



# Cleantech Forum San Francisco

San Francisco | January 22-24, 2018





Cleantech Forum  
**San Francisco**

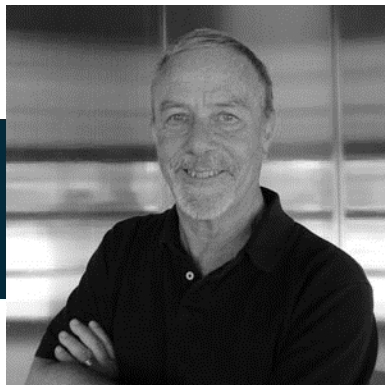
# Entrepreneur Coaching





# Cleantech Forum | San Francisco

## Entrepreneur Coaching



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# Cleantech Pilots: Knocking Down Barriers



Silicon Valley's Leading Cleantech Innovation Hub



# ProspectSV Mission

## Accelerate the adoption of clean technologies in



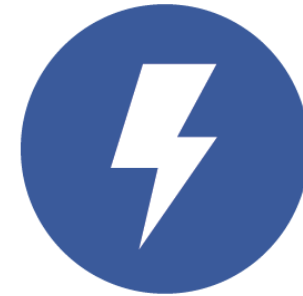
### Mobility

New ways of moving  
people and goods.



### Buildings

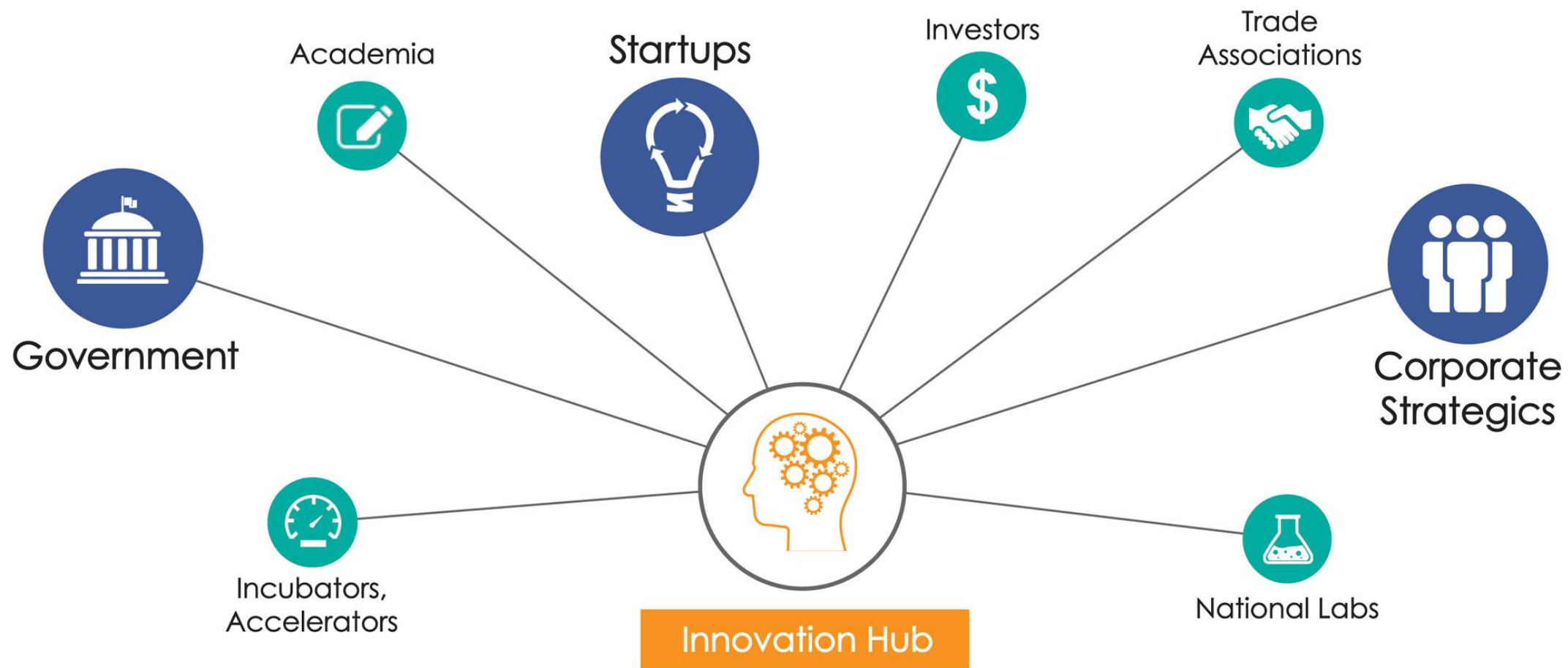
More efficient  
commercial buildings.



