

## Entrepreneurial ID «venture leaders» 2008

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«Project»: [Epithelix Sàrl](#), Provider of innovative in vitro solutions for respiratory diseases and chemical testing

Industry: Bio-tech



### *The venture leader*

To transform an idea into sustainable business while having fun was what drove me to become an entrepreneur. Since the beginning of my university studies, I have been fascinated by entrepreneurs. I believed that it is truly rewarding to create a business from scratch and to make it grow. Since it was an evidence for me, I prepared myself by reading books, attending training courses and meetings. I held the position of President of the association "Entreprendre Total CPE" in 2000 whose aim was to raise entrepreneurial spirit along young students by organizing annual contest of creation of enterprises.

Upon finishing my Ph.D. at the University of Geneva, with three colleagues, we decided to value one invention we found by transforming it into a real business. This was the starting point of our fantastic adventure: Epithelix. I personally never felt so satisfied since we created the company. I take advantage of my research experience and education from Tokyo Institute of Technology, University of Hull and the Ecole Supérieure de Chimie Physique et Electronique de Lyon. My business skills were further strengthened with trainings and seminars provided by venturelab.

### *The Company / project*

Epithelix Sàrl is a Swiss biotech start-up company specialized in tissue engineering. The laboratories of the company are located in Plan-les-Ouates, near Geneva.

Epithelix provides innovative R&D solutions for the study of human diseases and for toxicity testing of chemicals, while reducing the number of animal experiments based on its premium technology.

Founded in March 2006, the company develops, produces and sells reconstituted *in vitro* human tissues. Epithelix also offers to research laboratories and chemical, cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries high-throughput screening services and testing of chemicals, based on its unique *in vitro* cell models. Since its creation, Epithelix has built its reputation as an innovative company, with high quality product, and with some notoriety on the market. Media (The Economist, Le Temps, CASH, Agefi...), prizes and awards (CTI label, Liechti prize 2007, Nominee of De Vigier Prize 2007, World Technology Award 2006, Naëf prize, BioInnovation Prize, Venture Business Plan McKinsey&Company 2006) and conferences, have also contributed to Epithelix's reputation. Its products are penetrating the market with a remarkable speed. Furthermore, Epithelix has secured partnerships with two leading distributors. We have relocated to new production facilities at the end of 2007.

We are preparing for a European validation (in about 3 three years from now). Once validated, our model will become a standard for *in vitro* inhalation toxicity testing of chemicals. Since there are more than 30'000 chemical compounds that need to be tested, our objective in five years is to reach CHF 24 Millions of annual sales, and to employ about 35 people.

We are looking for partners as well as customers in United States.