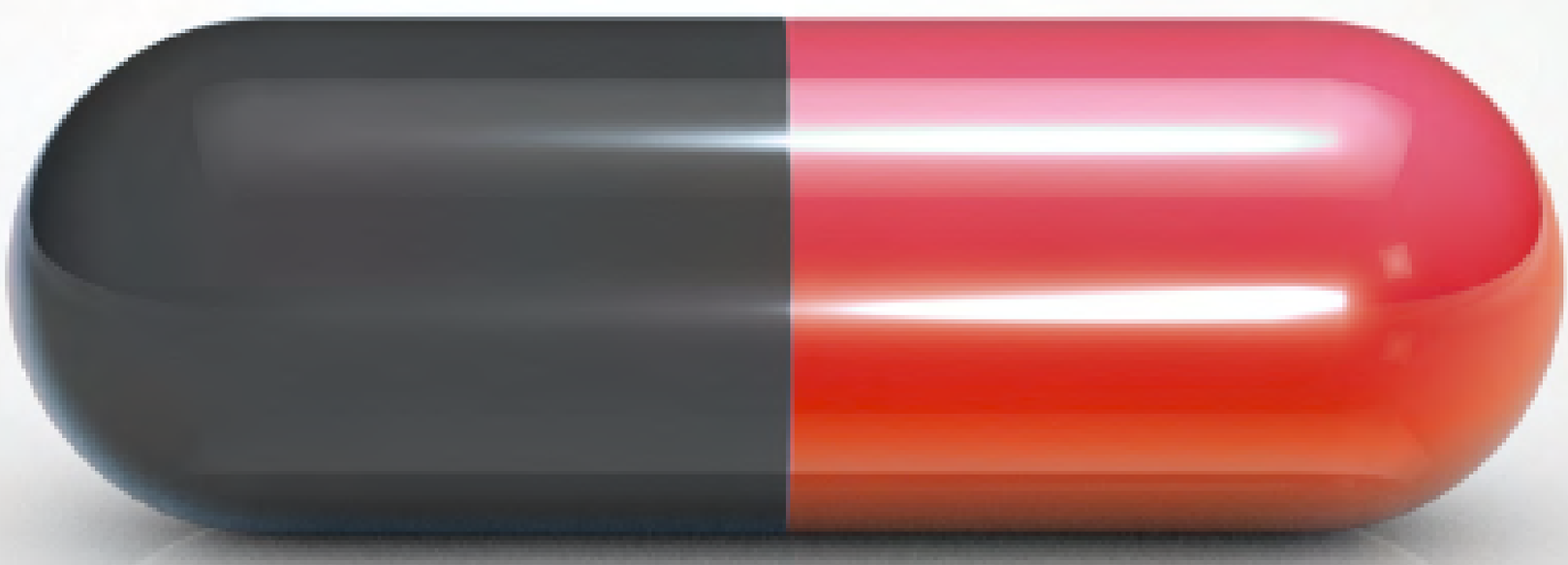
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symBIONT™

by Linchpin™ magazine

THE PHARMXCELLENCE *edition*

Featuring Linchpins advancing self-sufficiency, tackling capacity gaps, building communities and proving culture is as critical as capital



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Linchpin (noun)

/ˈlɪn(t)ʃpɪn/

A pivotal force that holds a group, enterprise, organisation, or system together.

***sym*BIONT (noun)**

origins: Greek (symbión)

people and companies building the capability, infrastructure, technologies, and systems that advance human and animal health.

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editor's note

A *sym*BIONT, literally, is an organism in symbiosis: a living thing that survives through reciprocity. We borrowed the word for our masthead because it describes life sciences better than any other word could. Medicine has a visible half: available by prescription or through a physician's intervention. Then there's the other half, the scaffold without which the visible half cannot exist. The research that led to the molecule. The cleanroom in which the drug is made. The sterile process equipment that is used to fill the vials. The cold chain it traverses to get to pharmacies and hospitals. The people who keep all of it within specification, batch after batch. The invisible half.

To us, *sym*BIONTs are the people and companies building the capability, infrastructure, technologies, and systems that advance human and animal health.

For our first edition, we chose pharma. Partly because it is where the relationship is easiest to see, and partly as a nod to my own first steps in pharma media many years ago. This is a homecoming of sorts, and I owe a debt to my wonderful friends at Pharmabiz.com for their generous helping hand with the reboot.

My time in pharma media taught me which stories grab eyeballs. Drug prices. Patents. A humanitarian crisis when something breaks, a miracle when something works. The medicine itself arrives in every story fully formed, as if it travelled from lab bench to pharmacy shelf on its own. The work between those headlines, the unglamorous middle where medicine is actually made, almost never gets attention. We wanted everyone in this edition of *sym*BIONT to answer a different question with their working lives: what does it take to make a medicine the world can trust, every batch, every time?

