
Tomáš Bertók: Expert in biotechnology and medical applications

„Making the first step towards commercialization activities was a hard decision. First of all, as a scientist I had to switch to a completely different mindset. What I can tell now from my experience, business needs to be experienced – hardly learnt at the university.“



Foto: private

Tomáš Bertók
Glycanostics Ltd.
Company size: 17 employees
Sector: Medical applications
Position: CTO

I studied biotechnology at the Slovak University of Technology. During my studies, I wanted to focus on medical applications which was not really possible to such extend back then. Luckily, I got a Ph.D. position at the Institute of Chemistry SAS, where I started to work on two completely new topics for me – glycomics and biosensors. Study of glycans (complex saccharides) and their changes using simple, miniaturized devices naturally led to their application in medical diagnostics, which was just one step from oncology I'm focused on right now. Although, my first case study were autoimmune diseases. Once you identify a new area or a high unmet medical need, it allows you to innovate pretty quickly, as well as to find collaborations in the industry/clinical practice.

Making the first step towards commercialization activities was a hard decision. First of all, as a scientist I had to switch to a completely different mindset. What I can tell now from my experience, business needs to be experienced – hardly learnt at the university. It is about a deep analytical approach in general, what makes scientist

kind of favored for the job. Still, getting used to a new language, communication with investors, partners or IP lawyers, was hard at the beginning. That is something I would like to help with in the future – to offer a support for new entrepreneurs from the Academy, my know-how, network, etc. I prefer to look at our world as a whole – I don't like to isolate or separate different topics and areas of our lives. I rather try to connect some general principles, knowledge and get a complex view. For instance, a scientist uses marketing tools every time he/she chooses to publish a paper – to convince the reviewer and audience his/her research is worth of investigation. Doing business in R&D is something, that helps to develop a lot of soft skills, but also project management and leadership. It definitely boosts someones personal growth, but here I think it's important to note that if a scientist is not comfortable with the idea of starting a start-up, then don't! It needs to be your decision and your private motivation, because in the future, you as a leader will be responsible for motivating your own team.