

**Leveraging  
Partnerships with  
the FDA : Advice for  
Startups**

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**Swartz Center for Entrepreneurship  
Carnegie Mellon University**

**April 2, 2019** <sup>1</sup>



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# Agenda

AbiliLife's Story

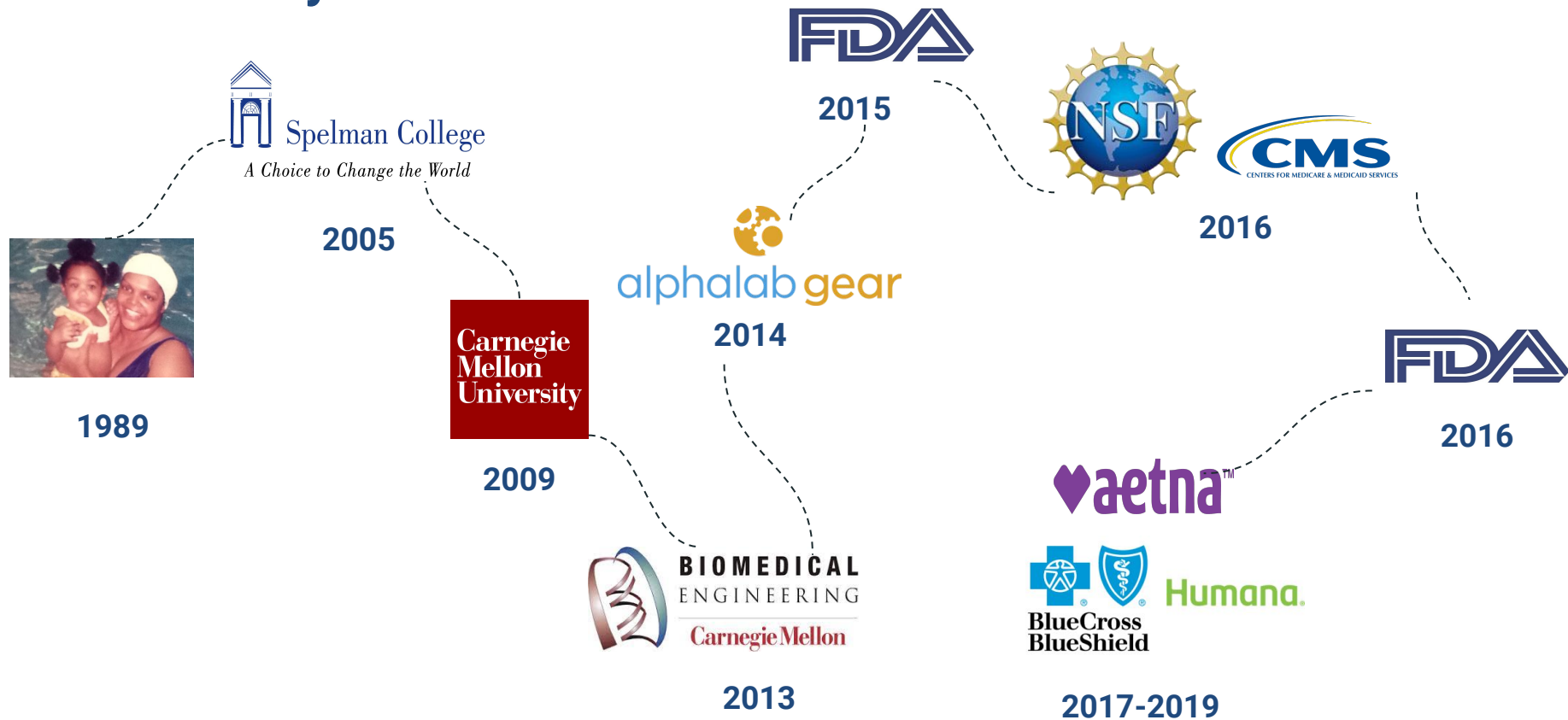
Engaging with the FDA

AbiliLife FDA Engagement and Product Roadmap

Conclusions



# The Journey



# The Product

## Intended Use/Indication for Use:

*Back brace designed specifically for geriatric and neuromuscular patients (i.e. Parkinson's disease, spinal stenosis, osteoporosis, etc.).*

*Rolls shoulders up and back for more natural and healthy posture.*

*Rigid back panel supports from tailbone to the top of the shoulder blades.*

**Classification:** I, Exempt

**Regulation:** 21 CFR 890.3490

**Description:** Truncal Orthosis

**Code:** IQE



Reg.& Listed # 3011170501



DME-HCPCS Code L047

# Post-Marketing : 2016 - Today

Then:



Originally designed for PD patients



Now:



600 Pre-existing codes didn't include PD



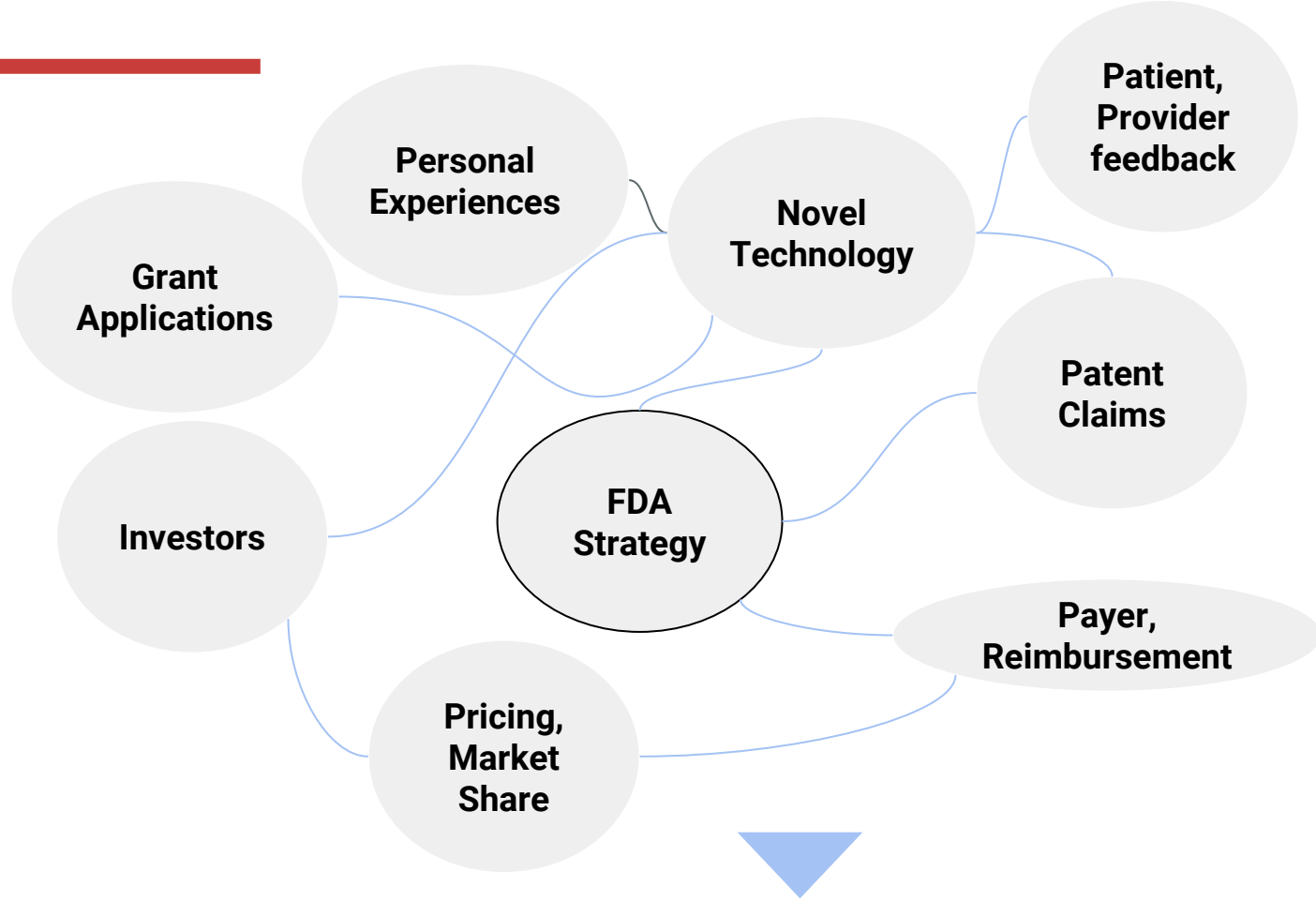
Only CMS reimbursed for the Calibrace+



+20

Sole-providership helped with payment

# The Web: FDA Strategy Interlinked with Innovation And Business Needs

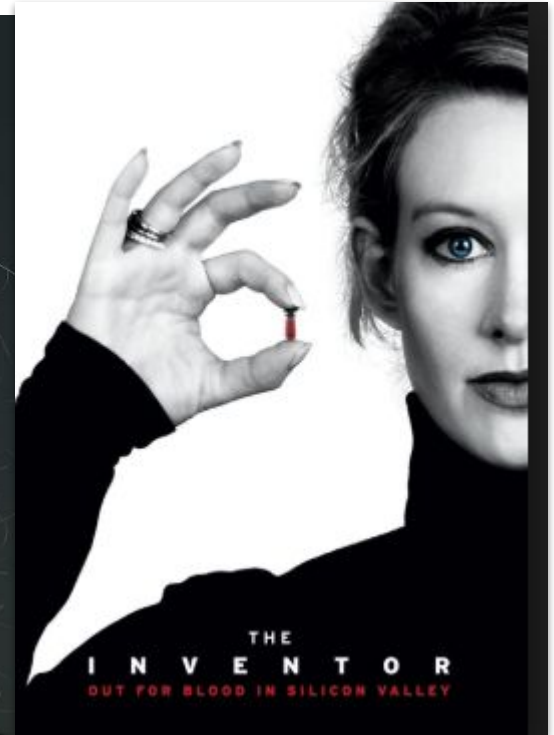
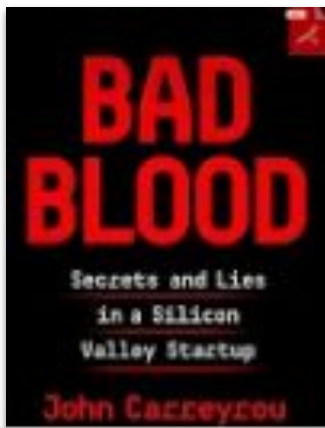


**Meet Patient, Caregiver, Business Needs  
Advance Science**





# **Engaging with the FDA**



# FDA Warning Letter, 2015

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

1431 Harbor Bay Parkway  
Alameda, CA 94502-7070  
(510) 337-6700 Fax: (510) 337-6702  
Industry Information: www.fda.gov/oc/industry

DATE OF INSPECTION: 08/25/2015 - 09/01/2015  
FACILITY: 3010479366

TO: Elizabeth A. Holmes, Chief Executive Officer and Founder  
Theranos, Inc.  
1701 Page Mill Road  
Palo Alto, CA 94304-1111  
Manufacturer

This document lists observations made by the FDA representative(s) during the inspection observations, and do not represent a final Agency determination regarding your design observations, or have implemented, or plan to implement, corrective action in response to the FDA representative(s) during the inspection or submit this information questions, please contact FDA at the phone number and address above.

The observations noted in this Form FDA-483 are not an exhaustive list of conditions. Under the law, your firm is responsible for conducting internal self-audits to identify and correct violations of the quality system requirements.

DURING AN INSPECTION OF YOUR FIRM WE OBSERVED:

OBSERVATION 1  
Design validation did not ensure the device was tested under conditions of use and intended use. Specifically, You provided no evidence of design validation which was used in the validation.

