Understanding & addressing challenges key to new discoveries and breakthrough

As lab managers play a key role in new discoveries and breakthroughs, looking for ways to improve productivity and efficiency in the lab will benefit the companies as well as the pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical industries alike.

« **Tiffani Manolis,** Senior Director for Pharma Strategic Program at Agilent Technologies, San Francisco, California, USA

With well-developed infrastructure, thriving research ecosystem, encouraging measures from both the government and the private sector, as well as a great pool of skilled talent, Singapore has emerged as one of the most advanced biomedical hub in Southeast Asia. It is the choice location for companies to ramp up investments for R&D, drug discovery, development and production of new products to meet the region's healthcare needs.

With a shared goal of improving patients' health, companies focus on pharma researchers' unmet needs to bring innovative solutions to market. Thus, it is imperative to speak with lab managers who dedicates countless of hours just to find the right analyses and diagnosis. Understanding the key challenges and pain points faced by laboratories can help identify unmet needs and key industry trends to provide better healthcare service.

Needs of pharma lab managers

In today's age when efficiency and uncompromising quality is of the essence, laboratory managers need the assurance that the new instruments they purchase for their labs can meet this ever-increasing demand. This is particularly apparent in the pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical industries, where the demand for unwavering quality at an optimal speed is crucial; leaving no room for errors when it comes to pharmacovigilance and bringing new medicines to the market.

Lab managers aims to achieve two particular goals according to Agilent Technologies' Global Lab Manager Survey where 700 respondents (laboratory managers, directors and other key decision makers) commented on their laboratory sustainability goals, staff training, current and future goals productivity and workflow. These are:

1. Obtain higher throughput/productivity

Lab managers are looking for improved efficiency, speed and productivity within their workplaces. The pressures to achieve increasing productivity can be driven by a number of factors; one such factor is the industry trend towards expedited regulatory approval processes (such as the FDA's accelerated approval program), in disease areas where there is a high unmet medical need. When regulators are driving speedier approval processes, it means that labs need to become more productive than ever before, placing significant demands on infrastructure and driving decisions about which instruments lab managers choose to have within their labs.

2. Improve overall system efficiency

In order to achieve greater productivity, pharma lab managers also need to look at ways to improve overall system efficiency, which again reflects the growing pressures that laboratories are under to provide robust results in shorter time frames that ever before. When you think about the additional processes and training that needs to be put in place when instruments are not up and running as soon as possible, with all applications, software and associated consumables as a standard, can help understand the impact that overall system efficiency has on the modern day pharma lab. This also demonstrates the need for a world-class service organisation that intimately understands customer challenges.

When asked about the specific challenges lab managers face, instrument maintenance/downtime is considered one of the top challenges, followed by the complexity of testing requirements, and then time-consuming sample preparation.

To alleviate these concerns, one such example is by bringing customers into the R&D processes and consult them every step of the way to ensure that their concerns are being addressed in the new instruments that are being developed. This means biomedical companies can ensure that any new solutions solve customer challenges. BS