### Energy

New approaches to  
distributed energy &  
grid management.







# Why Pilots?

- De-risk technology in real world setting
- Lay groundwork for conversion to sales
- Proof: for investors and customers

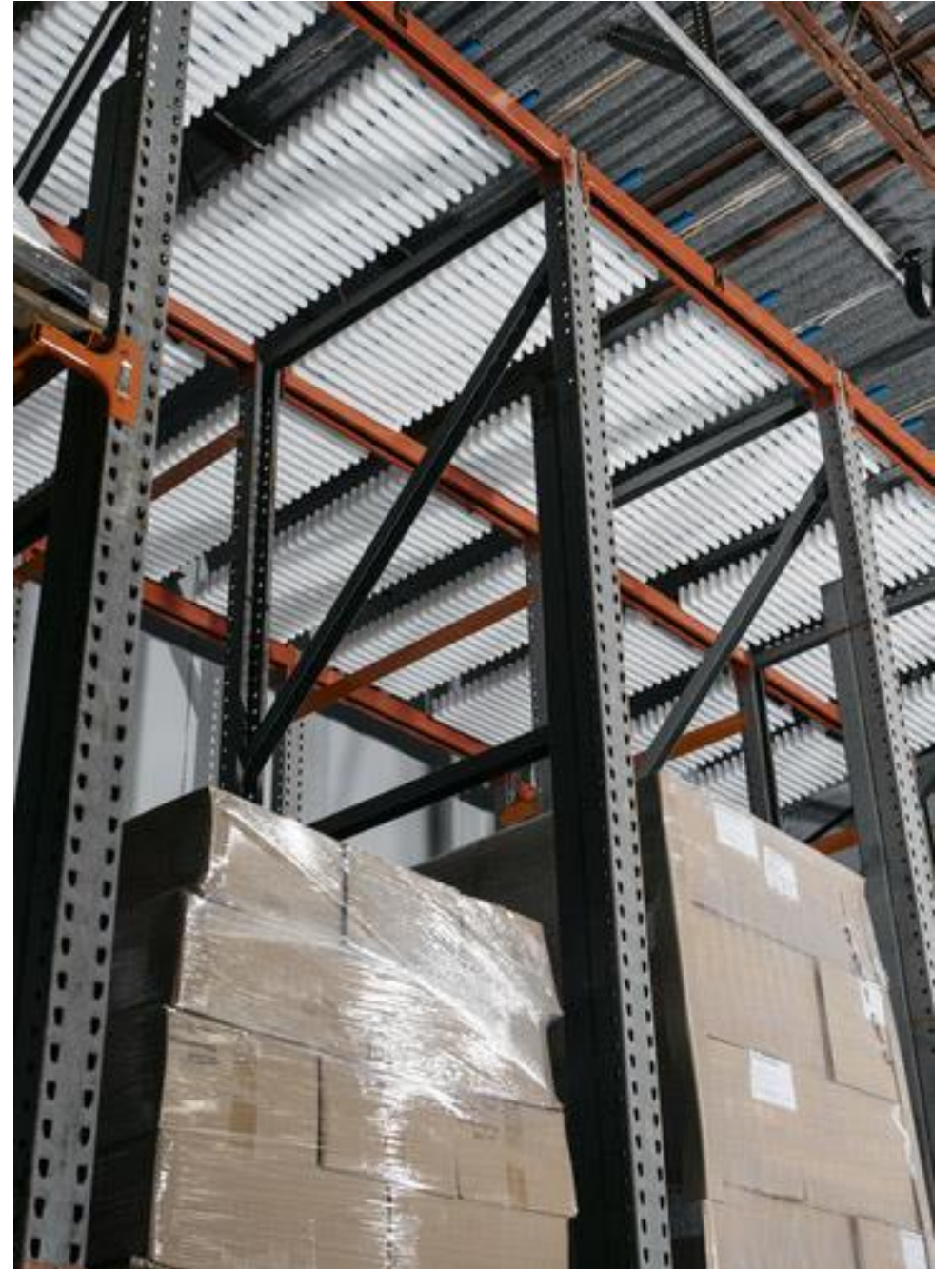
But getting pilots is challenging!



