

L@b Brief | November 2024

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COMMENT

Good sense in the UK – and some of the same in the EU

Hello again,



ACCORDING TO [Invest 2035](#), which sets out how government intends to deliver growth: ‘Over the next decade, the life sciences sector holds enormous potential to drive economic growth and productivity. It is built on over 6,800 businesses that generated over £100 billion in turnover(2021 to 2022 figures). The UK is also home to 4 of the top 10 global universities for life sciences and medicine, and with the expertise of the NHS, the UK is a global hub for innovation’.

So that’s all good, but threats to UK success in life sciences have come in the shape of the European Parliament's rapid revision of the MDR/IVDR regulations requiring the re-certification of tens if not hundreds of thousands of products.

A recent German-inspired resolution from the European Parliament has called on the EU Commission to act by the end of the first quarter of 2025 to relieve the burden on medical technology companies which have suffered from the bureaucratic and lengthy certification processes.

The resolution demands:

- The simplification and acceleration of certification procedures and the introduction of transparent and binding deadlines.
- The elimination of unnecessary recertifications and the reduction of administrative burdens, especially for SMEs.
- The creation of fast-track procedures for innovative products and products that address undermet medical needs.
- The full implementation of the European product database EUDAMED to create more transparency.
- Clear regulations for medical devices for rare diseases and increased support for SMEs, for example through guidelines and model forms.

Meanwhile, in the UK a consultation is underway to introduce ‘International reliance’ a mechanism through which some medical devices could access the GB market more quickly if they have already been approved by a comparable regulator in another country which seems a sensible step to avoiding doubling the compliance costs of UK manufacturers. It is also looking at keeping some EU law in force to help smooth out some of the bumps.

Thank goodness – some sense at last!

Toodle pip!

Jacqueline

UK News

Say hello to your Lab Board Members

GAMBICA'S MISSION is to assist members and grow the market for your products. How we do this is guided by our sector boards and we are very fortunate to have a wealth of experience in the lab industry represented on our Lab Industry Sector Board. The Board meets regularly to discuss industry issues, and what actions GAMBICA can take to address them. Our Board Members represent a broad spectrum of the lab industry, encompassing various company sizes and specialisations, bringing unique perspectives and expertise to our organisation. This collective knowledge not only strengthens our strategic direction but also enhances our ability to serve our community effectively. Most of our Board Members will be present at the GAMBICA Lab Industry conference in March, so do come and say hello to them there, and let them know about your concerns and priorities.

JENNY O'CONNELL | (VICE CHAIR) MD EPPENDORF UK LTD



Jenny becomes chair of the GAMBICA Lab Sector Board in January, bringing her expertise from Eppendorf, a leading life science company. Eppendorf develops and sells instruments, consumables, and services for liquid, sample, and cell handling in

laboratories worldwide. Its product range includes pipettes and automated pipetting systems, dispensers, centrifuges, mixers, DNA amplification equipment, ultra-low temperature freezers, bioreactors, CO2 incubators, and shakers.

PAUL WHEELER (CHAIR) MD OF ELEMENTAR UK



Paul began his career at Elementar after building his own mass spectrometer as a student. Elementar UK was formed in 2008 after Elementar Analysensysteme GmbH purchased the stable isotope product line from GV Instruments.

Prior to GV Instruments, the products can be traced back to the early 1970s with the 602 instrument from Vacuum Generators and through other companies such as Micromass and Waters. Elementar UK also supplies and supports the elemental analysis, total organic carbon and optical emission spectroscopy.

JONATHAN DAVIES | OXFORD INSTRUMENTS



Jonathan is Group Head of Quality and Product Compliance at Oxford Instruments, a leading provider of high technology products and services to the world's leading industrial companies and scientific research communities.

Jonathan is an EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) Assessor and Chartered Quality Professional and a Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute.

JESSICA GABB | BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER | IS INSTRUMENTS



Jessica is a business development manager at one of GAMBICA's newest members, IS Instruments, an SME specialising in spectrometers and laser-based instrumentation. IS looks to take the best technologies they've

developed for space and apply them to challenges on Earth.

**TIM HUTCHINSON
LIEBHERR**



Tim is head of UK at Liebherr which manufactures laboratory fridges and freezers. He was previously MD at V-ZUG UK the UK arm of a Swiss appliance manufacturer, and before that Group MD at Waterline Group.

**SIMON KENNEY |
CEO | GOODFELLOW CAMBRIDGE**



Simon CEO of Goodfellow, has an engineering background and spent over 24 years at global distributor, RS Components in various national and international roles. At Goodfellow for almost a decade now, he has transformed the organisation by expanding its market presence and focusing on innovation. As part of the GAMBICA Board, he aims to promote a culture of continuous improvement and keep the organisation leading in industry advancements.

**KEN MACLACHLAN |
Previously country leader of thermo fisher
scientific in the UK, now consulting in the IVD
& laboratory industries**



Ken has many years' experience on the Lab Board, where he represents member company Hycor Biomedical. Hycor is a US corporation starting up in the UK specialising in the manufacture and supply of in vitro diagnostic products for blood testing for allergies.

**TIM MCDOUGLE |
ATS LIFE SCIENCES**



Tim, who was previously Executive Vice President, EMEA and Global Life Science Solutions at Avidity Science, has recently taken on the role of leading business growth across ATS' Life Sciences group companies (6 in total). Three of these companies, Avidity Science, Heidolph and Scientific Products (SP) sell laboratory equipment. Avidity and SP have facilities and manufacture in the UK. Tim has worked previously in senior Commercial roles for Veolia Water Technologies, including five years in China and two years in North America, and Hanovia Limited, the Ultra-violet light water treatment specialists.

