



(i) Winner of Ozarks Regional InnovateHER Contest

Name of the winning individual: Anna Daily

Company name: Ascendant Dx, LLC

Product/Service Name: Melody™ and Canto™

Company Address, City, State, and Place of Incorporation: 1200 Stewart Place, Springdale, AR 72764

Product/Service website: <http://www.ascendantdx.com>

Telephone number of winning individual: 479-966-4590 and cell is 479-530-5778

His/her e-mail address: anna@asndx.com

(ii) Host Organization Information:

Host organization's official legal name: Startup Junkie Consulting

Street address, city, state: 1 E. Center St. Suite 270, Fayetteville, AR 72701

Designated POC: Haley Cleous

Contact number: 417-880-2350

E-mail address: haley@startupjunkieconsulting.com

(iii) A concise, two-sentence description of the product or service

(Note: this description may also be also in promotional or informational materials in connection with InnovateHER):

"Ascendant Dx is an early stage bioscience company whose mission is to commercialize disruptive diagnostic technologies aiding identification and treatment for diseases of women and children. Ascendant's first product (Melody™) is a simple and highly effective diagnostic to detect early stage breast cancer by detecting specific proteins present in tears."

(iv) Total number of applicants that participated in your InnovateHER competition:

In an attempt to find the best company in our region that met the criteria, we had multiple steps in applying for the contest. All interested emailed us for the application packet. After explaining the purpose of the contest and what they would be judged on they were given an application packet and asked to send in their business plan. The best applicants were invited to a pitch contest from which the winner was selected.

of email inquiries: 20

of completed applications: 6

of finalists: 3

November 24, 2015

InnovateHER Team:

On behalf of the Ozarks Regional Innovation Cluster, ScaleUp Ozarks, and Startup Junkie Consulting, I am happy to express our support of Ascendant Dx, LLC as the Ozarks nomination for the 2016 InnovateHER Challenge.

The Ozarks regional InnovateHER competition had multiple strong applicants, but Ascendant Dx was by far the obvious choice and was unanimously selected by the judging panel. The selection was made from a combination of the applicants' business plans and a live pitch contest judged by local stakeholders. The judges selected Ascendant Dx as the winning company because they most accurately fit the contest criteria to have a measurable impact on the lives of women and families, have the potential for commercialization, and fill a need in the marketplace.

Ascendant Dx is a biotech company commercializing disruptive diagnostics technologies aiding in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases that primarily affect women and children. Their primary focus is on cancer, autoimmune diseases and serious childhood afflictions. Currently, the company is working on developing two tools: (1) Melody™, a breast cancer-screening test to empower women with dense breast tissue to manage their breast health, and (2) Canto™, a diagnostic test for Systemic Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (SJIA), a serious childhood disease. Melody™ uses biomarkers found in tears to aid in the early detection of breast cancer. Mammograms are not as effective in diagnosing breast cancer in women with dense breast tissue, including younger women. Melody™ provides an alternative screening option, as well as a significantly easier, faster, and less uncomfortable screening method. Canto™ allows doctors and parents to diagnose SJIA. Currently, diagnosing this disease is a process of elimination, and can take years for doctors to determine that a child has SJIA. No diagnosis test exists for this serious disease, and Canto™ is the first and only test that can diagnose SJIA..

Both products that Ascendant Dx is developing have a measurable impact on the lives of women, children, and families. Breast cancer is a disease that almost exclusively impacts women. Additionally, it has one of the poorest so-called Gold Standards in medicine. It has a 60% false positive rate over 10 years. This is especially acute for women with dense breasts, where the sensitivity is in the low 20 percentile. In recent clinical testing, the Melody™ panel has shown a sensitivity of ~90% with a specificity of ~80% in separating cancer from healthy tissue. These numbers are better than anything on the market today. Additionally, 50% of women who have health insurance do not schedule regular mammograms. Ascendant Dx's first product, Melody™, will offer a painless screening alternative that will increase patient compliance and thereby increase early detection rates. Early detection is an essential component in treating breast cancer, and results in a higher survival rate as well as lower costs of treatment. The second product under development, Canto™, a test for the diagnosis of SJIA, allows for diagnosis of a serious disease that impacts one in 250 children. If left untreated, it can lead to serious life

long health issues. Early detection of SJIA is important to a child's quality of life and long-term health.

The company is pursuing two platforms for commercialization of both technologies: (1) Protein Microarray, a miniaturized ELISA device, and (2) Point of Care Device, a disposable microfluidics device for use in a doctors office for a rapid test. The combination of good results and availability of proven, cost effective platforms would lead to high potential for commercialization.

For Canto™, the test for SJIA can be used at ER, Children's Hospitals, and pediatrician offices. SJIA is one of the diseases that fit under "Fever of Unknown Origin." These diseases today require a long list of lab and imaging tests along with weeks of observation for diagnosis, since essentially various diseases have to be ruled out until a decision has been reached on "what this disease can not be."

In breast cancer screening, today, we spend over \$4 billion a year on false positives alone (2012 NEJM Article). Mammography does not detect cancers over 2 cm in diameter. The sensitivity of mammograms for women with dense breasts (40% of women in the US) is around 22%. Mammography is inconvenient, painful and awkward – it is equivalent to putting a 40-pound battery on a woman's breasts. As a result, 50% of insured women in the US do not get regular mammograms. A test that can reduce the costs, increase the compliance and detect breast cancer at earlier stages, especially for women with dense breasts, is filling a need in the marketplace. SJIA is not as prevalent as breast cancer, yet the so-called Fever of Unknown Origin diseases (like SJIA) are some of the most expensive diagnostic processes in pediatric medicine. A definitive diagnostic test can find a willing customer base in the market.

As regional hosts, we appreciate the opportunity to be involved in a contest with such a powerful mission. We truly believe in Ascendant Dx, it's technologies, and it's team. Their mission is powerful, and they have the potential to positively impact the quality of life and health of women and children. I thank you for your consideration of our regional winner for the national contest.

Sincerely,



Haley Cleous
Associate Consultant
Startup Junkie Consulting