# Viking Cold and Whole Foods

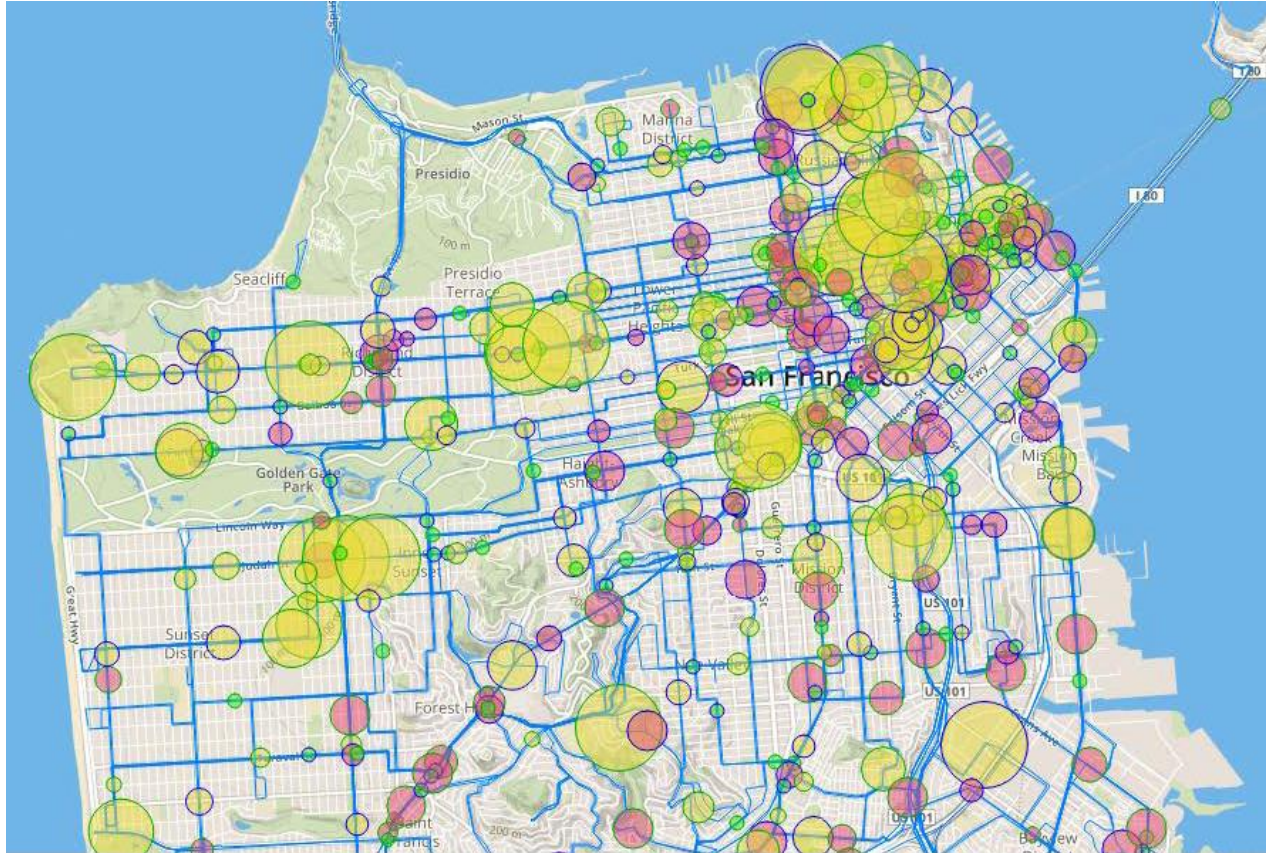


CALIFORNIA  
ENERGY  
COMMISSION





# Viking Cold and Whole Foods



Swiftly



Santa Clara Valley  
Transportation  
Authority



# Viking Cold and Whole Foods





# Knocking Down Barriers

1. Be clear about what you need to test and site requirements
2. Match with target market(s)
3. Find a champion who wants to work with you
4. Be able to articulate benefits of the pilot (some may not be obvious)
5. Get help and referrals to identify pilot partners
6. Be alert to opportunities



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A hand is shown drawing various business-related diagrams on a chalkboard. The diagrams include a bar chart with three bars of increasing height, a line graph with an upward arrow, a wavy line, and a zigzag line. The word 'MARKET' is written in a circle, and 'Growth' is written next to an upward arrow. The background is a purple gradient.

# THE 8 MOST IMPORTANT CONCEPTS TO REMEMBER WHEN RECRUITING

for start-ups and early stage companies



## TALENT ACQUISITION AND ADVISORY FOR THE NEW ENERGY ECONOMY



Enertech Search Partners is a boutique talent acquisition and advisory firm that has been a partner to some of the most compelling emerging and market leading technology companies in the new energy economy, with a particular focus on distributed energy resources, emobility and smart infrastructure, energy finance and evolving business models such as transactive energy and blockchain.

**T REX**

 **SUNVERGE**

 **Grid4C**  
Foreseeing Power

 **eMotorWerks**  
An Enel Group Company

**stem**

Energy Superintelligence™