**LEE OAKLEY |
PRIORCLAVE**



Lee is Sales Director for both the UK and US at Priorclave which manufactures autoclaves. Responsible for global sales, Lee has had notable success in exports particularly to the US, Australasia and the Middle East. He has been employed by Priorclave for 19 years after 16 years in the hydraulic industry. Lee is working to help GAMBICA gain more members and show the industry what good work we do to increase business for British companies.

**SCOTT RUDLAND |
WATERS**



Scott is general manager for Europe North at Waters which manufactures analytical instruments, notably Mass Spectrometry, Chromatography and Informatics solutions. Scott has over 35 years of experience in the analytical industry, and has spent 24 years at Waters.

**GEMMA SCOTT |
RADLEYS**



Gemma is Director of Sales at Radleys and assumes responsibilities for sales, customer experience and product management. Radleys specialises in the design and manufacture of innovative laboratory

equipment, including glass reactors which are sold globally. The company is known for its range of products that support chemical synthesis, process development, and scale-up operations in research and industrial laboratories.

**PAUL VANDEN BRANDEN |
SCIMED**



SciMed is one of the largest UK distributors of scientific equipment, covering a wide range of analysers, testers and process chemistry solutions and was established in 1975. Paul is one of the directors of

SciMed and is responsible for all sales and marketing activities, you may have met him at the last conference.

**ANDY WHITTARD | MD
CHERWELL LABORATORIES**



Andy has been at Cherwell since 1990, working initially as a Service Engineer, then into a sales role, to Sales Director and finally becoming Managing Director in

2005. During his almost 20 years as MD he has overseen continued, sustained growth. In 2023 he helped the business transition into new ownership as Cherwell joined the AnalytiChem group. Cherwell has joined the Life Sciences sector within AnalytiChem and alongside other group businesses will continue to offer its Redipor range of prepared media products to the pharmaceutical and life science sectors.

**TONY WITHERS | GLOBAL SALES DIRECTOR
GRANT INSTRUMENTS**



With over 30 years' experience in the laboratory business, Tony has worked in both global and regional distribution businesses, with the last 10 years working for manufacturers. This

experience of both sides of the business model has allowed Tony to really understand the needs and requirements of both parties. At Grant Instruments he leads global sales activities for temperature control, life science equipment and data acquisition product lines.

New venue for GAMBICA Lab Conference on the future of lab research



YOUR UPCOMING **Laboratory Industry Conference**, which normally takes place at Stapleford Park, has switched venues for 2025. Now that Stapleford Park has gone into liquidation (too few footballers getting married there apparently) we have moved the event to the nearby **Barnsdale Hall Hotel** in Oakham, Rutland, near Rutland Water.

This year's conference will feature the voices of your customers and will also offer sessions on the future of scientific research which will help you

ensure that your product portfolio is squarely designed for the future's biggest areas of demand.

We will also have TV expert Anand Menon and celebrated economic commentator, Lee Hopley providing insights on economic, sales and exports which will help you be ready for tomorrow's world.

Prof. Marc-Olivier Coppens from UCL will open a session on the future of research by exploring how nature-inspired engineering can lead to sustainable practices in lab settings. Jenny Readman from the UK Centre for Process Innovation will look at what research is being funded so that you can draw conclusions about the equipment which will be needed. David Calvert will outline the specific hurdles lab suppliers face as the demand for biochemistry grows, while Dr. Han Wu explain how continuous training drives instrument performance and maximises ROI for suppliers. She will cover, in particular, how partnering with lab technicians and researchers through training can unlock value for lab suppliers. The session will conclude with a Q&A panel, allowing attendees to engage directly with the experts.



We will also have sales training experts setting out effective sales strategies for the UK and Europe. You can see the full programme [here](#)

Don't miss out. Book your place at the conference or the dinner, [here](#).

Prognosis poor for French lab sales



THE FRENCH are highly pessimistic about the future of their domestic lab sales according to the latest *Instrument Business Outlook* annual Business Climate Survey. Survey participants from Germany, Switzerland, North America and the UK mostly believe that the lab tools market will improve in 2025, but the French see difficulties with funding which are likely to have a significant impact on sales.

Representatives of CIFL, the French lab suppliers' association highlighted the effects of reduced government medical reimbursements on diagnostic testing labs and suppliers. M. Thomas and M. Boyer of CIFL said: "In the biology sector, the government review of the nomenclature for the B index of medical biology reimbursements will result in a further decrease of 10%. Since 2018, cumulative cuts have already reached close to 25%, significantly impacting laboratory revenues and reshaping the financial landscape of the medical biology sector."

The reduction is intended to control healthcare costs and relieve budgetary constraints within the national healthcare system. These actions are forcing labs to undertake cost savings, which are affecting lab equipment purchases. "This challenging environment means that investments in new equipment, previously seen as essential, are increasingly under scrutiny. Estimates suggest that around 20%–30% of planned investments in laboratory

equipment could be either postponed or cancelled, as laboratories prioritise operational efficiency over capital expenditure.

“Additionally, a transition to Total Laboratory Automation (TLA) systems could increase as laboratories evaluate the long-term value of consolidated and automated systems to better manage resource allocation and reduce operational costs,” commented M. Thomas and M. Boyer.

