

# GAME CHANGERS FOR 60 YEARS

60 years of entrepreneurial adventure

## Episode 2: The 80s, strategic acquisitions

A human, scientific and industrial adventure, the history of bioMérieux has been an incredible family and entrepreneurial story since its creation in 1963.

Embark on a 5-episode journey to discover our 6 decades of commitment to improving health worldwide.

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Late 1970s...

Since the discovery of penicillin in 1928, the range of available antimicrobial agents had grown significantly. Extensive vaccination campaigns also helped reduce mortality, especially among children. One could even dare to dream of a world free from infectious diseases. bioMérieux started to expand internationally with subsidiaries in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany.

On May 8, 1980, the 33rd World Health Assembly officially declared: "The world and all its peoples have won freedom from smallpox."

However, optimism about infectious diseases would be short-lived...

The 80's brings great challenges for the medical world. The AIDS epidemic explodes. Antibiotic-resistant bacteria continue to spread throughout the world.

bioMérieux gears up to meet these major challenges.

In March 1987, it acquires API System. Created in 1969, in France, API system achieved meteoric international success thanks to a revolutionary idea: miniaturized tests allowing rapid bacterial identification.

Philippe Sans, Deputy CEO of Institut Mérieux, was financial controller then, in charge of international affairs: *"At that time, bioMérieux was essentially a company dedicated to reagents and had very little presence in the world of instrumentation whereas API®, due to its reputation, had a relatively strong international presence with various subsidiaries in countries where bioMérieux was not directly established, particularly in England, and we had already had a joint subsidiary with API in Germany. So this was also a factor that contributed to accelerating bioMérieux's European development and strengthening our network of subsidiaries."*

Still produced in France, API® galleries remain a global reference for identification today. Every 30 seconds, an API® gallery is used somewhere in the world!

January 1st, 1989: while the world was celebrating the new year, Alain Mérieux the evening before secretly signed the papers for the acquisition of VITEK® Systems, Inc—the world

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leader in automated bacteriological analysis. The news was greeted with amazement by the world of medical biology.

Philippe Sans explains: *“bioMérieux was completely absent from the North American market, and setting foot in the US starting from nothing is extremely complicated, but suddenly, thanks to the acquisition of VITEK<sup>®</sup>, we established a strong presence in the United States in the field of medical diagnostics.”*

Then another treasure is revealed in this acquisition...

Let's head to the east coast, to a small laboratory in the suburbs of Boston. Designed to detect the presence or absence of a pathogen, an automated immunoassay, VIDAS<sup>®</sup>, is intriguing the bioMérieux teams.

A few weeks of evaluation by the R&D teams is enough for them to understand the full potential of this automated analyzer.

1991: VIDAS<sup>®</sup> is brought to market and causes a revolution in the field of immunoassays!

With its ease of use, VIDAS meets the needs of all types of laboratories to perform specialized and high-medical value analyses in a short period of time and with high quality results.

Even today, with the largest installed base of immunoassay systems in the world, VIDAS<sup>®</sup> remains a benchmark instrument!

Philippe Archinard, Deputy CEO of Institut Mérieux, who at the time worked in bioMérieux's R&D department, remembers: *“In France, no one knew this system. There were only one or two prototypes and it was very manual. Then, in a very short time, it became the success we know today, and the journey was extraordinary and remarkable in every way.*

*You have to understand that within six or eight months of discovery, we announced the launch of the system at the Arche de la Défense. And 18 months after it was discovered, we launched on the market a system with 6 or 8 parameters.*

*So, this journey was unique in many ways—unique in the history of bioMérieux, but also, I think, unique in the history of diagnostics”.*

Beyond their strategic dimension, each of these acquisitions is the result of personal encounters and affinities. bioMérieux strives to preserve the sites and assets of the acquired companies as much as possible in order to give priority to the quality of the projects. To do so, the Company gives them the necessary autonomy and relies on the richness and the expertise of the teams in place.

To daringly create opportunities for growth around the world, to welcome and collaborate with confidence in order to evolve together towards a greater impact for health for all! This has been and still is bioMérieux's winning equation!

In the next podcast, we'll take you to the 90s, a period marked by tremendous business development for bioMérieux. Stay tuned!