**-chargepoint+**

**FIRST FUEL**

**SUNPOWER**

**centrica**





YAHOO!



Google

amazon

**WHEN WE TALK ABOUT ICONIC STARTUPS, WE LOVE TO FOCUS ON THE  
INCREDIBLE IMPACT OF A PROMETHEAN CEO**

But what about the rest of the team?





IN THE VENTURE CAPITAL INDUSTRY, THEY TALK A LOT ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOUNDING TEAM. BUT YOU MIGHT UNDERESTIMATE, ESPECIALLY IN THE EARLY STAGES, SOMETHING THAT MIGHT BE AS IMPORTANT AS YOUR DRIVE, SOFT SKILLS AND STRATEGIC PROWESS:

**YOUR ABILITY TO RECRUIT AN A-CLASS TEAM.**

***BOTTOM LINE:*** *The venture community will be looking for a cohesive and reality based plan around talent acquisition*  
*– do you have one?*



***QUOTE: "I TALK TO HIGH-GROWTH STARTUPS EVERY DAY AND I KEEP HEARING VERSIONS OF 'COMPARED TO RECRUITING, FUNDRAISING WAS EASY'."***

Your first five hires pretty much pick themselves, but getting from 5 to 50 is an entirely different ballgame.



1

## YOU'RE NOT THAT COOL

What they are really saying after the interview





OUR NATURAL INCLINATION IS TO BELIEVE THAT ANY AND EVERY CANDIDATE SHOULD WANT TO WORK FOR OUR COMPANY. HOWEVER, THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF ANY JOB OPENING, IS TO ASK YOURSELF IF YOUR JOB IS ONE THAT THE BEST CANDIDATES WILL BE DRAWN TO.

- > It's a very competitive market
- > You have to sell candidates
- > What's your attractivity rating?



2

PURPLE SQUIRRELS DON'T EXIST

Quit chasing them





AH YES, THE HUNT FOR THE MYSTICAL, ALL-INCLUSIVE PURPLE SQUIRREL, WHO WILL BE ABLE TO HANDLE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF NOT ONE, BUT TWO (OR MORE!) ROLES. LET ME CUT THAT CHASE SHORT FOR YOU — MORE THAN LIKELY, THAT PERSON DOESN'T EXIST.