“In the biology market, particularly among private labs, the commercial model from IVD companies is undergoing significant changes. Increasingly, IVD companies are adopting inside sales models, leveraging digital tools and remote engagement strategies to reach clients more efficiently and reduce the costs associated with traditional field sales teams. The evolution of laboratory needs—especially in biopharmaceutical research—has expanded the scope for advanced lab tools that facilitate high-throughput screening, automation and data analytics. As these trends converge, biopharmaceutical lab tools, including liquid handling systems, microplate readers and molecular analysis instruments, are expected to see heightened demand despite the overall slowdown. However, due to budget constraints, laboratories are likely to favour flexible financing options, rental agreements and service-based models, where costs are spread over time rather than upfront capital expenses.”

France’s diagnostic tool companies, according to CIFL, are seeing increased competition. “Established players are expected to adopt more aggressive pricing strategies to retain market share, potentially leading to more frequent price reductions and bundled service offerings.”

Mike Copps noted that public companies in the US have cautioned investors regarding expectations. “Many companies have proactively adjusted 2025 expectations downward, helping manage investor expectations in response to ongoing demand uncertainties and delayed recovery across core and adjacent markets.”

But he remained cautiously optimistic. “Increased stability in core pharma and biopharma markets offers potential for growth for some members, especially in bioprocessing, which has shown a solid recovery trajectory. However, instrumentation remains pressured, particularly for routine-use tools, as capital expenditure constraints continue. High-end instruments show more resilience, suggesting growth for premium instrument segments in 2025.

The German commentators shared his view. “In our mid-year survey, companies were still predominantly optimistic. Despite all the uncertainties, the trend was for a slight increase in domestic business and a significant upturn in international business.” But the optimism has recently dimmed, said a spokesperson for SPECTARIS, attributing the change to the election of Donald Trump and related possibilities of trade barriers and greater geopolitical tensions. Christian Walter (who will be speaking at GAMBICA’s conference in March) stated that members of Toolpoint, the Swiss trade association, also expect a modest economic recovery. “Year-over-year comparisons should ease, as 2024 was no longer marked by the high demand driven by supply chain shortages or COVID recovery.” Toolpoint members describe Europe’s economy as resilient, despite the economic challenges in Germany but for the US, expectations are more mixed. “For the US, members’ expectations are characterised by both hope and fear; hope that robust US economic data will translate into increased demand for lab science tools, and fear that aggressive tariff policies from the incoming Trump administration could impact end-user pricing and further disrupt the global economy.” As for Asia, “Performance is expected to improve slightly over 2024, though the

region remains a far cry from its role as the world's economic engine in the early 21st century."

Where will the growth come from?

In Germany there is a noticeable rise in demand for sustainable products. Regulatory requirements are increasingly mandating the use of recycled materials, while funding sources often tie investments to sustainability goals. This shift has led some companies not only to adopt a stronger commitment to sustainable practices but also to explore new business opportunities, such as certification services for sustainable products.

Chinese market also gives cause for disquiet

According to Mike Copps, "China remains a wildcard. Recent stimulus measures introduced in China are anticipated to contribute to demand, but most companies expect tangible impacts to unfold gradually in 2025."

In the Swiss view the situation in China will probably remain stable or improve slightly over the course of 2025 but any improvement is anticipated mainly in the EV and battery segment, as well as in food and agricultural testing. Expectations for biopharma, especially diagnostics and medical, remain modest.

The Chinese market is seen as particularly difficult by German companies. "After a weak year in 2023, in which exports had already fallen by 2%, exports to the People's Republic in the first half of 2024 were even 7% below the previous year's level," said the SPECTARIS commentator.

This accords with what GAMBICA members have noticed that Chinese partners are reporting an exceptionally challenging business environment with businesses closing across the spectrum. But here France seems to be uncharacteristically optimistic: "The laboratory equipment market [for all lab instruments and consumables, including non-diagnostics applications] in China has been experiencing significant growth, driven by increased investments in R&D and the expansion of various industries. In 2023, the Chinese laboratory supplies market for French suppliers generated revenues of approximately \$2,925.5 million and is projected to reach \$4,579.8 million by 2030, reflecting a CAGR of 6.6% from 2024 to 2030."

Your chance to brief NW university purchaser

GAMBICA HAS been approached by David Yates, sustainable relationships manager of the North Western Universities Purchasing Consortium (NWUPC) who has asked if it would be possible to provide him with an industry briefing to help him future-proof their buying activities.

The briefing will be on teams on the morning of 11th December.

David would like the briefing to cover:

- Industry wide rather than individual supplier information.
- He wants to understand if there are any pinch points in the supply chain similar to that which has affected chips and display screens in the last few years.
- Any legislation coming up which will impact on what they should buy and what is available.

- Any likely impacts of AI.
- General industry trends.
- Where technological developments are likely.

This will all help to inform their risk matrices. It should be a useful way of making contacts and re-enforcing your views of what should be in the upcoming frameworks.

If you would like to be involved please email me urgently on jacqueline.balian@gambica.org.uk. We will field no more than three people.

I have invited David to attend our conference in March, along with his colleague Lisa Blackburn

Lab staff exposed to biological risk says HSE



A RECENT Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation highlighted a risk to lab staff of being exposed to serious pathogens such as *Brucella canis*, linked to increased animal imports from Eastern Europe. The HSE has called upon clinicians, nurses, GPs, and vets to provide comprehensive information on specimen request forms including recent travel history, contact with imported animals, and consumption of unpasteurised products which are crucial for lab staff to assess potential dangers and implement appropriate safety measures. When this information is lacking or delayed, specimens may be processed under inadequate containment conditions, increasing the likelihood of exposure to Hazard Group 3 pathogens.

