



# Bold Growth at BioAscent

Chloe Carter, Titian Software Ltd

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## ABOUT BIOASCENT

BioAscent has seen huge changes to its business since the Contract Research Organisation (CRO) was founded in 2013. Back then, it focussed purely on compound management and nearly all of its business was working for the European Lead Factory international consortium. Now, the bulk of its compound management services are to commercial companies, mainly small virtual biotech and medium biotechs. BioAscent has grown enormously in the last two years – so much so that in March 2020 it won an Alantra Pharma Fast 50 award as the UK's fastest-growing drug discovery CRO.



In the summer of 2018 we had a step change. We expanded to offer full contract drug discovery services.

We raised £1.6 million and employed a highly experienced team of biologists and medicinal chemists.

**Dr Mike Piper**

BioAscent, Chief Commercial Officer

This growth has been driven by both existing and new services. Dr Mike Piper continues;

**“The compound management part of the business has grown enormously over the last two years – in fact over the last four years. Essentially revenue doubled from 2017 to 2018, and doubled again for 2019, just for the commercial part of compound management.”**

And the most important part of the compound management business for BioAscent is managing its customers' libraries.





## MOSAIC SOFTWARE: HELPING BIOASCENT RISE TO THE CHALLENGES OF A CHANGING MARKET

Since its foundation, BioAscent has used Titian Software's Mosaic sample management to underpin its services by managing its inventory, sample processing and audit trail. Mosaic also tracks libraries BioAscent holds for customers and lies behind BioAscent's Compound Cloud – its popular on-demand service providing IP-free access to lead-like pharma compounds.

Co-founder and Chief Operations Officer  
Dr Sylviane Boucharens explains:

**"First it helps us in our daily work at BioAscent. Without Titian's Mosaic we would probably need more people. Also, it's been quite a good tool to sell the service. Titian's Mosaic is well established and it's a guarantee of quality."**

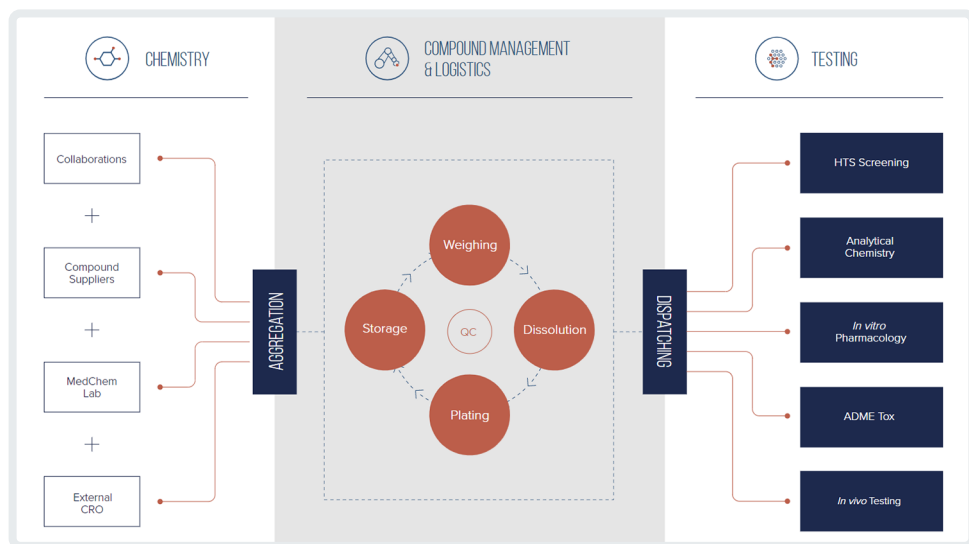
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**Dr Sylviane Boucharens**

BioAscent, Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer





Titian's Mosaic software underpins BioAscent's compound management and logistics services

## SUPPORTING COMPOUND MANAGEMENT AT BIOASCENT

- Mosaic software provides a recognised level of process quality that helps to sell BioAscent's services
- The comprehensive audit trail helps to resolve any queries on unexpected results
- Data quality is higher as Mosaic's integration with other systems avoids manual data handling
- Mosaic can help to scale up operations without increasing staffing levels
- The accuracy of BioAscent's inventory brings peace of mind to customers

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**It's a very reliable system and it ticks all the boxes we need to work efficiently with our clients**

**Dr Sylviane Boucharens**

## SUPPORTING THE COMPOUND MANAGEMENT VALUE PROPOSITION

BioAscent's value proposition is to deliver a big pharmaceutical grade compound management and logistics service with transparency, at a cost-effective price. For customers, it means they don't need to keep that expertise in-house and they don't need to buy all the equipment. They know that their compounds are looked after properly, and they have complete transparency on their inventory.

**"We really have everything in Mosaic" says Dr Boucharens. "We have it integrated with quite a lot of hardware".**

This includes liquid handlers, balances, Brooks stores and robotics, Dotmatics software and a new £500,000 investment in automation currently under way. Direct integration with Mosaic is the standard at BioAscent.

