

# ► the executive interview

## ► Greg Lucier, CEO, Invitrogen

*"I always wanted to mesh technology with business."*

The youngest of four children, I grew up in Norristown, PA. My father owned an industrial advertising agency in Norristown, where he did a great deal of work with foundries and steel companies. That experience gave me my first taste of technology.



Greg Lucier at Invitrogen's manufacturing facility in Carlsbad, CA.

In high school, I decided to pursue a career that would mesh technology with business, and that combination is what I now consider to be the foundation of my career—merging roles that are technical yet business-oriented.

I went to Penn State, graduating with a degree in industrial engineering. I've always had a knack for motivating people, and that has helped me immensely in my current position. There are two important tenets that I've learned in my career: First, always face reality, meaning don't do business on hope. Second, in business, it's all about having great people and building a culture and environment where talented people can come, stay, and perform well. This realistic view comes from having been part of the transportation industry, where I saw what it was like to work in a very mature business. I developed a grounded sense of what it takes to execute and move forward in business.

On the other hand, now I'm in a business that is anything but mature. Because

the life sciences field is so young, there is an element of the unknown, and I think that can lead to flawed business models and unrealistic valuations of technology, such as we saw in the late 1990s. But I am confident that five years from now, this will change completely. I believe that people outside the life sciences will come into the industry and move into leadership positions, bringing about a more rigorous business process.

I've learned from working in different industries that the ability to learn quickly is crucial. Coming in now to the life sciences arena, I've used many tools and tricks from other industries and have secured a skilled mentor to get up to speed very swiftly. Our strategy here

at Invitrogen is to become more of a solutions company, build bigger technology platforms, and allow things to work together in an overall system—that way, we will really help clients discover more drugs. Our goal is to bring more determinism to the concept of creating new biologically based drugs. If we can chip away at the "discovery" element, the frontiersmanship of this industry, I'm confident that we will unlock massive value.

I came to Invitrogen because when I studied health care, I saw two major trends. One was the movement of information, which is very fragmented today. I believe that improvement of the flow of information is one of the massive trends of the future. The other is the ability to understand how life works. I wanted to build one of the next "great American companies" that could lead a revolution around how life works. What I intend to do with Invitrogen is build a long-term reputation for this business.

I married my high-school sweetheart. We

have 3 children, ages 12, 10, and 7, and spend our weekends enjoying many of the great activities that San Diego has to offer, including golfing, sea kayaking, and surprisingly enough, skateboarding.

In my spare time, I enjoy reading historical biographies and autobiographies. I would like to pattern myself after President Teddy Roosevelt. He was one of the most activist-oriented presidents and was incredibly bold in his thinking. He created the national parks system and drove for equality of the classes. He knew how to use the power of his position to effect change. If I had to choose qualities from a historical perspective on which to pattern my life, I would like to be someone with credible principles and integrity and who has great leadership capabilities to attract and motivate top-flight people. I would also like to have the insights to look around the corner and see where to go next.

—INTERVIEWED BY JAMES F. RYAN  
AND FELICIA M. WILLIS ■

### About the company

- **Invitrogen headquarters**  
1600 Faraday Ave., Carlsbad, CA, 92008
- **Other sites**  
Manufacturing sites in Auckland, NZ; Frederick, MD; Grand Island, NY; San Diego, CA; Sao Paulo, Brazil; Glasgow, Scotland; and Tokyo, Japan.
- **Number of employees**  
3000 scientists and other professionals
- **Founding facts**  
1987, by Lyle Turner; company went public in February 1999.
- **Acquisitions/mergers**  
Life Technologies (formerly Gibco), September 2000.
- **Company mission**  
To provide innovative products and services that accelerate biological discovery and understanding.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF GREG LUCIER