The HSE urges laboratory operators to take proactive measures, including training clinical staff on the importance of thorough documentation and implementing systems to ensure that relevant clinical details are easily accessible. Establishing clear guidelines for completing specimen request forms and creating mandatory fields for critical information will enhance communication and safety protocols it says.

This emphasis on improved risk management not only protects laboratory staff may also present sales opportunities for companies specialising in laboratory safety solutions, training programs, and IT systems.

New guidance on the minimisation of animal testing

THE HEALTH and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency have developed guidance outlining ways in which new tests on animals might be avoided or minimised by registrants subject to the toxicological and ecotoxicological information requirements laid out in Annexes 7-10 of UK REACH.

The guidance primarily applies to the registration of new substances, that is, those that were not registered under EU REACH before 1 January 2021.

Registrants must submit a testing proposal to the Agency for any Annex 9 and 10 testing by way of a dossier update in line with Article 40 of UK REACH.

[View guidance](#) on the minimisation of animal testing under UK REACH.

Your feedback sought on trade strategy

THE GOVERNMENT is seeking informal feedback from interested parties on the development of its trade strategy which is expected to be published in Spring 2025.

The Trade Strategy will seek to address:

- How to facilitate trade for businesses and provide practical support tools.
- How to build the right partnerships internationally.
- How the UK should operate in the international context.

Draft feedback will be put to GAMBICA's export group meeting on 18th December for approval.

It is expected that the main priorities in our response will be:

- Providing financial support for exporters
- Reducing the drag still being caused by Brexit by renegotiating the UK-EU Trade Continuity Agreement (ie addressing issues with Carnets, temporary import/export etc
- Working to maintain alignment on standards and regulation
- Addressing ongoing delays to Export Licences.

If you have any items you wish to add, or views on any of the bullet points above, please get in touch. Jacqueline.balian@gambica.org.uk or if you prefer to respond direct, please send your comments to: tradestrategyengagement@businessandtrade.gov.uk.

Consultation on medical devices

THE MEDICINES and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency [MHRA] has launched a new consultation on forthcoming regulations on routes to market for medical devices and *in vitro* diagnostic devices.

The focus is on four areas:

- **UKCA marking:** Medical devices, or their sterile pack, currently need to have a UKCA marking to be placed on the Great Britain market. The MHRA is introducing new requirements to improve device traceability by assigning devices with a Unique Device Identification [UDI], which reduces the need for a UKCA marking.
- **International reliance:** International Reliance is a mechanism through which some medical devices could access the GB market more quickly if they have already been approved by a comparable regulator in another country.
- **In vitro diagnostic [IVDs] devices:** IVD devices will be classified in four risk classes based on the patient and public health risk they pose. Each class has different requirements for an IVD device to gain market access, according to its risk level. The MHRA is seeking views on the regulatory requirements for Class B IVDs, which covers IVDs for lower risk self-testing, such as pregnancy tests, fertility tests, and cholesterol tests.
- **Assimilated EU law:** to remove the revocation date of four pieces of law originating from the European Union so that they remain in place until the transition to an updated medical devices regime:
- Commission Decision 2002/364 on the common specifications for in vitro diagnostic medical devices

- Commission Regulation [EU] No 207/2012 on electronic instructions for use of medical devices
- Regulation [EU] No 722/2012 concerning particular requirements for medical devices manufactured utilising tissues of animal origin
- Regulation [EU] No 920/2013 on the designation and the supervision of approved bodies.

The consultation is open for input until 5th January 2025.

New planning policy proposed for biotech labs

THE GOVERNMENT is consulting on ways of aligning a new national planning policy with its industrial strategy and planning changes to help expedite the delivery of data centres, gigafactories, laboratories, freight and logistics.

The Government has noted in its industrial strategy that more laboratory capacity is needed for Britain's burgeoning life sciences sector, working on things like precision medicines and quantum technologies.

It also aims to make the National Planning Policy Framework, the "NPPF", more supportive of proposals in these key industries and to enable schemes to follow the most proportionate route to consent, either by way of a standard planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or a development consent order (a "DCO") under the Planning Act 2008.

For further information click [here](#).

LAB construction updates

Lab opens in King's Cross, London



A NEW commercial laboratory building, part of the Tileyard Quarter development near King's Cross is to be the first of four planned laboratories being built to support advanced research and manufacturing.

Offering 113,000 square feet of flexible laboratory space to meet the demand for adaptable lab environments in central London, the design allows for low-vibration superstructure and specific provisions for specialist utilities.

Reckitt to remodel its R&D facility in Hull

GLOBAL CONSUMER health and hygiene leader Reckitt has appointed Spencer Group to remodel part of its Science and Innovation Centre in Hull. This project will create new laboratories and fragrance evaluation spaces. The £105 million facility, which originally opened in 2019, serves as Reckitt's global technical innovation hub for renowned products like Nurofen and Strepsils.

Kadans Science Partners starts work on Cambridge lab building



KADANS SCIENCE Partners has officially broken ground on Merlin Place a 139,000 sq. ft. laboratory and office building located in the Cambridge Cluster life sciences district. The six-story facility will offer a mix of containment level 2 (CL2) wet labs, dry labs, and flexible office environments tailored to the needs of biotechnology, pharmaceutical, med-

tech, and digital health companies.