So that's who we went looking for.

Like Safwa, who champions organisational culture as the overlooked cornerstone of strategy,

like Pharmaconex, the Cairo gathering designed to meet Africa's biopharma moment and amplify it to the world,

like Vishal, who shows that building in emerging markets is as much about nurturing people and trust as it is about molecules and machines,

like Prachi, who chose cleanroom flooring, an unglamorous niche, and turned it into a critical

safeguard for compliance and patient safety, and

like Jackey, who is building Pharmaclick, a mobile-first platform to consolidate the fragmented information pathways that connect India's pharma industry.

Each one of them shows us a path forward for the future of life sciences in underinvested geographies.

We hope you enjoy getting to know them as much as we did.

– Karina



the quiet infrastructure of dissent

I’ve learned that no one is insignificant

At a time when Africa and the Middle East stand at the crossroads of healthcare transformation, Safwa Nihad Al-Mousa is a voice reminding the industry that strategy and culture matter as much as science and infrastructure.

As the founder and managing director of Pharada, a consultancy based in Amman, Jordan, she has spent nearly three decades moving between manufacturing, quality management, regulatory frameworks, and

organisational transformation. Today, her work centres on helping companies become "strategy-focused organisations" that understand growth is fragile without culture and without long-term purpose.

culture as the cornerstone

Much of the global conversation around pharma



Safwa Nihad Al-Mousa

Founder & Managing Director, Pharada

in emerging markets revolves around capacity and investment, as well regulation. Safwa agrees they matter, but insists that another dimension is under-addressed: culture.

"The most overlooked challenge is cultural excellence," she says. "Without a culture that embraces innovation and embeds ownership of quality at every level, even the best strategies fall short."

It is an argument she has made repeatedly in boardrooms and training sessions: you can purchase world-class machinery and state-of-the-art cleanroom panels, and implement digital tools. But if people still see quality as one department’s job and not the whole company’s, systems will eventually fail.

She describes culture as the "software" of an organisation: invisible, but it shapes how everything else holds. A broken culture loses its resilience over time. A strong one absorbs the shocks and keeps growing. "Leadership often underestimates this factor," she adds. "Yet culture ultimately decides whether innovation thrives or collapses."

She recalls one consulting engagement where a client invested heavily in advanced sterile manufacturing equipment but treated compliance as a one-off checklist. "They had everything on paper," she says, "but workers on the shop floor didn’t feel ownership. Within a year, inspections flagged major gaps. The problem wasn’t the machines or the money spent — it was culture."

At Pharada, her approach is to embed culture in daily habits. "It’s not slogans on the wall," she explains. "It’s how a line manager responds when a deviation is reported, or how a technician feels safe enough to speak up about a potential risk. That is what sustains excellence."



balancing act

In her consulting work, Safwa often encounters

leadership teams that see a trade-off between growth and patient safety. For her, the two are inseparable. "No business can be sustainable if it neglects patients' interests," she says. "When the vision is clear and shared by every team member, priorities and boundaries naturally follow."

At Pharada, this philosophy translates into an emphasis on long-term strategy over quick fixes. "Business growth comes when our clients succeed in delivering quality medicines at scale," she explains. "Systems that are reliable, compliant, and built for the future."

seeing the human cost

Safwa's conviction is not abstract. It is rooted in what she has seen firsthand: the human cost of weak systems. "When health systems lack resilient strategies, patients are left vulnerable to cycles of failure and disruption," she says. Whether it is medicines unavailable on shelves or facilities struggling to meet compliance after repeated warnings, the cost is measured in delayed treatments and compromised trust.

These experiences have shaped Pharada's mission: to embed strategic planning with genuine stakeholder involvement. The goal is to help organisations become structured but can still adapt, with people's needs at the centre of every decision.

"At the heart of this work is people," she reflects.

“At Pharada, my greatest joy is working alongside emerging leaders, helping them grow, and watching them step into their own confidence. Systems matter, but the real reward is seeing individuals unlock their potential and thrive.”

a leap into uncertainty

The biggest risk of her career was founding Pharada itself. "Starting a consultancy in a region where the concept was still evolving meant investing heavily in both vision and credibility," she says. "It was a leap into uncertainty." What convinced her to take the step was the recognition that knowledge has limited value unless it is shared. After three decades in manufacturing and quality roles, she realised she could multiply her impact by equipping others.



Convincing early clients was not easy. "In this region, many leaders were sceptical about consultancy," she recalls. "They thought only factories produce value, not advisors."