- > If they exist – you likely can't afford them
- > The process will suck up your time and resources
- > Sophisticated recruiters will not help you



3

## YOUR DOPPELGANGER

Why you shouldn't hire people just like you





ITS VERY COMMON TO HAVE A COGNITIVE BIAS TOWARD PEOPLE WHO'VE DONE THINGS YOU'VE DONE, SAY THINGS YOU'VE SAID, AND THINK ABOUT THE WORLD THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT THE WORLD, BUT THAT'S CAN BE DANGEROUS.

- > Be self-aware
- > Fill the gaps and blind spots
- > Diversity is always better
- > Hire people who are smarter than you



4

## IT'S THE PROCESS, STUPID

Why you shouldn't act too much like a start-up





DON'T ASSUME THAT THE HIRING PROCESS IS SEPARATE FROM YOUR COMPANY AS A WHOLE. IT ISN'T. YOUR APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT WILL REPRESENT YOUR EMPLOYER BRANDING TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

- > Have a clear set of requirements
- > Words matter – clearly define them
- > Make sure other internal interviewers are prepared – get buy in
- > Don't leave candidates "in the dark" for more than 3 days



5

## REVERSE ENGINEERING

Why you should choose function over form





I AGREE YOU NEED TO BE PRAGMATIC ABOUT BUDGETS, ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE BOOTSTRAPPING, BUT NEVER SETTLE ON A MEDIOCRE HIRE. THERE'S NO PURPOSE IN WINNING A BATTLE BUT LOSING THE WAR.

- > Don't focus on the title, focus on the function
- > ABP – Always be pipelining
- > Always hire 1 “A” over 2 “B”,s
- > Be willing to stretch for a rockstar



# 6

## WHAT'S UNDER THE HOOD

Why its so important to understand candidate motivation





ATTRITION IS A REALITY OF START-UP LIFE, BUT THE EXIT OF A TEAM MEMBER AT A CRITICAL HOUR AFFECTS THE MORALE AND SPIRIT OF THOSE WHO STAY, WHICH CAN TAKE MONTHS TO BOUNCE BACK FROM. ALL BECAUSE YOU HIRED A PERSON WHO NEVER REALLY WANTED WHAT YOU WANT.

- > What is their time horizon – are they looking for a quick exit?
- > Are they more interested in building a team than being “hands-on”
- > What is their risk tolerance - did they negotiate hard for a severance package or guarantee?
- > Do they NEED a job?



7

## CULTURE CLASH

Why top-grading should be part of your culture





EVERY FOUNDER WANTS TO BELIEVE THEY WILL TAKE THEIR START-UP TO EXIT WITH THEIR ORIGINAL FOUNDING TEAM, BUT THE REALITY IS YOU WILL LIKELY HAVE TO MAKE VERY TOUGH DECISIONS ABOUT UPGRADING CERTAIN POSITIONS – IF YOU DON'T YOUR BOARD WILL.

- > Recognize that the team you started with, isn't necessary the team you'll need 2 years from now.
- > Series B can be a tricky time for talent acquisition – culture will likely shift with the need to scale – don't be afraid it – embrace it.
- > Understand your limits and be actively engaged with your Board.



8

**WE DON'T NEED A RECRUITER**

We have LinkedIn





TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA HAS CERTAINLY OPENED THE DOOR FOR MANY COMPANIES TO GET THE WORD OUT ABOUT THEIR JOBS, BUT UNLESS YOU ARE PLANNING TO HIRE PEOPLE WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED, BELIEVE ME YOU NEED A GOOD RECRUITER. TRUE MATCHMAKING IS STILL MORE AN ART THAN A SCIENCE.