Situated adjacent to Cambridge Science Park and St. John's Innovation Park, Merlin Place will aim to achieve BREEAM Excellent certification.

GAMBICA events

Maintenance requirements for ISO certified labs | online | 10 December, 10.30am



THIS WEBINAR has been designed to help you improve the contribution of your service and other after-sales activities. Certification body AUVA will explain the maintenance requirements for laboratories with an ISO quality management certification. They will also provide detailed guidance on the requirements and suggest how laboratory equipment suppliers' service

contracts can be designed to specifically match the ISO requirements. The webinar will be presented by Graham O'Geran. To book your place, click [here](#).

Export group meeting – Support for your online sales; 2025 exhibitions and trade missions; and the market in China | GAMBICA offices, London | 18 December 2024 | 14.00 - 17.00



THE NEXT export group meeting will have content to interest any exporter, with concrete information to help you grow your overseas sales, opportunities to input into GAMBICA's plans for exhibition pavilions and trade fairs in 2025 and beyond and a chance to get your views reflected in the Government's trade strategy.

Agenda:

- How to improve your online sales outside the UK – Colin Piper DBT digital unit
- The market in China and the CACLP show – Rita Huang and Mike McCourt from DBT's China team
- Arab Lab – the new format and how to participate – Thomas Hall from the exhibition's new owners Terrapin
- Virtual trade mission to Panama and Uruguay
- The government's trade strategy consultation – draft response for approval

- Close and Christmas drinks

We look forward to meeting you for our Christmas event, please [click here](#) to register so we know how many to cater for...

Benefits of sustainability standards & mapping a path to Net Zero| online | 21 January 2025 | 10.30 - 11.30



IF YOU are thinking of starting on a journey to Net Zero, the choice of path and priorities can be very confusing. There are now a whole range of sustainability standards each with the potential to play a part in your green transition. In this webinar, experts from leading ISO consultancy, Blackmores, will describe

the purpose of each standard along with its benefits and disadvantages. They will then provide a deep dive into how or how far, each might meet your particular needs. Finally, the session will provide a run through of how you can use ISO 14068 to plan your path to Net Zero.

The webinar will cover:

- ISO 14001 Environmental Management – Benefits and disadvantages
- ISO 50001 Energy Management - Benefits and disadvantages
- ISO 20400 Sustainable Procurement - Benefits and disadvantages
- How can sustainability standards support you?
- What is ISO 14064 and ISO 14068?
- Calculating GHG (Green House Gas) Emissions across scopes 1,2 & 3
- Reducing your current environmental impact
- Re-quantifying your emissions
- Offsetting remaining emissions – What options are available?

To reserve your place, click [here](#).

The Service Team as company ambassadors – shared cost training | GAMBICA offices, London | 28 January 2025 | 09.00- 17.00



THE LATEST in the shared cost training being provided for members by GAMBICA will be a one-day workshop on *The service team as company ambassadors*.

This training has proved very popular with members offering servicing in the past. It is designed to inspire those in Service Teams – both Service Engineers and those who provide team support – to realise

the importance of their contribution.

It will develop their sense of purpose and encourage them to see themselves, directly or indirectly, as a key player in your company’s business success.

The day will build on their experience of customer service and will develop their ability to handle a wide range of client situations with confidence. It will also help develop further their organisations’ reputation for excellent service.

What delegates will learn

- Their vital role as service engineers and service team members in the business growth of their company.

- How to contribute to their role in providing their organisations with a ‘competitive edge’.
- How to listen and understand to client needs more effectively and to respond to them successfully.
- How a little extra effort during a service call can develop opportunities that contribute to ongoing sales.
- How to develop stronger and more positive client relationships.
- Techniques for handling difficult situations.
- That they are valued professionals with a key role in their organisation’s ongoing success.

Training methods

The day will build on and share experience of those attending and will focus on developing an Action Plan to deliver excellent client service in everyday business. Practical exercises, discussions and group work will form a key part of the workshop – which will be practical, relevant and fun.

The range of costs will be between £250 and £550pp depending on numbers. If you would like to reserve a place on this training, please do so [here](#). We will contact you when we know how many people want to book to tell you what the cost will be. You will be invoiced direct if you wish to go ahead.

Board gap analysis in preparation for acquisition – finding your place | online | 11 February 2025 | 10.30 - 11.30



WITH INCREASING acquisition activity in the laboratory industry, many more people are thinking about how to prepare themselves and their company for external scrutiny. Demonstrating that you have the skills to take your company to the next level requires careful analysis of your current skills set and what is required to take the company further. From a company point of view, those preparing to seek investment need to analyse their c-suite and non-execs to make sure that they have the range of experience and aptitudes required. In this webinar Andrew Moore of tech sector executive recruitment firm Bailey Fisher will explain how directors should undertake the necessary skills gap analysis, and how individual staff members can review their own progress and identify the means to progress their careers as their company develops.

To register for your place, click [here](#).

Selling through distributors – shared cost training | GAMBICA offices, London | 28th and 29th April 2025 | 09.00 - 17.00



WE ARE delighted to be able to offer GAMBICA members specialist training in selling through and managing channel partners. This training has been specifically developed for the lab industry by trainers with huge experience in our industry, Sharon Eaton of BioChannel Partners and Steve Vaughan of George James. This training normally costs £3600 per person,

but it is available through GAMBICA as shared cost training which could cost as little as £750pp if 12 people register.