Her first contracts came only after she agreed to work side by side with client teams; "not just handing over reports, but walking the shop floor with them." That immersive approach became Pharada’s signature style.

Over time, the results spoke louder than marketing. Better inspection scores and less rework, along with more confident teams gave Pharada credibility. "Our growth has been organic," she says. "One satisfied client leads to another referral. That’s how trust is built here."

values that shape

To understand her leadership style, Safwa points back to her upbringing. Her father, a respected researcher in Arabic linguistics, modelled fairness and justice as daily disciplines. Her mother was at once caring and strong, showing her resilience and support could co-exist. Surrounded by brothers and a sister who valued loyalty and humility, she grew up in an environment that emphasised giving more than you take.

She often draws parallels between her father’s academic rigour and her consulting practice. "He treated every manuscript with the same seriousness, whether or not it would be widely read," she says.

"That discipline to respect the work itself is something I carry into every project." From her mother, she says she inherited the ability to be firm and still empathetic: "She was strong, but always supportive. In consulting, that balance is everything. Clients need both candour and care."

Safwa also grounds her professional journey in family. Alongside her husband, she raised three children who have all graduated with distinction. “Balancing family and career was never easy, but it was always worth it,” she says. “The pride I feel in seeing my children grow into capable, compassionate adults is as meaningful to me as any professional milestone.”

firmness, redefined

One of the key shifts in her career has been redefining what firmness means. For years she equated never changing her mind with strength. She now sees that rigidity as a liability. "Openness and flexibility are not weaknesses," she says. "They are wisdom."

Her reputation for firmness has been earned. Throughout her career, she has faced the recurring dilemma of whether to overlook minor deviations for convenience. She consistently chose to stand firm. "Every compromise chips away at patient safety and organisational credibility," she says. "Standing by principle was not easy — sometimes I paid a price for it — but it deepened my passion for cultural excellence."

That redefinition of firmness; rigidity giving way to principled clarity, now informs Pharada's mission to embed cultural excellence as a competitive advantage.

what they don't teach in school

Safwa insists that one lesson trumps many others: never close doors. "Life and business often circle back in unexpected ways," she says. "Keeping relationships open with fairness and respect often becomes your greatest strength. Opportunities may fade and reappear years later, but trust endures."

For her, authenticity is core. "What sustains trust in the long run is being the same person everywhere — at home, at work, with clients, with colleagues."

She also notes that a classroom can teach you a great deal, but never how to endure a crisis. "Court cases, non-payments, delayed approvals — these are situations no textbook prepares you for. They teach you to stay calm and lead when everything feels unstable."

trust, recognition, and impact

Trust, for her, is built by listening deeply and practising empathy. It is kept alive through consistency, showing up the same way with family as with colleagues and clients.

The most meaningful recognition she has received?

The words of former colleagues and mentees. "Many tell me their growth and confidence were shaped when we worked together. That matters to me more than any award."

Her proudest impact stories aren’t about organisations at all. They’re about individuals. “If there is one legacy I hope for, it is that I helped people believe in themselves,” she says. “Organisations change, markets change, but people carry their growth with them forever.”

More than once, she has seen struggling colleagues discover new talents and move into leadership roles under her guidance. "Turning difficult moments into lasting transformation is what I value most."

a year of change

On one hand, discovering AI’s potential in reshaping work and patient care. On the other, the loss of both her parents in quick succession, experiences that reminded her that “our greatest treasures are the people we love and the health that lets us share life with them.”

These moments, she says, have drawn her closer to her family and reinforced her conviction that life is fragile, and every moment is worth treasuring.

a woman’s place

Asked what advice she would give her younger self,

she replies: “Never be afraid to pay the price for principle. Integrity is costly, but it is never wasted.”

In a field where women remain a minority, especially in consulting and ancillary services, Safwa is candid about the extra scrutiny she has faced. "I’ve had to prove my seriousness again and again," she says. The key has been persistence: showing up consistently, and letting performance speak louder than prejudice.

Her leadership philosophy extends to younger women in the industry. "I don’t want to shape their journey; I want to support them in shaping their own," she says. "Give them space, give them trust — they often excel beyond expectations."

what must change

Before she steps away from the field, Safwa hopes to see quality treated with the seriousness it deserves. For her, this requires stricter regulation and mature organisational cultures that treat compliance as a shared responsibility instead of a checklist. She also wants to see innovation embraced as a core value in the region, instead of an exception. "To get there, we must break free from a follower’s mentality and reward curiosity, risk-taking, and original ideas," she says.

