

# TAKING THE NANOPULSE

IndustryWeek.com October, 2011



**Nanotechnology is the new normal in manufacturing. It's the driver taking the U.S. out of the economic doldrums and into global strength.**

## **Nanotechnology, the U.S. economy. And you. The nanotech world goes commercial and you're at the epicenter**

BY SCOTT E. RICKERT

I witnessed an American revolution catch fire in Boston, and I feel like a latter-day Paul Revere. "The nanotech economy is coming, the nanotech economy is coming!" And that's good news for the U.S. – and you -- because we're at the epicenter.

The scene of the revolution I'm talking about was the Nanomanufacturing Summit and Annual NanoBusiness Conference in Boston. There, 250 nanotechnology leaders from science, business and government gathered to take stock and look ahead.

What did I see at the revolution? Three crucial transformations coming together to reshape business and the economy.

- Nanotechnology commercialization is a fact.
- Nanotechnology will lead the U.S. out of the economic slump and into global strength.
- Private and public sectors are working together to make sure that happens.

Let's start with commercialization. Ten years ago, when I walked into the inaugural version of this conference, I was one of the few with money-making nanotechnology products on the market. This time? The sessions were packed with executives from multi-million dollar businesses, and the chatter was about P&L as much as R&D. Nano-companies are defying Wall Street woes and going public. And even academics were talking about business plans, not prototypes.

What triggered the change? The virtually infinite platform of nanotechnology is now powering scores and scores of vertical markets through partnerships, customer relationships and licensing. It's now widely accepted as the strong, innovative link in existing – and profitable - - supply chains. In fact, for many large companies, nanotechnology is now simply business as usual. Folks like Lockheed Martin, GE and others, who at one time needed to troll these conferences for emerging technology, now simply buy "off-the-rack".

Nanotechnology is, quite simply, the new normal in manufacturing. That capability is the driver that is taking the U.S. out of the economic doldrums and into global strength. As I noted in a keynote address to the conference, one country – our country – accounts for about 35% of the global nanotechnology markets. That's 35% of a \$1.6 trillion market by 2013.

The reason? Nanotechnology equals complexity. It demands high-level knowledge and a pool of skilled knowledge-workers. We've got it here. Dollar-a-day hands simply can't get the job done. Nanotechnology will continue to be the lever that moves the manufacturing world, so instead of exporting jobs, America will be exporting nano-enabled products.

Dozens of companies from Europe, Asia and the Middle East were at the conference. Their goal was tapping into the American know-how for making science into business. Some were there to buy. Some were looking to invest. More than a few were making plans to set up facilities in America, to be close to the nanotech centers of power. And others were simply trying to learn our go-to-market strategies to help inform their own.

Our government leaders joined the Boston nano-revolution, too. Representatives from Congress, The White House, regulators and funders were visible and vocal. They know innovation is the key to rebuilding the economy and that the U.S. has an undeniable edge. What other technologies have the depth of unexplored potential? What other platform can support so many product verticals? Nanotechnology is the core of the new economy, led by savvy entrepreneurs who are ready to run, and Washington is committed to supporting sensible regulation and smart investment.

Have you joined the Revolution in your organization? If not, it's time. As I told the Boston group, don't worry if you're not an expert. Now, more than ever, it's easy to find one -- in energy, in transportation, in health care, in consumer goods. Locate yours, then build a partnership, build a plan, build a product -- and you'll be on the front lines of a winning economy.

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