THE TRAINING CONTENT IS AS FOLLOWS:

<p>DAY 1</p> <p>Module 1: Channel partner skill development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The role model channel partner manager• Developing personal goals• Prioritising a focused workload• Managing v Leading skills• Communication & listening skills <p>Module 2: Channel partner management planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business plan development• Current situation audit & gap analysis• Defining best partner profile for optimal coverage• Channel partner recruitment process• Planning and managing growth	<p>DAY 2</p> <p>Module 3: Managing Channel Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managing channel partner performance• Managing targets and sales funnels• Business reviews with your channel partners• Managing channel conflicts• Managing under-performance, recovery and termination <p>Module 4: Influencing channel partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessing capability and willingness• Managing power imbalances• Channel partner motivation• Constructive feedback• Developing trusting relationships
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This training is being offered by GAMBICA on a shared-cost basis, the more people who attend, the lower the per person price will be. Please register your interest [here](#) and Sarah Wicks (sarah.wicks@gambica.org.uk) will inform you about the cost per person and invoice you nearer the date.

We can accommodate between 6 and 12 people and the cost will be between £1500 plus VAT per person (if six people attend) and £750 per person (if 12 book).

INDUSTRY events

Global innovation and new technology health event | London | 9-10 December 2024

THIS EVENT is described as the NHS innovation festival and comprises the UK National ICS congress, the mental health technology show, the future hospital show, the women's health technology show and the net zero technology show. For more information click [here](#).

Biopharma and life sciences connected | Cork, Ireland | 23 January 2025

THE THIRD annual Biopharma & Life Sciences Connected event will be held at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Little Island, Cork bringing together 1,000 senior managers from industry, academia and government support agencies responsible for nurturing growth and investment in the biopharma sector. The agenda includes three separate stages, cover digital transformation, sustainability, skills and training, capital investment, regulations and much more. Click [HERE](#) to watch a short video from the 2024 event. There are a limited number of table-top exhibition slots available @ €2,195. For more information click [here](#).

SLAS Europe technology provider showcase | San Diego | 25-29 January 2025

FOCUSED ON interconnectivity, technology and discovery, the SLAS event provides a deep dive into laboratory automation, innovation and analytics. The event is especially targeted at the pharma industries and offers an 'Omics and spatial omics track' and a 'screening applicatoin and biomarker diagnostics track. For more information click [here](#).

CIM2025 International Metrology Congress | Lyon | 11-14 March 2025

CO-LOCATED WITH France's largest industrial trade show this event aims to be a hub where science, industry and metrology players come together. For more information, click [here](#).

London Lab Live | ExCel London | 14-15 May 2025

THE SUCCESSFUL Future Labs Live Basel event is to be replicated in London from 2025, with the organisers, UK firm Terrapin, expecting over 100 speakers 150 exhibitors and 3000 attendees. The focus of the conference will be on lab informatics, digitalisation, IOT and cloud services. To exhibit or attend, click [here](#).

Solutions in Science | Cardiff | 8-10 July 2025

FEEDBACK FROM visitors to the last SinS conference in June 2023 was positive and the next event has now been scheduled to take place in Brighton. The aim of SinS is to showcase complementary and diverse ranges of analytical instruments, technologies, applications and present solutions to scientists from a range of industries and academic disciplines. To book your exhibition stand contact Chris Jarvis chris@intlabmate.com 01727 855574.

YOUR QUESTIONS | OUR ANSWERS

By GAMBICA technical director Andy Evans

Q: Is there still an exemption from RoHS for Mercury in Calomel Electrodes?

A: If your electrodes fall into the category: "Mercury in reference electrodes: low chloride mercury chloride, mercury sulphate and mercury oxide," I'm afraid, the exemption annex IV 1d expired in July 2024 this year.

Q: It looks as if the expired exemption includes Mercury in reference electrodes: low chloride mercury chloride, mercury sulphate and mercury oxide. To be sold probes must have a mass of mercury less than 0.1% of the total weight of the product but is this the total mass of all mercury containing compounds ie the liquid Hg and the total mass of HgCl₂? Or would this just be the actual mercury content ie the just the total of Hg ions excluding the mass of the Cl-?

A: Unfortunately, article 4 states that it is no more than 0.1% of 'homogeneous' material:

2. For the purposes of this Directive, no more than the maximum concentration value by weight in homogeneous materials as specified in Annex II shall be tolerated. The Commission shall adopt, by means of delegated acts in accordance with Article 20 and subject to the conditions laid down in Articles 21 and 22, detailed rules for complying with these maximum concentration values taking into account, inter alia, surface coatings.

And the definition of 'homogeneous' material in article 3(20), definitions:

(20) 'homogeneous material' means one material of uniform composition throughout or a material, consisting of a combination of materials, that cannot be disjointed or separated into different materials by mechanical actions such as unscrewing, cutting, crushing, grinding and abrasive processes;

If this were not the case, then it would mean, for example, that mercury switches could still be used in cars because the weight of the mercury is only a small percentage of the total weight of the car.

EXPORT news

Concern at reducing footfall at Medica



PARTICIPANTS IN the GAMBICA pavilion at Medica almost universally raised concerns about the ongoing reduction in the footfall at the event. Giving the event an average score of 7.85 out of ten, exhibitors felt that the organisers should do more to attract visitors. Suggestions included speed-dating or meeting arrangements to improve the value for exhibitors, a pathology section, more marketing, free visitor passes or providing other inducements to visit. Reduced numbers of exhibitors

was also noted with prominent gaps in almost every hall. Some felt that it would be better to re-purpose unused areas as seating or other amenities rather than just leaving gaps.

