Stanford eCorner

Establishing a Market

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If Fluidigm had not decided to market the crystallization chip, says Worthington, they would have developed a platform for doing large-scale parallel PCR. However, they decided against it because the market was already firmly established by major companies and Worthington was not optimistic about forming a partnership with a large company.

Transcript

It would have been a platform for doing massively parallel PCR.. We figured out that you could do up to hundreds of thousands of PCR reactions on the chip.. That's a very different kind of market than protein crystallization.. It's an established market with giant gorillas that are out there, applied biosystems and other folks and we either are going to have to work with them or against them, and either one is a really difficult thing.. There's actually a lot of precedent for small companies like Fluidigm doing big deals with much larger companies to co-develop products and almost all that precedent is bad.. They almost always work out poorly for the small company and then if they work out well for anybody, it's for the large company.. But honestly most of the time, it doesn't work at all.. There are some practical reasons for this.. You're growing an organization and you're having to figure out how to develop your product development engine for the first time.. If you attach to that a giant organization that already has its way of doing things and already has its inertia and momentum and politics and all that kind of junk, frankly I don't know how you can do it..

So to answer the last part of your question, where is that now, we continued to work on the chemistry and it's very interesting.. It's very exciting because we know we can do things in this market that you can't do any other way but we're probably not going to be commercializing anything like that for quite some time.. Either we're big enough that we can counterbalance the weight and inertia of another large company to co-develop something or we develop a new chemistry that we could use on our own...