

Industry News



The up-side of the sliding pound

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The progressive de-valuation of sterling since Brexit is having a little-spoken about effect: many US drug companies are now placing their contract lab work in the UK to take advantage of our skills and their added buying power. This has been great for the lab industry in the UK, so much so that lab capacity is in very short supply particularly in the London, Cambridge, Oxford triangle.

Take-up of life science related space in the UK hit 629,374 ft² at the end of June 2022, 11% above the previous year's total for the same period, according to estate group Savills. The total for the first half of 2022 was only 29% below the total amount transacted in the whole of 2021.

Capacity is being added rapidly with projects like the new 23-storey 823,000 ft² tower vertical life sciences campus at Canary Wharf which is planned to be Europe's largest and most advanced life sciences building. Outline planning consent has been secured for the wider scheme with the capacity to deliver 3.5 million ft² of laboratory and affiliated space. 2022 also saw the first lettings of pre-fitted lab space in London and Savills commented that there will be many new lab schemes being delivered in the capital over the next two to three years.



Barbra Wells

So, there has been plenty of scope to sell to labs in the UK, but that hasn't stopped GAMBICA members from turning their eyes to other markets too and the same currency considerations are making the US a popular choice of export market. As a result, GAMBICA has been focusing on helping members to develop their sales in the USA. As well as offering webinars and contacts on how to set up an entity in the US we recently had a hugely entertaining meeting of the GAMBICA export group featuring Barbra Wells, CEO of Priorclave North America, exclusive distributor of Priorclave Laboratory

Autoclaves in the US, Canada and Latin America. Priorclave, is a GAMBICA member and a pretty traditional UK company whose brand was virtually unknown in America a decade ago. Today, Priorclave North America serves more than 300 research labs and makes up one-third of all company sales and 50% of all its exports. Barbra was able to explain to other GAMBICA members how they too could expand effectively without boots on the ground in the US. She was also able to introduce them to the freelance on-line marketing specialist who generates the leads for Priorclave NA.

Traditionally, companies looking to grow their market in the US have started either by attending exhibitions, or by identifying distributors there. But the exhibition option has become less and less attractive over the years. The main US lab exhibition, Pittcon, has been in decline for years and many members are unenthusiastic about the event. The constantly changing leadership hasn't helped and it's hard to see a positive future for this once world-leading event.

GAMBICA is therefore looking at which alternatives in the US which might be of interest to members and other UK companies who accompany us to exhibitions. We have identified AACC in Anaheim in July this year as one of the most likely exhibitions to appeal to a broad range of exhibitors. The American Association of Clinical Chemistry runs this event and as the name implies, it is of most interest to medically-related companies. While these make up a fair proportion of GAMBICA members, and of the British In Vitro Diagnostic Association who we also cater for, we also have many company members which need to address the sectors offered by events like Anachem and Achema in Europe. For such companies AACC is not an ideal choice and it is being held this year in a Disney resort location. When Pittcon is held in Orlando it is generally felt to be ultra-quiet in the afternoon as so many of those attending take the afternoon off to visit Disneyland with their families.

So for 2023 and 2024, as well as Medica in Dusseldorf and Medlab in Dubai, which we attend every year, we are planning to offer the following options for members:

Analytical Lab Africa	Johannesburg 5/7 July 2023
Medlab Asia & Asia Health	Bangkok 12/14 July 2023
AACC USA	Anaheim 23/27 July 2023
MedLab Africa	Johannesburg 24/26 October 2023
Analytica	Munich 9/12 April 2024
Achema	Frankfurt 10/14 June 2024
AACC USA	Chicago 21/25 July 2024

The advantage of exhibiting with GAMBICA is that we do all the heavy lifting, we negotiate with the exhibition organisers and stand builders, we arrange a prominent position, you get all the 'great' branding which highlights that all the members of the pavilion are from the UK, with all that that implies in terms of quality of products and services, and members benefit from proximity to other companies offering related products.

Of course, there are other ways to find distributors. GAMBICA has formed a partnership with Bio Channel Partners, a specialist database of distributors and manufacturers worldwide which have been vetted and which offers completely up-to-date contact information. You can search for distributors or manufacturers by location or by type of equipment and you can exclude those already serving your competitors. GAMBICA members get free premium membership of the service, but



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it is also available to non-members as a paid-for service.

Once you have found a distributor, of course, you need to manage them and make sure that you don't cannibalise the sales of your own staff and lower your margins as a result.

The benefits of direct sales versus using distributors, whether it's better to have a sales force out on the road or staffing the telephones, how much lead generation can be managed on-line, and how to overcome the vast backwash of apathy for on-line events post Covid, will all be debated at the GAMBICA lab suppliers' conference on 14th March at Stapleford Park Spa Hotel near Melton Mowbray. Although all the hotel rooms have now gone, there are still day places available to attend the event which will also cover the new sustainability requirements of pharma companies, how to improve your product life-cycle, and provide alerts about other issues you may need to be prepared for in 2023/24. It's where the lab industry meets to plan the up-coming year and it would be lovely if you could join us, you can book your place here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/gambica-2023-annual-laboratory-industry-conference-tickets-401211453257>, or if you have ideas for future topics, please get in touch with jacqueline.balian@gambica.org.uk

If you would like to come with us to any of our up-coming exhibitions contact Kirsty.roberts@gambica.org.uk



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