“More should be done to attract visitors across from Hall 3 into Hall 1 where the GAMBICA pavilion is sited. We really appreciate the GAMBICA facilities, the event is a marathon across four days so the GAMBICA hospitality area really enhances the event. Gives you a chance to take people off your stand for a coffee or a drink, and to get away yourself for a breather every now and again.”

The feeling that Medica, at four days, is a little too long was also raised by more than one person. “They should reduce the last day,” said one exhibitor, “it’s terribly quiet and it’s mad to have to stay on an empty stand until six in the evening. It means another night’s stay and the hotels in Dusseldorf are extremely expensive.”

Another agreed: “On the last day particularly, there were lots of people coming to sell to us exhibitors. I don’t mind other exhibitors doing it, but when they haven’t even paid for a stand for themselves it’s a bit much.”

With the high costs of hotels at Medica, there seems to be a growing feeling that Medlab ME in Dubai actually presents better value for money for exhibitors, despite the fact that stand space is more expensive. “Medica is losing out to Medlab, partly because the hotel charges here are mad!”

Unfortunately there were some problems with the build at this year's show which caused issues for a number of exhibitors and the Medica app cannot be downloaded and contained a number of errors including wrong stand addresses and difficulty with interrogation as it has to be accessed via the rather patchy wifi.

While some commented that the number of leads generated was lower than in previous years, the average number of leads generated was 72 - the range varied from "Two or three" to nearly 200. Of those who could estimate the amount of business likely to be generated at the event, predicted an average of 140,000 with a range between £15,000 and £250,000.

Despite the complaints however, 12 out of 22 exhibitors questioned said they would certainly return next year, with the rest saying they were likely to do so, depending on the return on investment from this year's show.

UK genomics spotlight launched by DBT

THE DEPARTMENT for Business and Trade, has launched a **Genomics Spotlight** to showcase the UK's expertise in genomics and latest developments that make the UK a hub for genomics business and investment.

The document highlights both the export potential of UK companies, as well as the investment potential across the wider NHS infrastructure and research institutes. This is a reminder of the world leading genomics capabilities we have in the UK, from the NHS Genomic Medicine Service which is the first national healthcare system in the world to offer Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) as part of routine care, to world leading institutions and research cohorts, to the ever-expanding innovation of UK small businesses - the UK has a lot to offer.

The document showcases UK capabilities in genomics, with the aim to promote this sector to markets around the world, to promote UK plc and the healthcare institutions in place. To view the document, click [here](#).

Trade mission Christmas present from Uruguay and Panama



COMMERCIAL OFFICERS from the Department of Business and Trade based in Uruguay and Panama have been in touch with GAMBICA to offer a virtual trade mission to interested companies.

If you would like to be involved, the first step is to send me the HS code of the product you wish to find buyers for. The Commercial Officers will then identify buyers of those products and arrange a meeting with you.

The opportunity will be discussed at GAMBICA's export group meeting on 18th December but if you can't make that, you can still participate by sending your HS code wishlist to Jacqueline.balian@gambica.org.uk.

FedEx bans on mixed packages of electrical equipment and liquids

A MEMBER has brought it to our attention that FedEx has instituted an internal rule banning mixed packages containing both electrical items and liquids from being carried as air freight. The measure has been taken as part of a package designed to increase security measures in planes.

The FedEx protocols now state also require liquids aerosols or gels to be sealed in original packaging. Similarly, electrical and electronic devices must also be in original sealed packaging. FedEx's internal directions to staff are below.

1. Perform open box inspection (including internal boxes), searching for Liquids, Gels and Aerosols (LAGs***) in combination with electrical and/or electronic devices.	
Compare content with shipment description on paperwork	
If, ...	Then, ...
... goods description (AWB/shipment paperwork) and contents do not match	REJECT AND RETURN
... Liquids, Gels and Aerosols (LAGs***) in combination with electrical (i.e. Hairdryer) and/or electronic devices (i.e. Mobile phones, devices with battery) in the same package	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liquids, Aerosols and/ or Gels (LAGs***) sealed in original packaging (e.g. perfume boxes, wine crates)• Electrical and/ or electronic devices in original sealed packaging (e.g. electric parts)	

So, if the liquids or electricals are not sealed in their original boxes and in a package together the package will be rejected.

It seems that the measure has been prompted by the current heightened security concerns, but it may be that you will not face the same strictures from another carrier.

HR news

Could salary sacrifice be a way to mitigate the National Insurance Contribution hike?

THIS MONTH'S *People Management* suggests that salary sacrifice might offer a solution to the increase in the employer national insurance (NI) rate from 13.8 per cent to 15 per cent from April 2025, and the reduction in the income level at which employers start paying NI from £9,100 to £5,000.

Only half of UK businesses use salary sacrifice schemes for pensions but they offer a way for employers to offset some of the increasing costs by maximising savings on NI contributions. Salary sacrifice allows employees to forgo a portion of their salary in exchange for specific benefits, such as pension contributions, cycle-to-work schemes, or medical insurance. These contributions are made pre-tax, effectively reducing taxable income for both the employee and employer.

Employees may still have to pay income tax on the value of benefits as most are taxable and must be reported on form P11D however, there are no employees' NICs on benefits-in-kind. Despite recent reductions in employees' NICs from 12 per cent to 8 per cent, this may still represent a worthwhile exchange for employees.

