

Kevin Cook

At Sterling, our highly experienced team members and their passion for what they do are central to who we are. This month, we spoke with Kevin Cook, Chief Executive Officer, to learn more about his vision for Sterling.

Can you briefly describe your background and role at Sterling?

I completed my degree in Chemistry at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. I then started my career in contract manufacturing with Robinson Brothers as a trainee Plant Manager, and eventually, progressing to a Senior Plant Manager. My focus here was on fine chemical manufacturing, and I had opportunities to work on several hazardous and complex manufacturing projects. I then worked as a Plant Manager for Boots Pharmaceuticals, after which I joined Sterling Organics, which is now Sterling's Dudley site.

I held various operational leadership roles over the years as the site went through changes in ownership, before ultimately becoming the President of Shasun Pharma Solutions. From there, I oversaw the launch of Sterling Pharma Solutions as an independent CDMO in 2016 and was appointed CEO. It has been my goal to really position ourselves as a western based provider of small molecule API services to the pharma industry and create a business built on good values.

What is your vision for Sterling?

My vision from Sterling's inception has been to solidify our position as a preferred outsourced partner for API services. The Dudley site has always been very well known for its chemistry excellence and specialisation in complex and hazardous projects, and I wanted to ensure this would remain a key differentiator for Sterling. We've continued to invest in new technologies, facilities and equipment, and form partnerships with leading academic institutions to advance our focus on innovation.

I also wanted Sterling to be different from other outsourced providers. It was important to me to build a strong culture of service and collaboration. I worked with team members across functions to develop our core values: Be caring, Be transparent, Be willing, Be reliable. These are straightforward but highly relevant within the organisation, and they guide what we do to this day. Caring is especially important to us, as it applies to our employees, our community, our stakeholders, and our customers. We wanted to ensure that doing the right thing remained central to our culture.



Fast Facts

ROLE

Chief Executive Officer

YEARS AT STERLING

27

EDUCATION

University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne

SPECIALISATIONS

Pharmaceutical manufacturing, business development, process improvement, supply chain management

How have acquisitions played a part in Sterling's continued focus on innovation?

From the beginning, we were very aware that a significant portion of global pharmaceutical innovation is based in North America. As a result, expanding our presence to the United States was top-of-mind.

Our first acquisition since Sterling's formation came in 2019 with our Cary, North Carolina site. This site is highly specialised in early phase projects, and it not only expanded our geographical presence to the US, but also provided an opportunity to work with more emerging biotechnology organisations. In addition, it has enabled us to expand our end-to-end service offerings. As a project scales at Cary, we can then transfer it to Dudley or Germantown for larger scale manufacturing, providing a seamless, full-lifecycle experience for our customers.

Through all of these acquisitions, we are working really hard to create One Sterling. We do not want merely a collection of facilities, but an integrated organisation that delivers high levels of consistency and continuity to our customers.

Then, we acquired our Germantown, Wisconsin site in 2020. This site is right within our area of expertise, with strong development, scale-up, and commercialisation capabilities for small molecules. The facility also delivers expertise in high potency APIs with specialised cGMP containment suites. HPAPIs have been in high demand across the industry and within our customer base in recent years, and the Germantown site has enabled us to provide a robust offering in this area.

Finally, we most recently acquired ADC Biotechnology, based in Deeside, Wales. People are often a bit surprised by this acquisition, as they may see antibody drug conjugates as deviating from our small molecule focus. In my opinion, this acquisition is integral to our culture of innovation. We are exploring opportunities to handle more stages of the ADC lifecycle, including toxin manufacture, coupling our small molecule capabilities with the bioconjugation competencies at Deeside.

Through all of these acquisitions, we are working really hard to create One Sterling. We do not want merely a collection of facilities, but an integrated organisation that delivers high levels of consistency and continuity to our customers. Most importantly, we are committed to developing a strong culture across all of our sites. We want our team members at each of

our facilities to share our commitment to service, passion and science.

What plans do you have in store for Sterling in the near future?

Over the next few years, I hope to continue expanding our capabilities and upholding our culture of innovation. We also continue to consider changes within the industry and our customers' evolving needs to enhance our offerings in new technologies. Our Technology and Innovation Programme is a prime example of this, as we've established strong partnerships with universities and technical institutions to apply novel technologies in our customers' projects. To date, this has been demonstrated by our work in a variety of technologies including flow chemistry and biocatalysis.

Investment in people is also really critical to us, as our team members are central to everything we do. This includes youth development through apprenticeships and internships as well as continual training and development offerings for existing employees. We want to equip all of our team members with the tools they need to remain successful in their roles at Sterling and continually grow.

What sets Sterling apart from other CDMOs?

I touched on several things that set us apart, including our focus on technology and innovation, complex and hazardous chemistry expertise, and our investment in people. Above all, however, I believe that our interaction with customers is what really sets us apart.

I think that our customers learn the most about Sterling through our approach to problem solving. Challenges will inevitably arise in any project; it is the way we work diligently to find solutions while maintaining full transparency with our customers that truly differentiates us.

We always strive to be easy to do business with and serve as true partners to each of our customers, which is why we call ourselves a PDMO, or partnership development and manufacturing organisation. I think that our customers learn the most about Sterling through our approach to problem solving. Challenges will inevitably arise in any project; it is the way we work diligently to find solutions while maintaining full transparency with our customers that truly differentiates us. We always aim to remove the layers of complexity that can come with engaging an outsourced partner to instead be an organisation that our customers truly want to work with.



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