

SCIENCE IS...

Rand Coudray received vascular endothelial growth factor for the potential treatment of his coronary arterial disease in a Phase I clinical trial.

lean

Some of the best science has come out of lean and efficient environments. A lean, focused vision can be an asset to clear scientific thinking. Genentech has worked toward focusing its R&D effort for several years. Enhanced productivity and lean, effective operations in all areas of the company are key components of the company's Long-Range Plan toward improved financial results.

In 1996 and 1997, through a focused product development initiative, Genentech showed that a well-thought-out plan to increase efficiency can indeed bear fruit. Three project teams joined forces to minimize the time and cost required to move their preclinical products into clinical development toward a Phase II proof-of-concept point where informed decisions regarding further development could be made. If these teams had followed established procedures and timelines to move their products into the clinic, they would not have had the budget or time to do so, and would have had to drop their projects. They instead decided to join forces and question established procedures.

These project teams found several ways to cut costs and save time by taking intelligent risks — but none that would impact safety. They identified more efficient ways to manufacture product needed for preclinical and early clinical testing. They identified levels of control that were excessively duplicated and not required to meet regulatory requirements for such early clinical products. They took advantage of recently enacted Food and Drug Administration reform to reduce the number of tests needed or reported.

As a result of their efforts, three products are now in clinical testing — on an aggressive timeline and within reduced budgets — that otherwise may have been dropped: VEGF, the anti-VEGF antibody and the anti-CD18 antibody.

The most important aspect of this project is that it encouraged those involved to expand their thinking and question existing procedures. Genentech employees are used to asking: Is this effective, is it safe? They still ask these questions every day, but are now — in all departments — also increasingly asking: Is it cost and time effective, is it efficient, is it necessary? They are thinking and working lean.

AS A PATIENT OR AS A CORPORATION, DOING THE MOST WITH WHAT YOU HAVE, SEEKING BETTER WAYS TO ACCOMPLISH THINGS, AND HAVING A TENACIOUS SPIRIT THAT DOESN'T ALLOW COMPLACENCY ALL INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUCCESS. GENENTECH STRIVES TO WORK SMARTER AND MORE EFFICIENTLY. THE COMPANY'S EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY WORK PROJECT PRIORITIES, APPLY THOUGHTFUL EXPENSE CONTROLS AND INTEGRATE COST EFFECTIVENESS INTO BOTH OPERATIONS AND PRODUCTS ALL REFLECT THE VALUE GENENTECH PLACES ON WORKING, THINKING AND STAYING LEAN.