

# SIBL Makes Good Business Sense



When a beaming **Pamela Grace** talks about her new business BioSoftmosis, Inc, it make you want to find out more about a venture that would inspire infectious joy. As she

enthusies about SIBL's role in launching this software-for-drug discovery initiative, it is clear that she is an embodiment of SIBL's new slogan, "Information You Need to Succeed."

Ms. Grace relied on The New York Public Library before SIBL opened. During her 13-year stint as a scientist at Bell Labs, she became a regular user of the 42<sup>nd</sup> St. STC and EPA collections, plumbing the technical and patent literature. Then, after leaving the lab for a brief stint as a high school teacher in the NYC system, she read something that changed her life: a 2004 FDA report claiming that drug discovery was being impeded by a lack of computer memory to handle the massive amounts of data generated by the Human Genome Project. Grace decided to devote her computer science skills and experience to tackling this technical obstacle with an IT solution.

And 18 months later, BioSoftmosis, Inc. was born with the mission to develop software tools for drug discovery using genomic pathway analysis. Then, by collaborating with genomic researchers at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, 5 patentable ideas were invented.

The founder of BioSoftmosis is the first to tell you that SIBL played a key role in the birth of her company. She cannot praise the staff enough, in particular Laverne Clark and Ross Takahashi whom, she says, "never just answered my initial questions but kept trying to find out more about what I was trying to do at every stage of my search." In the beginning this meant navigating through the patent literature and then using *Computer Select* and *Compindex* find the primary CS journals. When she needed to consult medical titles, SIBL librarians wrote METRO cards for access to the library at Columbia Medical School that were praised by the Columbia staff for their specificity and precision. Grace also attended a class at SIBL taught by Janet Bogenschultz. There, she learned to hone her research skills using the computer science databases, and as a result was able to substantiate her hypotheses that insufficient computer memory, not necessarily computing power, was impeding drug discovery. As a result of her research, the company was invited by Intel to be an Official

Software Partner developing software requiring high-memory.

SIBL really worked as a "one stop shopping" venue when it came time to add business acumen to her technical expertise. Again, it was initially SIBL librarians who taught her the key differences between industry and market research and then exposed her to the incredible print and online resources we've amassed in this area. On to SCORE where she picked up the elements of business plan presentation from more than one experienced counselor with whom she continued to meet for months both here at the library and then at Federal Plaza. SCORE in turn led her to the Business Solutions Center where she Maria Fernandez referred her to a number of economic development and incentive programs.

Grace makes a point of underscoring the fact that in addition to the formal assistance she received from SIBL librarians at service desks and in the classroom and our SCORE and BSC partners, she got a number of profitable leads from the incredible networking that she says takes place on a daily basis in the training classes and public education programs as well as at the laptop docking area which she has used as her New York City office for the past several years.

A suggestion from another aspiring entrepreneur led her to the incubation lab at New Jersey Institute of Technology with some of its many attendant benefits for start-ups, including a commercial lease at \$1.25 per square foot and an \$86 monthly fee for two business phones with unlimited local and long distance access. And it was a chance encounter at the end of one of Jackie Gold's after-work small business seminars that led to her technology partner, SterlingTech, a software development firm.

Pamela Grace can't help but beam again as she wraps up her incredible tale with another networking gem. A the result of SIBL's giving her entrée to Columbia's medical library, an interested staffer at Columbia mentioned her fledging business to a Murray Low, a faculty member at the Columbia Graduate School of Business. Low has made BioSoftmosis the focus of a semester-long case study by his graduate students in his entrepreneurship class and has invited several venture capitalists to attend the business presentation in April. So just as her new CEO will be hiring 7-10 programmers there may be funding from angel backers to bolster the about-to-be announced federal grant funding to take BioSoftmosis to the next phase of its development.



- Kristin McDonough

*Pamela Grace with Janet Bogenschultz and Laverne Clark, two of the SIBL's staff who work with her.*