**"Because as the team becomes bigger and bigger – and the level of understanding about the way the liquid handler works and how to extract the data may be different from one user to another – we prefer to have these devices integrated online. For every liquid handler we are using, we have an API and Mosaic pilots the activity".**

She notes there is one big reformatting platform which has never been integrated because it was purchased in 2009, before Titian, HighRes and Labcyte (now Beckman Coulter) worked together. It requires lots of time dedicated to data handling.

**"That's why we go for online integration: more robust data handling and the ability to provide the client with files very quickly. It saves time."**



The fact that BioAscent has most of its equipment online is reflected in the accuracy of the data generated and the accuracy of its inventory.

**“We see that”** comments Dr Boucharens. **“Most of the time the inventory we receive are not really quality controlled. Sometimes clients send us plates saying they are 50 microlitres, but actually they are not even 10 microlitres.”**

She explains that the quality of BioAscent’s inventory is paramount and this starts from the ground up, because if the first information entered is not accurate there will be problems.

**“If you start to populate Mosaic from weighing and dissolution, you don’t have any surprises. That is something a client appreciates as well.”**

After inventory accuracy, BioAscent values Mosaic because it brings trustworthiness to everything it does.

**“For example,”** explains Dr Boucharens **“We had a case asking for the audit trail. It was regarding a plate where there were some concerns about the biological data. Because everything is recorded it was easy to follow the audit trail and identify the problem, even weeks afterwards.”**

As part of their recent growth, BioAscent is facing the need to upgrade its Mosaic system.

**“We have already changed version – I think it was in 2015. My experience of moving to Mosaic 6 was quite good.”**

New work processes need to be created for the new equipment, and processes for existing machines need to be validated. Different outsourcing partners need to be included – for example, for hardware and IT – but Dr Boucharens is confident.

**“For example, Brooks and Titian have a long history of working together, so it’s not overcomplicated. It requires some attention and work from everyone, but we feel confident we can do that”.**



## TODAY'S FOCUS: WORKING WITH VIRTUAL BIOTECHS AND MULTIPLE CROS

When BioAscent started, its customer focus was on large or medium sized pharma. Things have changed dramatically since 2013, as its compound management customers now are biotechs, small companies or even virtual companies. However, these are led by very experienced people, most of whom have worked in large pharma. This means they understand the need to have something very well organised and well established in compound management – even if they have a modest size of library now.

**“Having Titian’s Mosaic helps us because everyone who has been in a pharma company has used it or has been exposed to it”,** says Dr Boucharens.

Dr Piper explains that many companies are now doing drug discovery in a virtual or semi-virtual way. They may have some in-house capabilities in biology or chemistry, but the majority of their work is with a network of CROs. The market has spread rapidly and is global: companies no longer use one local CRO, but work on multiple projects with multiple CROs around the world. These innovative biotechs find it especially critical that their compounds can be accessed and delivered quickly, accurately and easily.



When customers ask BioAscent to send out library samples to their preferred CRO for testing, they can do so knowing that all the quality control is in place.

**“It’s something compound management groups would do in big pharma and we do it for our customers, which are more virtual.”** says Dr Piper.

**“We know exactly what we’ve got and how much is left; our customers have got complete transparency on their inventory. Whereas if they are not working with us, they will probably have compounds scattered across CROs all around the globe and they won’t really know exactly what is where”**

As well as the inventory accuracy, the whole audit trail is available via Mosaic as well.

**“If they get unexpected results in the test, they don’t have to worry about ‘was that an issue with the plating or the solution’ – because that’s all done with us and it has that seal of quality”** continues Dr Piper.

Without that, you might wonder if the anomaly was caused by the compound, whether it was the right compound, or if it was made up incorrectly.

**“Work with us and none of that is a problem. Titian’s Mosaic gives a huge amount of value to people doing drug discovery – work with us and you get that value.”**

Dr Boucharens underlines this:

**“It’s clear for me, Mosaic is the number one asset of the value proposition when we discuss compound management with clients. For a client, if he says two years later ‘there is something wrong with this plate’ – we are able to come back to that run and know exactly if the run was interrupted. That audit trail for us is very, very essential. Even if it is not routinely used, the client knows he can refer to it. It’s very positive for him.”**

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Mosaic is the number one asset of the value proposition when we discuss compound management with clients

**Dr Sylviane Boucharens**





## BIOGRAPHIES

### Dr Sylviane Boucharens

**BioAscent, Co-founder  
and Chief Operating Officer**

Sylviane has more than 20 years' experience in scientific research and drug discovery environment. Sylviane has a track record in building and leading outstanding and productive teams into seamless successful enterprises in start-up and medium and large pharma environment.



### Dr Mike Piper

**BioAscent, Chief Commercial Officer**

Mike is an experienced life sciences professional with a track record in sales and marketing strategy, general management, licensing and contract negotiation. Mike previously worked at CXR Biosciences, Concept Life Sciences, Ardana plc, ZS Associates, Deloitte and Arthur Andersen Business Consulting.



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