

Industry Insights



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Josh Mandel-Brehm Chief Executive Officer CAMP4 Therapeutics

Josh Mandel-Brehm is President & Chief Executive Officer of CAMP4 Therapeutics and holds a dual appointment as entrepreneur partner with Polaris Partners.

Prior to this, he served as Senior Director in the Business Development and Mergers & Acquisitions group at Biogen, and also as Director, Strategy and Operations for Rare Diseases.

Why is the “undruggable” industry so exciting right now?

Many targets that were historically hard to drug are now theoretically accessible. Many of these targets have strong genetic evidence, suggesting not only that they will have a therapeutic impact

on the associated disease but also that they may have a higher likelihood of success due to the nature of the genetic association. These breakthroughs allow us to address an entirely new category of diseases.

What is the major limiting factor when targeting transcription and how are you working to overcome this?

Our platform is geared towards understanding the components integral to the basic control of genes.

We start by learning how each component contributes to the expression of a gene, fine-tuning either more or less expression; this allows us to prioritize different targets based on the features relevant to the disease. The key limiting factor is usually matching targets with the right modality. The wave of new modalities really opens the aperture for our platform, which is a target generating machine.

We have decided to build our own internal modality expertise (not yet disclosed) to fully capitalize on the value our platform delivers.

In parallel, we are working with partners to leverage their capabilities in both disease and modality expertise. Our collaboration with Biogen for CNS disorders is an example.

Outside of your areas of focus, what area other areas of undruggability are you most excited about?

Cancer is an area we have not yet expanded into, but I am personally excited about the potential of our platform to open up new possibilities in oncology.

It turns out that many types of cancer have a genetic underpinning, and treatment starts to come down to identifying and correctly segmenting subpopulations and matching those patients with the right drug. There are of course other confounding factors, but the advent of

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new targets and modalities is really starting to create exciting therapeutic options for patients.

What lessons are we learning from the partnerships being made for targeting the “undruggable”?

Anytime you are dealing with a new modality or a new type of target there is inherent risk in what you don't yet know. The only way to address this risk is by doing experiments and iterating on our learnings. For this reason, it can take years for platform technologies to find their sweet spot.

I think two tensions are at play

here. First, young biotechs are able to access greater amounts of capital and perform this iterative, de-risking of their platforms without needing to partner. This is good because we are less reliant on partnerships to fund the maturing of our platforms, but there is a tradeoff as major biopharma companies bring more than just capital - they also bring expertise and resources. Partners also want to get a toehold on technologies with huge potential.

As a result, I think both companies, small and large, are adjusting expectations and learning how to collaborate for longer periods of time and structure deals more creatively with respect to economics and optionality.

Where can we expect this field to progress to over the next few years?

We are going to see the first set of clinical readouts for degraders and CRISPR (in vivo) programs - newer technologies tied to the

phrase “undruggable”, which is incredibly exciting. Some of these technologies are going to deliver on their great promise and others will not.

From my perspective it then becomes a design problem in terms of adjusting variables that can improve the efficacy and/ or safety profile of the technology.

What are you most looking forward to at the Virtual Undruggable Leaders Forum?

Learning from colleagues in the field as to what they are most excited about and why!

If you're interested in hearing more from Josh Mandel-Brehm, he will be presenting on Day 2 of the virtual Undruggable Leaders Forum.

He is participating in the panel and open Q&A titled “What's The Next Horizon in Undruggability?”, along with presenting a case study “Mapping the Genome and the Signalome: CAMP4 Therapeutics”.