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Curious About BioVentureHub *Community Members*



Gustav Ferrand Drake,
CEO, Co-Founder, Nyctea Technologies

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We recently had an inspiring conversation with **Gustav Ferrand-Drake del Castillo, CEO and founder at Nyctea Technologies**, to explore his journey, challenges, and the value of being part of BioVentureHub.

Gustav, What inspired you to become an entrepreneur?

My entrepreneurial journey began while I was a PhD student at Chalmers. Together with my supervisor we made a materials science breakthrough. It was a real “eureka” moment because I immediately knew that we succeeded doing something nobody had reported before. Briefly we invented a durable polymer coating that could reliably change its properties using electrical signals that allowed us to bind and release biomolecules on-demand. At first, I was just happy to know that I had been part of contributing with new scientific knowledge. But when we began filing for patents, I realized that I had an opportunity to start a business around this invention. In fact, it was necessary(!) filing for IP is expensive, and we needed to think about commercial applications, create a business plan, think about how this could practically be turned into a product. The real turning point for me was when we thought of the idea to use this invention to solve an important societal problem: cost-effective production of pharmaceuticals! The idea that something we invented in the lab can turn into something useful was, and still is, super inspiring to me.

What’s the biggest challenge you’ve faced, and what did you learn from it?

Managing urgency, persistence and patience. When starting a business there are a thousand things that are urgent. At the end of the day, It's important to focus on the problem you want to solve. It is challenging going from doing academic research which is open and suggestive to product development which has narrow definitions and hard requirements placed by the customer. Focusing on the customer early was important for us to learn what there is a commercial demand for, something we are still practicing of course! Having a background in research is great practice for learning persistence, you have to be willing to keep pushing when your intuition tells you to. But also, to have the wisdom in key moments to realize you are totally wrong and back down! Patience is important because building something valuable takes time. I often overestimate short term productivity. I practice evaluating myself and my colleagues on longer timescales and reflect on the direction we are going.

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What is the most exciting thing happening at Nyctea right now?

We are experiencing great interest in our product! Many pharmaceutical companies are looking for new technology for efficient and environmentally friendly purification of pharmaceuticals, and that is exactly what we deliver!

How has participating in the BioVentureHub community impacted your journey?

We have learned a lot about the customer thanks to our participation in the BVH community. It's impressive and inspiring to see how other companies in the hub have succeeded in scaling up.

If you could give one piece of advice to your younger self, what would it be?

Never stop learning. You still know little, and the best insights often come from unexpected places. Stay curious, stay adaptable, and keep challenging what you think you know.

And finally... What advice would you give your younger self?

Dare to test your entrepreneurial idea as soon as possible with your surroundings. Ask many questions! Be an eager student inside and outside your field of primary field of expertise.

Thank you, Gustav, for sharing your journey and insights!