Certain benefits, particularly pension contributions, are not taxable and are also exempt from NICs which presents an opportunity for both the employer and the employee to gain on the deal. From 6 April 2025, this could represent a 15 per cent saving for the employer. In particular, implementing a salary sacrifice arrangement can offer significant tax benefits for higher earners especially for individuals with incomes between £100,000 and £125,400, as it can help preserve their personal allowance.

Higher income child benefit charge (HICBC) is also based on 'adjusted net income,' which will be reduced by a salary sacrifice, allowing some employees to keep their income below the threshold of £60,000 HICBC and avoid the charge.

However, a salary sacrifice is effectively a contractual pay cut which may affect various aspects of an employee's financial situation including things like maternity pay and mortgage access.

Considerations for lower-paid workers

Lower-paid and part-time workers require special consideration, because if a salary sacrifice takes them below the lower earnings limit for NICs (£125 per week from 6 April 2025), they may not have a qualifying year for benefits and pensions purposes. However, as long as earnings remain at least equal to this limit, employees are treated as having paid NICs so a qualifying year is still achievable, even though no NICs are physically payable.

Salary sacrifice is not permitted to reduce an employee's pay to a level below the National Minimum Wage.

For further information on statutory rates and compensation limits, visit the [CIPD's topic hub](#). Alternatively you can use your free tax, legal and HR helplines from Quest. See the GAMBICA website [here](#).

Company news

New Member brings the graphene revolution to GAMBICA



NEW GAMBICA member, Paragraf, is pioneering the mass-production of graphene-based electronic devices. It has developed a unique, scalable process for producing high-quality, single-atom-thick layer of graphene directly on to

semiconductor wafer substrates, creating a sensing element for a wide variety of sensors and sensor applications. These sensors represent a major advancement over existing technologies, offering greater sensitivity and environmental (e.g., temperature) robustness and linearity of response, while presenting a truly digital result. While uncapped graphene can detect almost any molecule non-specifically, it is the selective membrane that is disposed over the surface that turns the sensor into a highly sensitive specific technology for myriad applications.

Paragraf's main products currently include:

- **Graphene Field-Effect Transistors (GFET)**, which offer versatile molecular sensing capabilities.
- **Graphene Hall Sensors (GHS)**, which measure magnetic fields for the purpose of monitoring position and current flow, while reducing noise and withstanding cryogenic temperatures.
- **Custom Graphene Foundry Services**, which enable the development and large-scale production of next-generation sensors tailored to your specific equipment or product needs.

Mark Davis, Paragraf's Director of Molecular Sensors, emphasises that Paragraf's Field Effect



Transistors (and other derivatives) are suitable for applications ranging from point-of-care diagnostics to central laboratory analyser platforms.

Mark's role is to accelerate the development, and expand the use, of Paragraf's accurate, rapid and easy-to-interrogate biosensors and chemical sensors, which can detect pH, gases, ions, small molecules and nucleic acids, proteins. As a 'deep tech' company, Paragraf serves multiple industries, including the medical, environmental, energy and food sectors, as well as quantum computing, cryogenics and automotive.

Paragraf was spun out from the University of Cambridge in 2015, led by Professor Sir Colin Humphries and researchers Simon Thomas and Ivor Guiney. Simon, now CEO of the company, has attracted over \$100 million in investment funding and has guided the company to its current commercialisation stage.

Mark, a molecular microbiologist, has a strong commercial scientific background and a familial lineage of scientific repute. His father, Professor Paul Davis, was one of the inventors of lateral flow that led to the formation of the Clear Blue pregnancy test and the industry of rapid testing. The innovation emerged from Unilever, based in North Bedfordshire, which is still home to some of the most innovative and effective diagnostics companies in the world that create a hotspot for UK plc.



Having followed the path into lateral flow, delivering multiple companies and innovations into the industry, Mark is now working to bring forward the GFET technology platform as the

next generation detection technology to meet the growing demands for a truly digital sensing solution that can reach from lab to home, at low cost, and high volume to ensure every customer can access results on a fair and equitable basis.

Graphene has been projected as a game-changer for biological sensors almost since its isolation in 2004. Graphene-based sensors are intrinsically digital, eliminating an AtoD conversion step in result reporting along with the infrastructure to achieve this. However, a major challenge to product development has been the lack of sensor consistency inherently created from the method of graphene production. Traditionally, graphene is grown on copper film and transferred to the substrate through a largely manual process, but this process often leaves contamination and causes defects or damage. Paragraf's process is very different, offering a scalable manufacturing process that removes defects and allows

for low-cost production of graphene-based electronics at volume similar to that of the semiconductor industry.

Paragraf's Foundry in Huntingdon, the only graphene semiconductor fabrication facility of its kind in the UK, aims to provide UK partners with best-in-class 2D materials and sensors for a range of applications. "We will create bespoke sensors for every customer—at scale and at a price that is commercially respectful," says Mark.

While the company's foundation is built on graphene, the next phase of success relies on the quality and variety of sensor materials that can be deposited onto the graphene, such as metal and metal oxides, polymers and bioreagents, and to further enhance its capability, Paragraf is already forming cross-industry partnerships to further enhance this technology and accelerate product delivery to market.

Paragraf has joined GAMBICA to connect with like-minded companies that might be interested in technology partnerships. The company also plans to participate in the GAMBICA pavilions at international trade shows, including Medlab in February 2025. Additionally, Mark will be attending the GAMBICA Lab Industry Conference in March. Be sure to say hello!