

DEVICEALLIANCE

FACILITATING THE SOCIAL
MEDTECH BOOM



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Over the next ten years, Orange County is trending to be one of the fastest growing medical device centers in the world. According to U.S. Dept. of Commerce data, Southern California has provided the highest level of employment to medtech over the past few years. In 2016, Southern California employed 33,000 people, which was twice that of many other medtech centers in the U.S. like New York, Northern California, Minneapolis, and Boston. With such dynamic growth forecasted, medical device companies in Southern California need the best of the best employees to remain competitive while continuing to push the boundaries of technology which serves its patients. The key question then becomes, “What resources are needed to continue elevating today’s medical device leaders while developing the newly emerging next generation of talent?”

THE NEXT LEVEL

In 2009, a group of Southern California medical device executives got together to form a non-profit professionals association called DeviceAlliance to serve as a networking system for the local device community. Two years later, the group had grown to several dozen professionals at which point Travis Smith, a young professional, joined the group.

“I was immediately impressed with how open everyone was, it opened my eyes to a lot of learning opportunities which I wouldn’t have been exposed to in a typical corporate setting. The broad spectrum of expertise was all there in

one community and they truly believed collaboration was their competitive edge. Everyone embraced the axiom of 'paying it forward' and it was contagious." By 2016 Smith had assumed the role of President of DeviceAlliance right as the organization was at a crossroads.

The mission of DeviceAlliance is to be the one-stop-shop at the center of the medical device ecosystem helping drive collaboration, innovation, and career development for all device professionals in Southern California. Yet, with the medical device market quickly growing and evolving to meet global demands, the DeviceAlliance leadership team questioned whether their vision was big enough to make a local impact.

"We did an audit of our community and discovered that our average member carried over 30 years of experience and intellectual capital within medical devices," says Strategic Sponsorship Chair, Scott Johnson. "At the same time, we were beginning to lack a competitive advantage and a legacy plan to help the next generation of

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medical device leaders. We had the components to take DeviceAlliance to the next level, but we had to quickly adapt and evolve or risk becoming irrelevant.”

The leadership team decided on a new goal and mission: to be the premier medical device professionals’ association in Orange County, CA. In order to do this, research and surveys were done with members, universities, strategic partners, and medical device corporations. The conclusions showed that not only was landing a job in medical devices extremely competitive and a difficult goal, but even with the large amount of STEM graduates, a big barrier was the lack of legacy knowledge.

Getting this intellectual capital and legacy knowledge to the community would be accomplished through events offering professional development, which would be the catalyst to innovation excellence. They wanted to develop a local device community, which worked in sync with one another for the betterment of the collective whole, to ensure Orange County medical device remained the foundation of the



industry in the United States. These conclusions led to the decision to become a more inclusive community not focused solely on executives, but the entire scope of medical device professionals. The industry needed the next generation of medical device leaders to be ready for tomorrow's challenges.

THE EDGE

DeviceAlliance began focusing on getting the best resources for insight into key issues and opportunities within the industry. They focused on building unparalleled value to their members through networking programs, mastermind panels, educational programs, strategic collaborations, and mentorship.

Recognizing the trends in Orange County, CA and the need to give medical device graduates an edge, they opened their membership opportunities to students and recent grads in the industry. They focused events on everything from career navigation in the medical device industry (from internship, management, executive, and entrepreneur perspectives) to women in medical devices sharing their experience on

how they manage work and life balance while making enormous impacts in the industry.

The result? They increased attendance to new levels, tripled their membership, and gained recognition from medical device entrepreneurs to Fortune 500 corporations. Today, DeviceAlliance has 19 strategic partners from local universities, startups, and mid-size corporations, to some of the largest in the industry, such as Medtronic.

In June 2018, DeviceAlliance hosted their 2nd Annual Women in Medical Device Event that boasted over 400 ticket requests from the medical device community. The event was the largest event ever in the organization's history, selling out weeks in advance.

For medical device sales representative Creighton Chaney, it was his first DeviceAlliance event. "Honestly, I didn't know what to expect, but I was blown away. The executive panelist stories empowered me to achieve my full potential. The main takeaway for me was that we need to continue to harness the power of mentoring to



achieve specific career and professional goals and do so before I graduate and join the industry.”

THE PROFESSIONALS ACADEMY

During the 2nd Annual Women in Medical Devices event, at the Orange County, CA operating unit of Johnson & Johnson Vision, DeviceAlliance President Travis Smith, made a big announcement which would change the face

and future of the non-profit. “Today I am pleased to announce the launch of our new branded program, DeviceAlliance Professionals Academy! This academy will directly support our mission and vision, while serving the biggest needs of the local industry.”

Smith announced that the first Academy phase launch of the five-year plan would focus on up-and-coming professionals. “Our Young Professionals Committee will focus on building

tomorrow’s medical device leaders through mentorships and career development. This will be followed by launches of other Academy programs focusing on Advanced Education, Career Development, Management, and Entrepreneurs. With the medical device community, DeviceAlliance’s members, and our strategic partners, we look forward to building an Academy that will be the one-stop-shop at the center of Orange County’s medical device ecosystem!”



At the conclusion of the event, hundreds of attendees were discussing the night's panelists, and the buzz surrounding the launch of the DeviceAlliance Professionals Academy. An executive from Medtronic said, "The fact that DeviceAlliance is in a great position to deliver this kind of value to its members is a testament to their passion to help the industry. I'm proud to be a member, now in my second year, and want to

get further involved and learn more."

After the announcement, when Kristin Gabriel, Biomedical PhD student from UC Irvine, was asked why she got involved with the Young Professionals Committee she replied, "No one else is offering these opportunities to students, and after I heard the keys to success from these inspirational women—the time to act is now."

DeviceAlliance continues to operate at the edge of advancing the Orange County, CA medical device industry, looking forward to seeing how they help the community grow and improve in the years to come. From here, it looks like the SoCal medtech community is in good hands.

To learn more or join DeviceAlliance, visit www.devicealliance.org or connect with them @CALifeSciences. ■





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