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TRANSFORMATIONAL GROWTH LEADERSHIP

Shaping the Future of Global Clinical Trials

An Exclusive Interview with

John Moller

CEO of Novotech

in conversation with

Unmesh Lal

Vice President, Frost & Sullivan





How a Biotech-Focused CRO Is Rewriting the Rules of Clinical Development Worldwide

As the biotech sector continues to be the heart of pharmaceutical innovation, contract research organizations (CROs) must evolve to meet its unique needs. In this exclusive conversation, **John Moller**, CEO of **Novotech**, shares how the company's Asia-Pacific roots, global expansion strategy, and deep biotech specialization position it to become the **CRO of choice for biotech and small to mid-sized pharmaceutical companies worldwide.**

Three Major Industry Transformations

Unmesh Lal: *John, let's begin with your take on the top transformations shaping your space.*

John Moller: There are three transformative shifts shaping our industry. First, the growing dominance of biotech and small to mid-size pharma — these players now account for nearly 75% of FDA approvals, with big pharma investing over \$100 billion in biotech acquisitions last year alone. Second, the acceleration of cutting-edge science-like cell and gene therapies, radiopharmaceuticals, and the digital reinvention of clinical trials. And third, the globalization of clinical development, as companies increasingly pursue multi-regional trials much earlier in the drug development lifecycle.

From Regional Roots to Global Reach

Unmesh Lal: *What's your five-year vision for Novotech?*

John Moller: We aim to be the global CRO (Contract Research Organization) of choice for biotech and small to mid-size pharma. Unlike larger CROs that attempt to straddle — both biotech and big pharma, our focus is singular and purpose-built. With a team of over 3,000 employees, and deep operational roots in Asia Pacific, we have established a strategic advantage that continues to drive differentiated value. We are now expanding heavily into North America and Europe, targeting a globally balanced presence of 7,000–8,000 staff. What makes us unique? We are built for biotech and small to mid-size pharma from the ground up, not reshaped for it.

Frost & Sullivan's Transformational Growth Leadership Program aims to honor visionary business leaders who possess the foresight and leadership acumen to drive positive change within their organizations and industries. The leaders we celebrate hail from diverse sectors and company sizes, yet they all share an unwavering commitment to innovation and excellence.

Advancing the Next Wave of Innovation: Oncology, RNA, and Rare Diseases

Unmesh Lal: *What are your key growth opportunities?*

John Moller: It's about being at the forefront of biotech innovation — particularly in high-impact areas such as: oncology, rare diseases, RNA therapeutics, radiopharmaceuticals, and vaccines. We are scaling our deep site relationships globally while strategically investing in AI and advanced data platforms to enhance predictability, quality, and speed of clinical trials.



“ In five years, AI will be the cornerstone of clinical trial design — from writing protocols to identifying subgroups in failed clinical trials that could still benefit from the molecule. The Watson dream is finally real, but this time, it’s scalable, affordable, and transformative.”

— John Moller, CEO, Novotech

The Real-World AI Advantage: Moving Beyond Flash to Drive Results

Unmesh Lal: *How are you using AI beyond the buzz?*

John Moller: The true value of AI lies in “boring but powerful” efficiencies. Whether its automating trial master file documentation or accelerating protocol development with natural language tools — reducing four days of work to four hours. Our strategy is to align with scalable general-purpose AI platforms from leaders like Microsoft and OpenAI because that’s where the enterprise-grade impact and long-term ROI truly resides.

Precision Medicine: Promise and Practicality

Unmesh Lal: *Where do you see the promise of precision health going?*

John Moller: Cell and gene therapies, despite their cost, are incredibly promising — especially for rare diseases. While CAR-T therapies captured early attention, next generation variants are emerging with improved safety profiles to reduce side effects. At the same time, some ultra-personalized therapies are fading due to complexity and safety concerns. Looking ahead, we believe selective precision medicine, powered

by real-world evidence and patient-level analytics, will define the future.

Risk and Resilience: Navigating Geopolitical Tensions

Unmesh Lal: *What challenges are on your radar?*

John Moller: Recent tariff actions have prompted a strategic reassessment of cross-border trials. We are actively engaged in scenario planning on regionalizing trials, analyzing geopolitical risk by sponsor country, and adjusting operations accordingly. While globalization has long been the theme, today’s environment demands a flexible regionally resilient approach to ensure continuity and regulatory alignment.

