Qualcomm Powers Ahead

**AUTOS:** Company to Charge Electric Vehicles Wirelessly

**By JULIE GALLANT**

Qualcomm Inc. brought a U.K.-based electric-powered racercar, the 850-horsepower Lola-Drayson B12/69EV, to its main Sorrento Valley campus recently to display the technology behind its latest foray into wireless electric vehicle charging systems.

Known for developing and manufacturing cellphone chips, Qualcomm is delving into a niche automotive space where mobile and mobility intersect through its unit Qualcomm Halo.

Andrew Gilbert, executive vice president of Qualcomm Europe Inc., said charging vehicles wirelessly without cables is an extension of the work already underway.

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**Theme Parks Rev Up for Summer Season**

**TOURISM:** SeaWorld’s Manta Coaster Among New Attractions

**By LOU HIRSH**

SeaWorld is counting on the swooping, G-force-pushing coaster and related ray-themed attractions to keep it on track for a full rebound from the amusement industry’s less than thrilling recession experience.

“We feel this is an important attraction for SeaWorld and also for the San Diego destination,” said the local park’s president, John Robbins.

“We have been working the past two years to add features to keep the park on track for a full rebound,” Robbins said.

Robbins made an opportune decision to exit the mortgage industry in 2005 when he sold Bexil American Mortgage Inc., operating both a wholesale division, which buys mortgages made by brokers, and a retail unit, providing home loans to consumers.

Robbins makes another strong comeback.

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**Mortgage Veteran Starts New Venture**

**FINANCE:** Robbins Saw Housing Crash Coming, Now Senses Opportunity

**By MIKE ALLEN**

John Robbins, who launched two successful mortgage companies in San Diego, is back in the game.

Earlier this month, he announced the launch of ResiAmerican Mortgage Inc., operating both a wholesale division, which buys mortgages made by brokers, and a retail unit, providing home loans to consumers.

Robbins made an opportune decision to exit the mortgage industry in 2005 when he sold American Mortgage Network to Wacho.

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**Arena Pharmaceuticals Gets a Preliminary OK**

**MEDICINE:** Three San Diego Pharmas Are Developing Promising Obesity Treatments

**By CATHY YARBROUGH**

The FDA advisory committee’s recent thumbs-up vote for the anti-obesity drug lorcaserin has focused the national spotlight on the medication’s developer, Arena Pharmaceuticals Inc., as well as two other San Diego area companies that also hope to obtain FDA approval to market new weight-loss drug therapies.

“All the activity in San Diego to develop drugs to treat obesity is very exciting,” Dr. Sunil Bhoyrul, a bariatric surgeon.

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**Accelrys’ IT Platform Collects R&D Data in a Central Place**

**TECHNOLOGY:** Firm’s Structured Framework Will Help Data Sharing

**BY CATHY YARBROUGH**

The scientists at Accelrys Inc. have developed a new IT platform to help boost the productivity of companies that depend on scientific innovation to succeed in the marketplace.

By integrating and sharing the massive data generated during the innovation process, the online Accelrys Enterprise Platform ties up the loose ends created by recent “gun wrenching changes” in R&D at many companies, said Max Carnecchia, CEO of the company that develops and markets software and services to support scientific innovation in industries ranging from automotive to pharmaceuticals.

These changes are particularly acute in pharmaceuticals, an industry that traditionally is slow to change. “But when you have a pistol up against your temple, you’re willing to try new things,” Carnecchia noted.

The pistol represents pressures from stockholders and other stakeholders for companies to lower R&D costs, while being more innovative and productive.

**ACCELLYS INC.**

CEO: Max Carnecchia.

Revenue: $144.34 million in calendar 2011; $82.96 million in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2010.

Net Income: $1.77 million in calendar 2011; $1.2 million in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2010.

Headquarters: Sorrento Mesa.

No. of local employees: 600 (one-third Ph.D. scientists).


Stock symbol and exchange: ACCL, Nasdaq.

**Company description:** Develops and commercializes scientific informatics software products and services for industries and organizations that rely on scientific innovation to differentiate themselves in the marketplace.

**Key Factors for Success:**

- Understanding customers’ scientific R&D needs and demonstrated ability to lead industry by solving our customers’ problems. Strong partnerships with leading companies across industries that innovate with science;
- and a deep understanding of science that permeates the company from product development to the executive bench;
- he added. Many companies are under the gun to quickly develop and successfully commercialize safe and effective first-in-class compounds to replace highly profitable blockbuster drugs, such as the cholesterol-lowering Lipitor, which are losing patent protection.

Because their R&D budgets have been slashed, many big pharma companies have had to outsource steps in the drug development and manufacturing value chain that previously were totally in-house, he said.

**Productivity Gap**

Carnecchia, who joined Accelrys as CEO two and a half years ago from San Jose-based Interworx Inc., at which he also was CEO, said that his customers have told him that the industry’s growing dependence on multiple vendors as well as external partnerships with other companies and academia have cut R&D costs but created a “disintegration of the value chain” that has contributed to the R&D productivity gap.

Echoing customers’ comments is the Accelrys-commissioned report, “Accelerating Science-Led Innovation for Competitive Advantage,” created by the International Data Corp.

The IDC report refers to the “highly decentralized and fragmented environment, where critical knowledge is scattered across departmental information systems and geographic silos that introduce waste and impede organizational learning and sharing of past methods and experience, further impeding new product introduction and eroding the value of critical intellectual property.”

“Forward-looking organizations need a structured framework for all internal and external experimentation so that critical information can be organized and shared to facilitate effective collaboration inside the enterprise as well as with suppliers, partners and academia.”

Lou Zumstein, who holds a doctorate from Harvard University in biochemistry and molecular biology and a biotech industry veteran based in Del Mar, agreed.

“So much data is generated during drug development, from numerous sources, in different formats, and over extended time periods, that important information can be overlooked,” he said. “An IT platform that can pull together and organize such a volume of data would be a significant asset in pharmaceutical R&D.”

**Cloud-based Platform**

The Accelrys Enterprise Platform provides the structured framework recommended by the IDC report by “putting together a loosely connected set of capabilities” that allow “scientific information to flow up and down the value chain,” Carnecchia said.

The cloud-based platform embraces competitors’ software products as well as the Accelrys electronic lab notebook and other software tools, Carnecchia pointed out, “because that’s what our customers want.”

Pharmaceuticals and other scientific innovation-driven industries have invested billions of dollars in IT to support their R&D, and “they’re not going to throw that away,” he explained. Instead they will make “methodical and thoughtful transitions” over time.

Cathy Yarbrough is a freelance writer for the San Diego Business Journal.