

## Top line-up for ERBI bio event

ERBI's Cambridge BioPartnering Exchange, which is to be held at the Wellcome Trust's Genome Campus in Hinxton from June 10-12 has attracted an exciting speaker line-up.

Last year, more than 600 delegates from 16 countries attended the event and ERBI arranged more than 1,000 partnering meetings.

For 2009, ERBI continues this successful format of bringing together industry experts from the world's major pharmaceutical companies, international

investors and biotech entrepreneurs with three main conference elements; the conference programme, formal partnering and a technology showcase.

Confirmed keynote speakers include Dr Patrick Vallance, senior VP of drug discovery, GSK and Dr Andrew Dillon, CEO of NICE.

Other confirmed speakers for the event are: Dr David Mott (New Enterprise Associates, US); Dr Margaret Beer of Merck Sharp & Dohme; Dr Ruth Keir

(Pfizer Inc); Dr Graeme Martin (President and CEO of Takeda Research Investment); Dr Ray Hill, ex-Merck Sharp & Dohme; Dr Barry Wilson, ex-Medtronic Inc; Dr Mark Treherne (CEO, Senexis Ltd); local biotech entrepreneur Dr Andy Richards and Nigel Cameron, Illinois Institute of Technology who will be chairing a session entitled 'Emerging Biomedical Technologies.'

Registration is now open via the conference website, [www.erbiconference.co.uk](http://www.erbiconference.co.uk)



Speaker, Mark Treherne

## TTP collaborates with US firm on JetExpert

TTP near Cambridge and US company ImageXpert Inc are collaborating to supply a complete ink development tool - JetExpert Plus - designed to speed up inkjet printhead, ink and system development.

The tool gives real-time control over printhead fire pulse shape as well as powerful in-flight drop imaging and analysis.

By combining ImageXpert's JetXpert drop-in-flight measurement system and the printhead driving technology of TTP's Meteor board, TTP and ImageXpert can now offer customers a complete development tool for optimising the capabilities of printheads, inks or other jetted materials.

A wide range of printheads is currently supported by the Meteor system allowing the same tool to be used on different projects.

# What happens when it all goes wrong?

## ○ The importance of business continuity planning

When we go into the office every morning there are certain things we take for granted. We come in, greet our colleagues, check our emails, call our customers, order from our suppliers, and generally get on with it. But what happens when something goes wrong?

Diarmuid Coyle, CTO of IT Support Partners, considers this often overlooked issue and what companies can do to rise above the unexpected.

WHILE we hope that it will never happen, unexpected events do sometimes occur. Even if they temporarily disrupt the normal operation of an organisation, they can have a severe impact on the business.

Traditional emergencies like fires and floods can put a premises out of action, and increasingly computer viruses, theft, sabotage and even something as simple as a power cut can have a cost way in excess of the material hardware.

The cost to business relationships when the customer database can't be accessed, when charities cannot process donations, and so on, not to mention the inevitable resource re-arrangement, can leave companies in a precarious position. Those that can overcome the effects of the incident and move forward smoothly and quickly are likely to have a significant edge over those who don't.

Large companies and public bodies have long recognised the importance of the issue and often maintain appropriate business continuity plans for their activities. This can be vital because although insurance policies may cover material costs, intangibles have to be very carefully managed.

One major bank that suffered an explosion had to deal not only with the physical effects of the blast, but also with distressed customers whose confidential information had been blown into the street - and of course, the media interest in the story.

In December 2006 the warehouse of another company, online clothes retailer Asos, was destroyed when the Buncefield oil refinery next door burned down. And the incident happened at the worst time - Christmas.

As well as £5.5m of physical damage, the firm was forced to suspend its shares and had to refund thousands of customers. However, thanks to careful planning, it was able

to resume trading within less than two months.

Most companies are understandably not keen to broadcast their experiences post-incident, particularly those that were less well prepared to meet the challenge.

According to figures published by the Chartered Management Institute last year, 60 per cent of large organisations had business continuity plans in place that should enable them to recover quickly in the event of an incident. This compares to just 33 per cent of SMEs.

The low priority given to business continuity by SMEs is arguably their perception that it is an unnecessary drain on resources for something that will never happen. In 2007, the Financial Times published startling figures that suggested some 80 per cent of unprepared businesses affected by a major disruption go out of business within 18 months as their customers go elsewhere.

**"A good business continuity plan does not mean that recovery will be instant, but it gives a clear roadmap to recovery and a strong signal to the company's partners that it plans to keep going."**

Indeed by their very nature, some smaller companies may not have the resources to quickly overcome emergencies and if the incident is prolonged, they may not have the commercial power to retain key customers or suppliers.

A good business continuity plan



**BURNING ISSUE:** Trade turns to ashes as the Buncefield oil refinery burns down in December 2006

does not mean that recovery will be instant, but it gives a clear roadmap to recovery and a strong signal to the company's partners that it plans to keep going.

In fact, larger companies that do understand the risks are increasingly extending the scope of their own business continuity plans to demand that even small companies that wish to supply them show evidence that they too have provisions in place should their systems fail.

Technology has a big part to play in the delivery of business continuity and it can take many forms to get organisations up and running rapidly again after an incident. Data backups can be kept at remote sites and critical servers mirrored in data-centres ready to be used when the live server is no longer accessible.

Staff can continue to work using hosted virtual desktop products that give them access to the business software they are familiar with and data they need. They can work from home or move to ready-to-use offices, complete with desks, computers, phones and catering.

However, it is important to realise business continuity is not just about keeping the IT systems going. Unlike disaster recovery - which is more about recovering failed technical systems - it is a holistic process that aims to restore business processes by

providing a framework for ensuring that the trading and value-creating activities of the organisation continue to operate.

As well as computer systems, the plan needs to cover key business processes, office space, telephones, customer communication, accounts and of course staff responsibilities during the recovery process. It can only be effective when combined with the involvement of the whole business.

So how much does it all cost? Not as much as you might think. Rather than planning for specific events like fire or flood, business continuity is based on impact. For example, loss of access to the company's premises is a potential impact of many different types of event and writing a plan to cope with this type of situation will make the process more effective.

Ideally the plan should be developed and written by a small group selected from all major business areas. This team will consult with all the key stakeholders to

identify critical processes and associated risks.

Once the business continuity plan has been developed, it must be tested thoroughly and regularly. No matter how good the plan is, it can still be a total failure if the tape drive at the new site is not compatible with the backup tapes or if phones don't work.

Moreover as the business evolves and grows, so the plan must keep up. Regular testing can highlight discrepancies - perhaps once a year or once a quarter depending on the growth rate of the company.

If an unexpected incident impacts an organisation, the show must go on. Effective management that keeps things under control after a disaster situation has taken place, can significantly enhance the company's reputation and indeed, gain it more customers as a result.

Business continuity planning is not only a good investment for business survival, but can be a serious business differentiator. And it need not cost an arm and a leg.

### About IT Support Partners

**IT Support Partners provide computer support and maintenance to small- and medium-sized businesses in Cambridgeshire and East Anglia. As well as business continuity solutions, we support and install IT systems and host a range of online services, including email and websites, remote application servers and much more.**