- > Consider the business model – contingency, retained, retingency
- > Always work with a specialist
- > In the early stages, you need a partner, not a vendor.
- > Find a firm that will be an extension of your team in order to really extract value





# REMEMBER

Human Capital is as valuable as Financial Capital – treat it that way

Find a partner not a vendor when considering outside help in attracting talent



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# Positioning to maximize value: strategy, differentiation, messaging

Cleantech Forum SF

January 22, 2018

Steve Weiss

Co-founder

Grey Heron





# Your markets are crowded!... must stand out

*for example.....*



Source: Towards a Distributed, Digital and Flexible Energy System, 2017 Global Cleantech 100 Report



# About Grey Heron:

*translating technology into substantive businesses*

- 24 years, 130+ clients
- Strategy, marketing/positioning/differentiation, fund-raising, interim executive, advisory
- Strategic BD, M&A, turnarounds
- Objective: build value

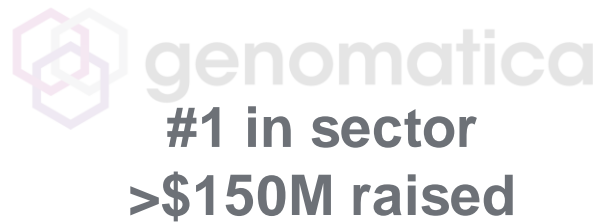


# Examples, big and small: projects and/or long-term relationships





# Examples, big and small: projects and/or long-term relationships





# Three key ideas, and then three stories

what's  
different?

synch

reinforce



# “made drywall sexy”

**SERIOUS ENERGY**





# What was interesting?

- Unexpected
- Ginormous market
- Operating results(!)
- Intriguing appetizer opened door for bigger entrees





credibility, visibility, leadership – against backdrop of failures



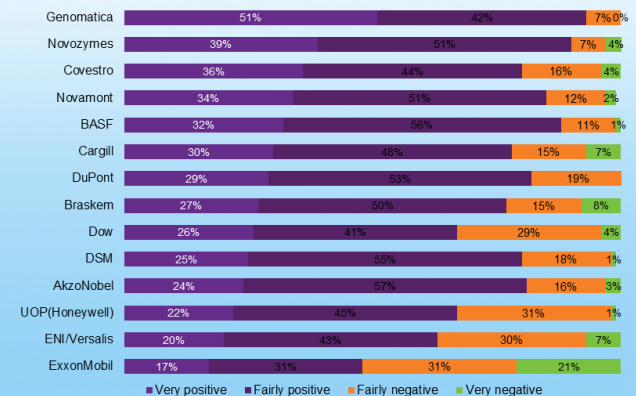


# What was interesting?

- Enable bigcos vs fight bigcos
- Minimal capex!
- Consistent messaging
- Continually build reputation



## Genomatica, Novozymes and BASF have highest positive impression in sustainability technology



Q32: What is your overall impression of the following companies with regard to sustainability technology?  
Source: ICIS Chemical Business survey of mainstream chemical industry, November 2017



# Differentiation on the back of a card

core purpose as genuine reflection of strategy





# Power a zillion IoT devices

- Printed, ultrathin, flexible batteries – non-lithium





# What was interesting?

- “they go big, we go small”
- Focus on best apps
- Strategy to capture greater share of value created
- Leverage bigcos; avoid capex





# So: what's “messaging”?

- Messaging = strategy; strategy = messaging
- Good messaging is: real, supportable, relevant, differentiated, clear – “hangs together” / makes sense



# Messaging is a journey

- “Find the nuggets”: what’s special, what do audiences respond to, build story, “fire-harden”
- Start with a coherent “*About Us*” paragraph
- You’re in a *long-term dialog* with your audiences to build understanding; think sequencing and validation
- Messaging *evolves*, along with market, products
- Credibility counts; easily-damaged; manage with care



# Delivering your message: create a marketing programs overview

<i>Announcements</i>	Your news pipeline: corporate, product, market, partners, technical...
<i>Speaking/conferences</i>	Who you're trying to reach and why, matched to when your story is relevant
<i>Awards</i>	"Impedance-match" to your evolution
<i>Visibility / thought leadership</i>	Find creative ways to break out



# Some additional lessons

- Specifics are always good: credibility-builders
- Avoid exaggeration: credibility-deflators
- Be honest with yourselves, especially re comparisons
- Be clear re vision vs. current status



In closing...





Many thanks!  
Email me with questions



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