



Serono

Global Sourcing Gives Serono Great Results



Nico Baldanzi
Vice President
IT Business Services
Serono

For leading biotechnology companies like Serono, R&D success often hinges on synthesizing myriad global resources and know-how. With more than 1,300 of Serono's 4,900 employees worldwide involved in research and development, the Swiss firm is constantly seeking the most effective ways to coordinate and streamline global R&D activities. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the company turned to Ness Technologies, a leader in global IT outsourcing, to deploy an electronic document management (EDM) system that would help Serono meet the complex regulatory requirements encountered at each stage of the R&D process.

Serono is the global biotechnology leader in reproductive health. Serono has strong market positions in neurology, metabolism and growth, and has recently entered the psoriasis area. In 2004, Serono achieved worldwide revenues of \$2.5 billion and a net income of \$494 million, making it the third-largest biotech company in the world. Its products are sold in over 90 countries. Bearer shares of Serono S.A., Serono's holding company, are traded on the virt-x (SEO), and its American Depositary Shares are traded on the New York Stock Exchange (SRA).

"One of the main reasons we chose Ness was its ability to bring together pharmaceutical and IT expertise from throughout the world," says Nico Baldanzi, Vice President IT Business Services at Serono. "The combination of American, Swiss and Israeli personnel and Ness' global management capabilities was instrumental in our decision to go with the firm."

"One of the main reasons we chose Ness was its ability to bring together pharmaceutical and IT expertise from throughout the world."

When Serono first turned to Ness in early 2003, the company was charged with a daunting task: implementing a collaborative Web-based EDM solution for the production of a vast number of regulatory-compliant protocols and reports. The project covered information related to Serono's global R&D cycle, including all documents that play a key role in the multi-year development and approval process of Serono products. "We're talking about incorporating tens of thousands of documents, including 20,000-to-30,000 active ones, ranging in size from a few pages to hundreds of pages each," Baldanzi says.

Keeping Up With Changes

But the project's large scope was not the only challenge for Ness. Since the biopharmaceutical industry imposes highly stringent, yet constantly changing requirements on firms in the sector, flexibility was essential every step of the way. "The standards in our business are always being updated," Baldanzi says. "It's an evolutionary process that demands the highest level of flexibility as well as attentiveness to our needs. Rules change quickly, and must be fully respected." Add to that an extremely tight five-month deployment deadline, and it was clear that Ness had its work cut out for itself.

"Our satisfaction with the first phase of the project, both in terms of meeting deadline and budget, encouraged us to embark on other projects together."



But the company didn't disappoint. Ness had the Documentum-based project up and running on schedule by May 2003, which helped it gain plenty of credibility in Serono's eyes. "Ness' ability to do so much during such a short period impressed us," Baldanzi says. "Our satisfaction with the first phase of the project, both in terms of meeting deadline and budget, encouraged us to embark on other projects together."

Following initial implementation of the regulatory affairs project, Ness created for Serono a Documentum platform, SeronoDocs, to help develop a contract management system (CMS), as well as a standard operating procedure (SOP) solution for its stringent manufacturing documentation requirements. And at the outset of 2005, Serono yet again turned to Ness for consulting assistance in defining the most appropriate clinical trial management system for the Swiss firm. "We've had such a positive experience with Ness that it is now our preferred integrator for all Documentum applications," Baldanzi says.

"We've had such a positive experience with Ness that it is now our preferred integrator for all Documentum applications."

Responding to Needs

Ness' success with Serono can be attributed to several factors such as responsiveness and good customer service. But if there is one area most responsible for the fruitful Ness-Serono relationship, it's the company's global sourcing capabilities. "From the outset, Ness delivered the global know-how required to handle our highly complex needs," Baldanzi says. "Even though we're based in Switzerland, Ness brought in top-tier American personnel with expertise from the pharmaceutical industry - first to get the project off the ground and then to manage it. That contribution was critical to the project's highly successful launch."

From Serono's perspective, the relationship has paid great dividends thus far, according to Baldanzi. "Now we have an organized, streamlined fully automated document management system that has lowered manpower costs and shortened our time to market," he says. "And at the same time, we are assured of always maintaining compliance with all international standards."

About Ness Technologies

Ness Technologies (NASDAQ: NSTC) is a global provider of end-to-end IT services and solutions designed to help clients improve competitiveness and efficiency. Specializing in outsourcing and offshore, systems integration and application development, software and consulting, and quality assurance and training, Ness serves a blue-chip client base of over 500 public- and private-sector customers. With over 5,000 employees, Ness maintains operations in 15 countries across North America, Europe and Asia Pacific, and more than 100 alliances and partnerships around the world.