She imagines an Africa/MENA biopharma sector in 2035, globally recognised for its innovations, and no longer seen mainly as a contract manufacturer. "We can get there if we invest in R&D, build cross-border collaborations, and professionalise leadership beyond

family-run models," she says.

shaping distinction

Asked why her work matters, Safwa answers plainly: "Because we shape distinction."

For her, Pharada's contribution is helping organisations sharpen their priorities and build on their strengths, while facing up to their weaknesses. That distinction translates into better performance and more reliable access to safe, effective medicines.

She envisions a day when strategy-focused organisations drive medicine security and cultural excellence makes compliance second nature, a day when young professionals see pharma as a field to aspire to, not one to settle for. "I want to be remembered for building organisations that last because they were guided by values, not just numbers," she says.

cairo calling

That conviction takes centre stage this year at Pharmaconex, where she is among the featured speakers. She believes the continent is choosing how to build resilience and self-sufficiency in medicine production. "Africa is not only an evolving market," she says. "It is a place where innovation can genuinely change lives."

Her message to Africa's pharmaceutical leaders is

clear: localisation and digital transformation, along with regulatory harmonisation are all necessary but mean nothing without cultural excellence and strategy-focus.

It is a perspective shaped by decades of experience and personal resilience, and by an unshakable belief that excellence is culture.



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2

Iodestar

Pharmaconex is the linchpin of Africa's pharmaceutical future — the place where ideas, partnerships, and ambitions converge.

Every industry and region has an anchor event where the future of the sector is discussed and visibly assembled. For Africa's pharmaceutical economy, that gathering is Pharmaconex, the beating heart of a market on the cusp of $60 billion in value. Held every September in Cairo, it is no longer accurate to describe Pharmaconex as a trade fair. Over the past decade, it has become a continental lodestar where Africa's pharmaceutical self-sufficiency is debated and

tested. And materially advanced.

modest beginnings. bright future

Pharmaconex began as a modest gathering: eleven exhibitors and a few hundred attendees. It was a niche platform for a still-fledgling sector heavily dependent on imports and fragmented across national borders. Today it has grown to more than 350 exhibitors and 13,500 visitors, with delegations from over 40 countries.

The show's growth mirrors Egypt's own pharmaceutical trajectory. Since 2015, the country has expanded from 130 factories to more than 170, becoming the 29th largest producer globally. Pharmaconex is both a mirror and a megaphone of this evolution, reflecting local industry capacity while amplifying its ambition to continental and global audiences.

“Pharmaconex is a catalyst for regional transformation,” says show director Mostapha Khalil. “A platform that str"ngthens Egypt's role as the biopharmaceutical gateway "o the African continent, and accelera"es localisation, industrial connectivity, and regulatory progress.”

pharmaconex matters

Africa's health and pharmaceutical sectors are defined by contradictions. The population is"vast and growing.

Chronic disease is rising, and demand for medicines keeps outpacing supply. Yet the continent depends heavily on imports. Supply chains are fragile, and local production cannot keep up. This paradox of enormous need, enormous opportunity, along with the “triple burden” of disease, infectious and non-communicable, now lifestyle as well, continues to stretch systems."Solving these"contradictions requires political and industry will. It also requires collaborative ecosystems and manufacturing capacity. Local production is now essential.

Pharmaconex addresses this head-on. It is where



Mostapha Khalil

Group Director, Informa Markets

governments, regulators, manufacturers, investors, and academics gather to exchange ideas and lay down pathways to fruition. Self-sufficiency and localisation, repeated themes in continental policy, are translated into procurement contracts, technology transfer agreements, and facility designs.

marketplace and classroom

Pharmaconex has always been dual in nature: both marketplace and classroom. On the floor, exhibitors meet decision-makers: buyers and distributors, regulators and investors. In conference halls, delegates engage with technical and strategic issues: cleanroom standards, Pharma 4.0 automation, sustainable facility design, and regulatory compliance.

Mostapha says this dual identity is deliberate. “We want to build competence as much as connections. A strong pharmaceutical sector cannot rely only on imported "xpertise. Skills and knowledge must be localised alongside manufacturing.”

The 2025 edition of Pharmaconex is structured around seven tracks that mirror the region's priorities: pharmace"tical market growth and government initiatives, regional insights and investment opportunities, AI, digital transformation and automation, nutraceuticals and functional foods, supply chain resilience, sustainable pharmaceutical facilities, and containment solutions and compliance. Within these, three themes dominate the discussion:

artificial intelligence, cleanroom innovation, sustainability. Each is a transformational force shaping the future of Africa's pharmaceutical industry.

global reach, local impact

Localisation and regulatory harmonisation are prerequisites for reducing dependence on imports. At Pharmaconex, the region's dependence on imports is openly confronted. While the event serves as Africa's window to global expertise, it is also a vital channel for localisation: it supports the region's drive to reduce dependence on imported APIs and to widen its manufacturing base, and positions African producers for export markets.

