



Flexibility Is A Critical Aspect Of Biotech-CDMO Relationships

Featured Biotechs:

Levcept Limited
Corvus Pharmaceuticals
Surrozen
Pionyr Immunotherapeutics, Inc.

Lonza's small biotech series highlights the critical components that smaller innovators need to enjoy successful relationships with CDMOs. Here, the journeys of four diverse biotechs show the value of **Flexibility**.

Flexibility Is A Crucial Factor

Craig Parker of Surrozen — a small biotech with two complex bispecific antibody candidates — identifies one fundamental of a good relationship right off the bat, "Good CDMOs are not basic service providers — the relationship should be a collaboration."

This was evident in the earliest interactions between Surrozen and Lonza. Craig says, "We had some unknowns in terms of milestone timing and volumes. Lonza has tried and tested platform approaches and methods, but we found the scientists to be willing to listen to us. Our concern was actually not with any limitations of a large CDMO but rather that smaller CDMOs with limited technologies would lack the capability and resources to be adaptable."

More Flexible Than Most Realize

Alicia Levey of Pionyr — a San Francisco-based biotech with a pipeline of first-in-class clinical-stage cancer immunotherapies targeting the tumor microenvironment — highlights the issue at hand. "As a large CDMO, people tend to expect Lonza to be inflexible, but this has not been our experience. Their adaptability and openness is what you would expect from an agile provider, and Lonza has been extremely receptive to our ideas."

Agile When Batch Sizes Demand

Ben Jones of Corvus Pharmaceuticals — a clinical-stage immunology-focused company developing drugs that target the most critical cellular elements of the immune system — saw how Lonza demonstrated flexibility with its renowned technical strength and resources.

"We had the opportunity to explore a second indication with drastically different dosing. Lonza worked with us to manage this manufacturing challenge by being flexible about batch sizes and frequency, switching from a five-year plan to producing three clinical batches in

three years, and now we are in a position to scale-up to larger batch sizes as more drug is required.

Lonza's flexibility has increased markedly over the last couple of years, and today there is much greater latitude to change methods."

Rapid Scale-Up

Simon Westbrook of Levicept — his own biotech advancing a novel analgesic for osteoarthritis — had a similar experience with batch flexibility. "Our first GMP batch was at 200–250 liter scale. We wanted to move directly to a 1,000-liter GMP batch without doing another pilot run. Lonza was hesitant at first, but they listened to our reasoning and embraced the idea that it carried only moderate risk."

Collaboration Involves Balance

Pionyr found Lonza's flexibility evident in the cell line development program, but with requisite caution. Alicia Levey explained, "They tailored it to accommodate the specific needs of Pionyr. But just as importantly, Lonza was candid about the areas where they could be more or less flexible.

Flexible When Needed Most

Surrozen has found the flexibility invaluable when things change. Craig Parker described, "Our liver bispecific is a challenging molecule, and, despite the best efforts of our teams, the project has not always progressed as anticipated. Lonza has always found an alternative slot for us. Their size gives them some freedom that is not available to smaller CDMOs, and Lonza has always found ways to minimize the overall impact of delays.



Featured Contributors

Simon Westbrook, Ph.D.
Founder & CEO, Levicept

William Ben Jones, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President of Pharmaceutical
Development, Corvus Pharmaceuticals

Craig Parker, MBA
President & CEO, Surrozen

Alicia Levey, Ph.D.
President & Chief Operating Officer,
Pionyr Immunotherapeutics