Strategic M&A and Regional Expansion

Unmesh Lal: *Is your growth organic or via M&A?*

John Moller: Both. North America will likely involve a transformational acquisition, while Japan is being considered for either organic or inorganic growth. We are also exploring LATAM (Latin America), though political volatility affects prioritization.

Built for Biotech: Brand Position and Culture

Unmesh Lal: *How do you want sponsors to see Novotech?*

John Moller: We are a CRO purpose-built for biotech and small to mid-size pharma with Asia-Pacific DNA and global execution power. Unlike traditional CROs designed around big pharma our focus is singular — we serve over 1,000 biotech and small to mid-size pharma clients. They value speed, flexibility, and transparency. Our systems, SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures), and culture are optimized for fit-for-purpose partnerships, not bloated bureaucracies.

Trusted Partner, Not Just a Vendor

Unmesh Lal: *What's your approach to client experience?*

John Moller: We go beyond transactional execution — we embed ourselves into biotech teams. We assign executive sponsors, conduct real-time client feedback at multiple trial stages, and gather insights directly from project leadership. Clients often say: “**Your team acts like they are part of our company.**” That's exactly what we aim for.

Innovation at Scale: Fail Fast, Learn Faster

Unmesh Lal: *How do you drive innovation?*

John Moller: We run 60–80 internal projects at any time — process improvements, AI pilots, you name it. Success is great, but we also have clear “fail fast” criteria. The hardest part? Letting go of ideas you are emotionally invested in. But we stay hungry because we know we can outperform bigger, slower competitors.

Backed to Scale: Private Equity and the Path Ahead

Unmesh Lal: *With private equity involvement, what's next?*

John Moller: We are backed by TPG Capital, GLC, and Temasek — that gives us firepower and confidence. We have proven ourselves since 2017, and now with over \$2 billion in backing, we are ready to scale thoughtfully. Our culture, talent, and innovation roadmap are our biggest assets.

Final Thoughts: Staying Human in a Tech-Driven World

Unmesh Lal: *What excites you most — and what keeps you up at night?*

John Moller: In five years, AI will be central to trial design. LLMs (Large Language Models) will generate protocols, refine inclusion criteria, and flag subgroups in failed trials that still show promise. What IBM Watson once dreamed of — AI-assisted clinical insights — is now possible, scalable, and real. That's the transformation I believe will change everything.



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Annexure: Exploring the Future of Biotech CROs

For a deeper understanding of the evolving biotech CRO landscape, explore Frost & Sullivan's in-depth analyses:

- ▶ [Growth Opportunities in Global Pharmaceutical Clinical Contract Peripheral Services, 2025–2030](#) →
- ▶ [Growth Opportunities in Drug Discovery and Early Development Outsourcing Services](#) →
- ▶ [Growth Opportunities in Global Contract Research Organization \(CRO\)](#) →
- ▶ [Innovative AI-Enabled Clinical Trial Companies: Strategic Profiling and Growth Opportunities](#) →



John Moller | CEO of Novotech

John Moller is the CEO of Novotech, a leading global CRO focused on biotech and small to mid-sized pharma. Since 2017, he has led Novotech's strategic expansion across North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific. He originally joined as COO for Asia in 2014, driving regional growth and delivery capabilities. Prior to Novotech, John held leadership roles at IVF Australia and Virtus Health and was a consultant with BCG and Partners in Performance. He holds an MBA from Oxford, a medical degree from the University of Auckland, and a BA in Philosophy from the University of Canterbury. Under his leadership, Novotech has earned multiple industry awards, including Frost & Sullivan's CRO of the Year, recognizing its biotech-driven, high-quality clinical development model.



Unmesh Lal | Growth Coach and Vice President, Healthcare & Life Sciences at Frost & Sullivan

Unmesh Lal brings over 20 years of experience in healthcare strategy and consulting, with a focus on global life sciences and precision health. He specializes in identifying transformative technologies, innovative business models, and growth opportunities across pharmaceutical contract services. A recognized thought leader, Unmesh has authored key industry insights and presented at leading global events including J.P. Morgan, Bio-Asia, and Bio-IT World. He holds a master's degree in biomedical engineering from the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor.

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