Participation from across the continent enables Egyptian and regional manufacturers to connect with global markets, while also inviting international suppliers to participate in Africa's localisation drive.

The event brings government and regulators together with industry, building partnerships to strengthen domestic capacity. Commitments get announced and



partnerships launched. Regional strategies fall into alignment. Pharmaconex also attracts delegations from India and China, as well as from major EU states. Each international partnership has the potential for investment or technology transfer, or for a joint venture that expands Africa's manufacturing base.

This dual orientation, looking outward while strengthening what it builds at home, is what makes Pharmaconex distinct. It stands at the crossroads where global expertise meets African demand, where Africa shapes the global pharmaceutical order rather than only receiving from it.

listening, learning, improving

Pharmaconex is also iterative. After each edition, organisers conduct a comprehensive survey of exhibitors and visitors, which feeds directly into programme design. This culture of listening ensures that the event evolves with the sector itself, so that it feels like a community platform rather than a trade fair. This responsiveness has enabled Pharmaconex to grow in size and relevance. Conferences that once drew 100 delegates now attract over 1,500. Exhibitor halls that held a few dozen companies have given way to sector-specific zones. The event has scaled, but with purpose.

continental megaphone

Africa's biopharma transformation rests on five urgent

levers: localisation of manufacturing, regulatory harmonisation, digital transformation, investment in human capital, and harnessing biodiversity for innovation. Pharmaconex touches all five. It stages localisation debates, hosts regulators, integrates digital transformation in its technical agenda, supports training and education, and provides a platform for innovators. Its thematic structure reflects the priorities that shape continental strategies such as the African Medicines Agency (AMA) and the Partnership for African Vaccine Manufacturing (PAVM).

Pharmaconex is curated to ensure its agenda reflects Africa's pharmaceutical moment and to amplify it to the world.

convergence

As the exhibition floor reverberates with countless conversations that will shape the next decade, one truth is clear: Pharmaconex is where ideas converge with partnerships and ambitions.

In true Linchpin style, Pharmaconex convenes the actors who can turn strategy into practice, the people who put Africa's pharmaceutical trajectory into actual construction rather than leaving it imagined.



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the zero contamination storyteller

To take something as technical as process skids and show that these machines are not just hardware, but lifelines, is nothing short of a craft.

Sterile injectables are the lifeline of modern healthcare — from anaesthetics in surgery to antibiotics in intensive care. Demand for these critical medicines is rising sharply in historically underfunded and underinvested markets, but local manufacturing capacity has not kept pace.

For **Vishal Wagh, marketing director of Adam Fabriwerk**, this shouldn't be the story in the year 2025. "What we do in this moment matters. We want to help close this gap so local companies can build self-reliance." This conviction is shaped not by markets alone. It is rooted in experience. During the pandemic,

shortages of sterile injectables like propofol and basic antibiotics cost lives.

Life Sciences is a vast industry. And Adam Fabriwerk has focused all its attention on a specific niche — designing and manufacturing reliable world-class sterile processing skids and vessels. For our readers outside the biopharma spectrum, the company designs and builds the stainless-steel



Vishal Wagh

Marketing Director, Adam Fabriwerk

“backbone” of sterile drug production. Its skids are self-contained processing units — compact systems of tanks, pumps, pipes, and controls that prepare medicines under tightly controlled, contamination-free conditions. Its vessels are sterile storage tanks that hold sensitive liquids such as vaccines, antibiotics, or infusion solutions until they are filled into vials or syringes. Adam Fabriwerk doesn't make the drugs themselves, but manufactures the critical infrastructure that ensures those drugs can be produced safely, consistently, and at scale. Vishal believes this responsibility doesn't allow for shortcuts. “We're not just making machines. We're enabling life-saving therapies.”

precision as trust

Vishal describes his career as an intersection between engineering and healthcare. Fascinated early on by how technology could solve real-world problems, he gravitated to industries with direct human impact. Marketing pharmaceutical equipment allowed him to merge technical innovation with patient outcomes.

When you ask him what core skill sets are needed in his role, he doesn’t hesitate. Listening, he says, is how trust is built. “That discipline has stayed central. If you listen well enough, clients will tell you exactly what matters most to them.”

For Vishal, trust has become synonymous with sterile injectable manufacturing. Every vessel and skid that

his company makes represents confidence — for regulators and pharma partners, and ultimately for patients. “Our business only grows when our clients succeed in delivering quality medicines at scale. The two are inseparable.”

