



## ImmunoReagents, Inc.

### Driven by Superior Customer Service

#### Antibodies and the Immune System

Antibodies are Y-shaped molecules produced by the immune system's plasma cells that have the ability to neutralize toxins and pathogens like bacteria or viruses. They were originally described in the late 1800s as the active component of antiserum and a key component of most types of immune response. In the 1970s, scientists developed techniques to produce antibodies outside the body—and in vast quantities. “They are considered ideal research and diagnostic tools to study or detect underlying pathological conditions,” said Dr. Ann Black, founder of ImmunoReagents, Inc.

#### Taking the Entrepreneurial Plunge

Dr. Black worked for almost two decades in antibody development, purification and immunoassay development for companies like drug giant Boehringer Mannheim before she decided to strike out on her own. She was in charge of antibody development and procurement at its Indianapolis facility. She later made a career move to Fortron Bioscience, a developer and manufacturer of polyclonal antibodies, antigens and other biological reagents, to become Vice President of Research and Manufacturing. In 2005, when Fortron decided to sell the company, Dr. Black decided to take the entrepreneurial plunge and launch her own company—ImmunoReagents.

#### Challenge

Enter into global markets and grow international sales

#### NCMEP Solution

Trade show assistance; market entry strategy and advocacy

#### Benefits

Five new employees; \$600k in new sales; \$15k in cost savings

## Providing Custom Antibody Services

Founded in October 2005 in NC State's Technology Incubator on Centennial Campus, the company's initial focus was to develop a line of secondary antibodies which could be customized to meet customer specifications as well as be available in bulk quantities for research and *in vitro* diagnostics. "Our goal was to not only deliver products of superior quality, but to provide outstanding customer service as well," said Dr. Black. "This field is very competitive. One of our greatest strengths has always been our ability to be flexible and to deliver exactly what our clients need through custom antibody services while adhering to strict cGMP guidelines and ISO quality systems requirements."

## Entering the Global Market

With those capabilities in place, the company then branched into the immunodiagnostic market, manufacturing primary antibodies to be used in diagnostic kits for the detection of a variety of human diseases. Business was good, selling mostly to US based universities and organizations in the life sciences market. That all changed when she met John Loyack, by happenstance, at the 2014 BIO International Convention.

She and Loyack, Vice President of Global Business Services at the Economic Development Partnership of NC (EDPNC) and a North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partner (NCMEP), struck up a conversation about services EDPNC offered North Carolina companies interested in entering global markets. Dr. Black discovered EDPNC could help her company in a number of areas, including trade show assistance, market entry strategy, advocacy and more. As a growing company, ImmunoReagents moved quickly and applied for EDPNC's STEP funding.

EDPNC helped ImmunoReagents grow their global sales by connecting them to major international trade shows, foreign distributors for their products and more. Between 2011 and 2014, the percentage of the company's revenue attributable

to international sales grew from 3 percent to 30 percent.

"Without EDPNC, ImmunoReagents would not have been able to travel to Spain, Germany and Dubai, meeting customers in person and developing networks that improve every year," said Dr. Black. "For a small export business, the services they offer are invaluable. In addition, we were able to hire five new employees, saw \$600K in new sales and realized \$15K in cost savings as a result of our association with EDPNC. They also introduced us to the US Department of Commerce."

## Growing a Small Business

ImmunoReagents began with only six products in 2005. Today, the organization offers more than 2000 products to the research and diagnostic marketplace. Regional distributors offer these products not only in the US and Canada, but also in 22 countries in Europe, Asia and Australia.

## Winning a String of Accolades

Dr. Black was recently recognized with the 2018 North Carolina Governor's Export Award. The program recognizes NC companies for international export growth and honors companies whose products and ideas represent North Carolina's strong business reputation around the world.

In 2015, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce presented ImmunoReagents with the President's "E" Award for Exports, the highest recognition any U.S. entity can receive for making a significant contribution to the expansion of U.S. exports.

"We're grateful to the dedication of EDPNC, along with the Office of the Governor and the North Carolina Department of Commerce and to our customers around the globe," said Dr. Black. "We continue to live out our mission to provide quality antibodies and reagents for research and *in vitro* diagnostics, "Because We Care."

## Grow Your Business With Confidence. Contact Us Today.

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NCMEP is administered by NC State Industry Expansion Solutions (IES) and is joined by partners from the North Carolina Community College System; NCWorks Customized Training; the Economic Development Partnership of NC; the Polymers Center of Excellence; the Manufacturing Solutions Center; East Carolina University; UNC Charlotte; and North Carolina A&T University.