows the customer's collaborators to generate results without fear of missing out!

Lastly, I see sales and marketing teams bringing attention to our technical team's expertise and to celebrate our R&D team's success to deliver solutions to improve quality of life of patients.

The Fluicell sales team is soon heading for a tour across Asia, what are your plans and expectations for the tour and how do you view Fluicell's opportunities to grow on the Asian market.

This is one of the first major trips for Fluicell in the post-covid period that has for at least two years impact all companies. It is also the first major trip that I am organizing and planning. We are going to the 3D-Bioprinting, Biofabrication, Organoids & Organs-on-Chips Asia 2022 (October 6-7th) in Japan. I will present on behalf of Fluicell AB.

The Asian market for this trip will focus on stem cell research institutes and universities. We have already contacted several key persons that have been receptive to us inviting ourselves to their facilities. Of the three countries of interest Japan and Singapore are frequently noted by the field and by the researchers across the globe. Furthermore, Malaysia is also focused on tissue based advance therapeutics and high value assays for drug development. Our products can be a high impact tool in the research groups identified. Fluicell offers a complementary method to their research program and can enable their research objectives to advance their respective fields.

Are there any other geographical markets that you would like Fluicell to focus more on?

We aim to be truly global in our reach. We are focusing on opportunities in Australia with one of our select distributors. Several other regions I am expecting growth in are North America, Europe (Spain, Germany) and Middle East. These are large markets based on scientific and biopharma research impact and aspirations, where the lesser-known markets are in focus to gain entry to the regenerative medicine sector.

The Biopixlar platforms holds a special position in Fluicell's portfolio, both in terms of product sales opportunities and when it comes to expanding the company's operations to target new markets. What do you see as the platforms' key strengths and what do you see as the most promising opportunities for Biopixlar at the moment?

I joined the company with excitement because I get to help promote the capability of Fluicell's Biopixlar platform. As a scientist turned business executive, you always seek exciting innovations or to help cofounders, researchers and entrepreneurs achieve success for the idea. My impression is stronger now that I learned more about the platform and the team that has driven its development. The Biopixlar platform are tools within the reach of most labs because of their capability to bio-print cells with precision and deliver different types of cells to create complex tissues that better replicate the tissue functions of study. The microfluidics-based technology means that our bioprinting can be done in fluids or solutions so sensitive cells be printed, it also has less stress on the cells and will not be overly influenced by added ECM hydrogels.

There is an easy user interface in the software to create preprogrammed arrays and store previous printing methodology. The controlled fluidics means less or precious sources can be used with lower material consumption and expensive reagents are conserved.

Biopixlar is positioned to be both, the printer for creating mini-organoids and spheroids for research, including drug toxicity assays for biopharma; and the printer for advance tissue-based medicinal products. As we speak to customers, their feedback has been directed to these unmet needs.

However, I would be remiss if I do not mention our drug screening solutions. Dynaflo and Biozone 6 are also gaining attention

because precision testing needs of researchers in biopharma or academia. The demand is expected to increase for these instruments for user to evaluate response time to compounds and to examine dose response curve down to a single cell level. We are excited to drive the resurgent interests in these tools. Dynaflo is a workhorse for pharma and biotech companies, a tool that is reliable and well supported by our technical team.

Fluicell's initiatives in regenerative medicine and tissue-based disease models for drug development both have a focus on forming partnerships and signing license agreements with major pharmaceutical companies. What are you doing to make Fluicell an attractive business partner for these companies?

Again, the three pillars guide us here as we position Fluicell's expertise and experience to bring our solutions to the complex projects of biopharma. My focus for these partnership is to speak to the impact our solutions to complement the customer's expertise and to enable their programs through synergy of our combined knowledge. I am directing most of our applications team effort to focus on unique human models. We are looking to address Fluicell's initiatives by seeking our sources for: human cells (iPSCs, Stem cells) from manufacturers or researchers covering a variety of areas from diabetes, neuroscience, cancer biology and immunology; substrates or unique surfaces via collaborations with substrate providers, or manufacturers and enabling tools or projects for tissue repair. We are also open to in or out licensing to create unique collaborations.

I am still putting irons in the fire; ideas are being melded and tweaks along the way to make biopharma relationships another major driver of growth that is anticipated by the rest of the C-suite executives. Towards this mission, we started organizing our plan exhibition for BIO conference in Boston USA in June 2023. This is a high intensity partnering venue with major global biopharma companies from over 120 countries.

Finally, what are you most excited about right now for Fluicell and the sales team?

Today, I most excited that we are moving in the right direction with the caveat that pandemics remain at bay. Our integrated teams and my own outlook are very positive, and we are adding sale staff to handle the increased interests and interactions. This is certainly a heart pumping adrenaline rush moment. The sales team is feeling energized, we have several serious inbound customers, now we are focused on finding better ways to address our ideal customers thereby increasing our sales closures. And since we can be useful in so many areas, it will take time to tackle them. Like a restructuring UEFA football team, we see sparks and soon we hope to have a cohesive team with a consistent driven pipeline from the customer segments we can reach. This will also enable the interactions internally as we expect to close more deals, and a likely next step is to help the technical team gain another teammate to keep up with the expected demand.