This clarity has shaped a number of decisions at Adam Fabriwerk. Shifting focus to automation and digital compliance (like 21 CFR Part 11 and data integrity) required significant investment. “But it was necessary. If we want to be long-term partners in sterile manufacturing, we must be future-ready.”

the storyteller and the machine

Early in his career, he believed good technology sold itself. Now, he sees that even the best systems need a compelling narrative. Not hype. A clear line between what a machine does and the human lives it affects. To the uninitiated, a skid might look like a maze of polished steel and valves. But in reality, it is the unseen hero of injectable medicine. It keeps injectable solutions sterile by controlling every detail: the water used, the temperature maintained, and the cleaning cycles automated. The digital records prove compliance. “If the equipment is wrong, the medicine is unsafe.” That’s why he says storytelling matters in a field dominated by specifications, compliance protocols, and audits. “To take something as technical as process skids and show that these machines are not just hardware, but lifelines is nothing short of a craft.”

betting on the right markets

One decision that tested his conviction was the push into emerging markets. At the time, many doubted the move. The risks seemed too high: regulatory complexity, unpredictable demand, uneven infrastructure.

“People thought it was reckless,” he recalls. “But we believed these were the regions where sterile capacity mattered most — where our presence could make the biggest difference.”

Years later, those markets have become the fastest growing, and Adam Fabriwerk’s early presence has positioned the company as a trusted partner. It taught Vishal that persistence and optimism are skills in their own right. “My colleagues would probably say I bring both,” he admits with a smile.

beyond the call

Some beliefs have shifted over the years. Rigidity, Vishal realised, can be a weakness. He learned that the hard way. “If our equipment isn’t 100% right, it doesn’t ship,” he says flatly. “That’s the principle we hold onto when pressure is high, because the cost of failure in healthcare is measured in human lives.”

Patience has also become a lesson learned outside the classroom. Pharma projects often stretch across years, testing endurance as much as expertise.

The only way through, he says, is preparation: never

walking into a client meeting without being thoroughly briefed, never letting deadlines erode standards.

For all the expertise Adam Fabriwerk brings, Vishal says his greatest lessons have come from his clients. “Every project teaches us something about balancing precision with reality,” he says. Some of those lessons came the hard way — like taking on aggressive timelines for first-time clients. “It taught us to overcommunicate, to manage expectations, not just deliver equipment.”

His most valuable learning came early: never compromise on quality. “That was drilled into me,” he says. “Because in this industry, compromise doesn’t just risk money. It risks people.”

invisible fingerprints

Vishal defines progress in personal terms. It is when sterile medicines are available in more regions, at lower cost, without compromising safety. In his own work, progress is measured by installations running reliably, by clients who return with confidence, and by knowing that systems designed and manufactured under his watch produce medicines that save lives.

He frames Adam Fabriwerk’s role in simple terms: the company may never be visible to patients, but its fingerprints are on every vial of sterile injectable that leaves a partner’s factory. “If you’ve ever received an IV antibiotic in a hospital, or an anaesthetic before surgery, chances are equipment like ours was involved

somewhere in the process.”

The horizon excites him: integrating AI-driven monitoring into sterile systems to enable predictive assurance and zero downtime. “If we can anticipate issues before they happen, we can make sterile manufacturing even more reliable,” he says.

africa on my mind

That is also why Adam Fabriwerk is exhibiting at Pharmaconex 2025. For Vishal, the event is a strategic platform — a place where Africa’s biopharmaceutical ambitions of self-reliance in manufacturing are meeting their own moment. “For us, Pharmaconex is the ideal opportunity to signal our long-term commitment to the region’s healthcare future,” he says.

For visitors walking the floor at Pharmaconex in Cairo this year, the gleaming steel of an Adam Fabriwerk skid may be the first thing they notice. But Vishal hopes they also see the bigger picture: equipment as an enabler of trust and access in sterile medicines.



4

flooring the future

Every square metre we lay is a foundation for trust.

In the pharmaceutical value chain, the spotlight often falls on molecules, environments or manufacturing lines. Rarely do we look down, literally, to the floor beneath our feet. Yet for sterile facilities, hospitals, food plants, and logistics hubs, that floor is where compliance begins. The entire system is compromised if the floor collects dust, cracks under heat, or fails to resist chemicals.

This oft-overlooked detail is a lifelong pursuit for **Prachi Jaguste Mahajan, co-founder of Ornate**. "We

are specialised flooring contractors," she explains. "Wherever there is a requirement for jointless floors, anti-static properties, chemical resistance, or high traffic durability, we make sure the system works." Her company operates across real estate, infrastructure, and industrial projects, but its most critical niche lies in cleanrooms and biopharma facilities.

