



London Technology Network  
Ideas into Action

# Accessing unique expertise via LTN networking event

*Life Science*



CASE STUDY 7

# Life Science

**A London Technology Network event enabled Business Fellow Brendan Wren to make contact with Isohelix, prompting collaboration on a new way of transporting DNA samples.**

Networking events on specific industry topics are held ten times a year by London Technology Network (LTN), and allow connections between business and academia that can result in fruitful and profitable collaborations. LTN Business Fellow Brendan Wren of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine was aware of most companies working with DNA technology, but had not encountered Isohelix until attending a 2003 LTN networking event. Wren explains. "Isohelix is a small company that specialises in extracting DNA... and [later] I was talking to the CEO Dr Ernest Poku about the problem that post-9/11 we can't get hold of pathogens from worldwide sources anymore, because of postal restrictions. But sterile DNA extracted from pathogens, which is required for most downstream processing, can readily be posted." The solution, suggested by Wren, was to devise a DNA extraction kit that could simultaneously sterilise the DNA so that it could be posted. Following only two months of meetings and emails Isohelix offered their support to develop such a kit, in the form of their own funding and through a £10,000 JumpStart grant (achieved later with technical assistance from Wren). Development is almost complete on the pathogen packaging procedure – a new way of treating organisms and extracting their DNA. Isohelix's Ernest Poku said the work being done by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has been invaluable - and swift. "The time's gone very quickly, and Brendan's been very proactive in the research that he's done, as a matter of fact getting into the lab himself, which is unusual for somebody at a professorial level," Poku said. "He's a very interested person in finding a solution and the fact that he's personally brought in the concept of the product is very useful."

For more information on LTN and how we can help your business, contact:

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