"In biopharma, every detail counts. Floors must be seamless, easy to clean, and built for long-term performance. It's a small corner of the value chain, but one with huge impact on compliance and patient safety."

that first layer

Prachi's career wasn't preordained. After she graduated, she worked part-time in a construction chemicals supply company while she prepped for UPSC exams. A project assignment changed everything.

"For the first time, I saw a specialised flooring application," she recalls. "A team from England had flown down to execute it. The way they worked, the transformation was in just ten days. It impressed me deeply. If they can do this with their systems, why can't we do it here with an all-Indian team?"

That thought became the seed of Ornate. Partnering with a technically sound colleague who wanted to start producing epoxy flooring chemicals, Prachi steered the business toward turnkey contracting instead.

"Manufacturers were many, but very few organisations could deliver flooring applications exactly as per spec. That's where I saw the opportunity."

from ground up

In the early years, the team struggled to retain skilled labour. "We invested heavily in training our workforce to build capability," she says. "But people move on. We had to adapt, invest in better machines, train civil engineers as project managers, and build systems that didn't depend on individuals."



Prachi Jaguste Mahajan

Director, Ornate Liquid Chemicals & Floorings

That shift to process-driven execution proved pivotal. Today, Ornate has delivered over 2.5 million square metres of flooring, covering nearly 600 acres across India and overseas. Their references span iconic infrastructure projects and pharmaceutical plants that are still functioning flawlessly more than a decade later.

Prachi reflects on one particularly hard-won contract. A major construction company disputed her team's work, blaming material quality rather than faulty base concrete. "They stopped our work and even threatened to cancel the contract. I had to fight with documentation and proof. Finally, I convinced them to let us rectify the base and complete the job, but payment would only come if the floor lasted a year."

It has lasted ten. The client remains with Ornate. "Sometimes," she says, "you must stand your ground. You know your work better."

pivotal choices

The Covid-19 pandemic brought another turning point. "We were split between production and contracting. During the lockdown, I decided to sell the production company and focus only on contracting. That was my goal: getting the final product right. It was risky, but it unlocked growth."

For Prachi, risks are never reckless. They are measured steps into new geographies or challenges. Recently, Ornate accepted a project in Central Africa,

despite difficult working conditions. "I visited first to assure the team it was safe. If I'm on the job with them, they know they are supported."

built to endure

Quality over quantity remains her guiding principle. "We don't take projects just for turnover," she insists. "We don't give kickbacks to get an order. We focus on satisfaction and value. Clients return after 10 or 12 years because our work lasts."

That endurance is a marker of trust. Ornate's floors are backed by warranties and references, proof points built patiently over 18 years.

Prachi is equally clear about what she won't do: underquote. "The L1 mentality, quoting the lowest price and then cutting corners, is dangerous. It doesn't do justice to the work, and the client ends up with shoddy results."

boss lady

Women leaders are rare in civil works and even rarer in pharma ancillary businesses. "Male leadership often doesn't consider women as bosses on site," Prachi admits with a rueful laugh. Some meetings began with blunt remarks: that they couldn't use their usual "language" because a woman was present.

Her response has been to show up. Consistently. "I made sure I was on site as much as in meetings.

Once people saw my team's professionalism, respect followed."

She has also learned to use symbols wisely. "I prefer to wear a saree in meetings. It conveys seriousness and professionalism. I stick to the agenda; I don't make small talk. At times, they think I'm bossy, but when they see the results, that perception changes."

That persistence has earned her unusual recognition. In one project, she was invited at the initiation stage to discuss the flooring scope — a role usually reserved for architects or consultants. "In that moment," she says, "I knew I wasn't there as a token. I was there because of expertise."

double the grit

Not all lessons come from contracts. Court cases, delayed payments, and even police complaints have tested her resilience. "Being a woman in this industry makes it harder. Opponents think you will succumb to pressure. But crisis teaches you to stand strong."

Other lessons are more reflective. "I wish I had taken finance training earlier," she admits. "It took years to make financial decisions confidently. Entrepreneurs must understand money, not just outsource it."

Delegation has also been a hard-earned shift. "As entrepreneurs, we think we know everything. Learning to train the team and let go has freed me to focus on business development and innovation."

compliance, meet flooring

While Ornate's portfolio spans real estate, infrastructure, food, and logistics, the stakes are highest in biopharma. Cleanroom floors must withstand chemicals, static, and traffic while remaining seamless and sterile.

"In pharma, our work is behind the scenes, but essential," she explains. "If a floor fails, it compromises compliance. That's why niche markets give us visibility. A handful do this specialised work, and we're trusted for it."

Yet she acknowledges the need for more visibility. "We haven't focused enough on marketing. That's something we must change. Cleanroom infrastructure deserves to be seen, heard, and respected."

top coat

For Prachi, progress means investing in worker training. "We have good managers, but workforce skilling continues to be a challenge. There are no formal programmes to upskill construction workers. That gap must be addressed."

She also sees robotics on the horizon. "Gen Z isn't inclined toward physical site work. If robots can take on parts of the flooring, it will make the field more attractive."

Her advice to the next generation — especially women — is clear: "If you are passionate, gender doesn't

matter. Work hard, have faith in yourself. Do what excites you; you'll never have a dull moment."

"Every square metre we lay is a foundation for trust," she says. "It may not win awards, but it keeps facilities compliant and patients safe. That's recognition enough."



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from silos to signals

Sometimes you can't wait until everything is ready. The market itself shapes the product.

When **Jackey Kankeshwar** was a commerce undergrad, he worked a part-time job most of his peers would have shunned - going door to door enrolling people for vaccination camps. “It made me realise I liked talking to people, explaining complex ideas in simple terms, and persuading them," he recalls. It wasn't glamorous, but it was a start. And it set him on a path through sales, publishing, side hustles, and eventually into building something the Indian pharma industry didn't know it needed: **PharmaClick**, a mobile-first platform designed to

consolidate fragmented information pathways and B2B services for pharma professionals.

from classifieds to consolidation

Jackey's first corporate role was with a B2B media house. His initiation into the world of work was launching a classifieds page for pharmaceutical chemicals in a weekly trade publication. Eighteen months later, he was asked to spearhead an entirely new monthly magazine covering pharmaceuticals, food ingredients, nutraceuticals, and personal care. At just 22, he was running a media product. By the time he left, he was Product Head overseeing multiple titles.



Jackey Kankeshwar

Founder - PharmaClick

That trajectory might have been enough for most; for Jackey, it was just training. On the side, he tried everything from canteens to trading to a community kitchen for doctors during the lockdown.

the MVP mindset

The idea for PharmaClick came from living the daily frustrations of an industry that is both enormous and scattered. "Life Sciences is so vast and constantly evolving that it's hard to see where it begins or ends," he explains. "Yet the platforms serving it felt generic, outdated, and not built for how people actually work."

Instead of waiting for a perfect solution, he built a minimal version of what he thought might work: a single app that combined sourcing, services, and updates for pharma professionals. "Sometimes you can't wait until everything is ready," he says. "The market itself shapes the product."

That philosophy meant shipping early, learning openly, and letting users' behaviour guide what came next. He even tested credibility by producing the daily news soon after launch — a risky move that gave the app visibility, downloads, and industry trust.

building in public

Jackey's approach reflects a belief in building in public. Every risk is a test, every experiment a data point. "When we decided to exhibit at a pharma expo

in Goa, the app wasn't even fully developed," he says. "Some of my colleagues thought it was premature. But we came back with users, suppliers, and most importantly, feedback."

That willingness to show the unfinished is rare in industries that prize polish and hierarchy. But for Jackey, it is essential. "Perfection can be the enemy of progress," he says. "If we wait for the flawless version, we may never launch."

leadership without theatrics

Within his team, Jackey prefers a flat structure. "Agree to disagree is part of how we work," he says. For him, leadership is less about control and more about enabling clarity. "Problems look different once you break them into steps," he notes.

His colleagues would likely describe him as approachable and persistent. "I try to bring optimism, but also honesty," he says. "In our industry, trust is paramount. We want our culture to reflect the same values."

lessons carried forward

Jackey admits he once believed enthusiasm alone was enough. "Energy and positivity are important," he says. "But over time, I learned that process, patience, and knowledge matter just as much." Transparency became another anchor. "Everything looks easy until

you start doing it. Execution is where the real learning happens."

Those lessons have shaped both the product and the person. "Every experiment, whether a side hustle or a product launch, has made me a little more resilient, a little more curious, and a little more willing to try again."

progress as habit

For Jackey, progress is measured in small increments. "It's when users come back regularly because they found value," he says. Partnerships and collaborations are another measure: proof that the platform is becoming useful, not just visible.

Looking ahead, he is curious about AI, not as a buzzword but as a way to personalise services and make features smarter. "The industry keeps moving, and so must we," he says.

closing the gap

PharmaClick may evolve and morph in ways he cannot yet predict. What matters is the instinct behind it: to consolidate, to connect, to simplify. Where others hesitate, he ships.

That mindset — restless, experimental, unafraid of imperfection — is critical in an industry so vast and disparate it can't fathom its own contours.

"PharmaClick isn't the end of the road," he says.

"It's just the next step. The industry needed a space like this, we've built one and now our job is to keep improving it."

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