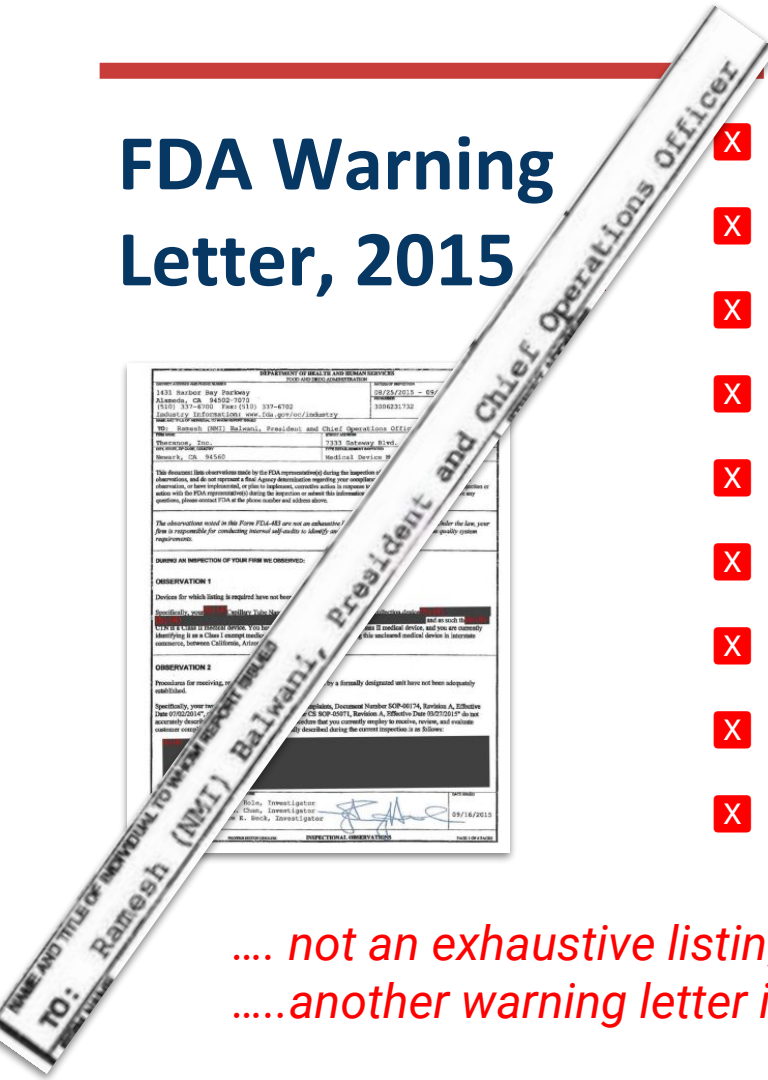
REVERSE THIS PAGE  
Suman S. Singh, Investigator  
Ian A. Pilcher, Investigator  
09/16/2015

INSPECTIONAL OBSERVATIONS

- ✗ Design validation to conform to user needs
- ✗ Design validation under actual/simulated use conditions
- ✗ Design input requirements
- ✗ Design risk analysis
- ✗ Document review and approval

.... not an exhaustive listing of objectionable conditions !

# FDA Warning Letter, 2015



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
FDA - U.S. FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION

1431 Harrison Way, Suite 100  
Alameda, CA 94502-7070  
(925) 514-1300 Fax: (925) 557-6702  
www.fda.gov/oc/industry

TO: Ramesh (NMI) Balwani, President and Chief Operations Officer  
NMI Balwani, President and Chief Operations Officer  
7215 Gateway Blvd.,  
Berkeley, CA 94705

This document contains observations made by the FDA representative(s) during the inspection of your facility, and do not represent a final Agency determination regarding your compliance with the FDCA or the CFR. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in compliance with the FDCA and the CFR. If you have any questions, please contact FDA at the phone number and address above.

The observations noted in this Form FDA-483 are not an exhaustive list of all violations observed. You are responsible for conducting internal self-audits to identify and correct any violations.

DURING AN INSPECTION OF YOUR FIRM NO OBSERVATIONS WERE MADE.

OBSERVATION 1  
Devices for which labeling is required have not been properly labeled. Specifically, you have not properly labeled the following devices: [redacted] and [redacted].

OBSERVATION 2  
Procedures for receiving, reviewing, and evaluating complaints have not been adequately established. Specifically, you have not established a procedure for receiving, reviewing, and evaluating complaints. You have not established a procedure for receiving, reviewing, and evaluating complaints. You have not established a procedure for receiving, reviewing, and evaluating complaints.

Investigator: [redacted]  
Date: 09/16/2015

- ✗ Devices listing
- ✗ Receiving, reviewing, evaluating complaints
- ✗ Failure to meet product specifications
- ✗ Corrective and Preventive Actions (CAPAs)
- ✗ Software, data processing systems validation
- ✗ Evaluation of potential suppliers
- ✗ Records of acceptable suppliers
- ✗ Device history records not established
- ✗ Quality audits

.... not an exhaustive listing of objectionable conditions !  
.....another warning letter in 2016!

# June 15, 2018: Theranos Founder and Former Chief Operating Officer Charged in Alleged Wire Fraud Schemes

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in LINKEDIN

📌 PIN IT

✉ EMAIL

🖨 PRINT



**Food and Drug Administration  
Office of Criminal Investigations**

**U.S. Department of Justice Press Release**

*Elizabeth Holmes and Ramesh “Sunny” Balwani Are Alleged to Have Perpetrated Multi-million Dollar Schemes to Defraud Investors, Doctors, and Patients*

# — What is FDA?



**FDA Regulates:** \$1 trillion worth of products a year

**FDA Mission:** Protect & Promote US Health

**FDA Modernization:** Streamline, Expedite, Incentivize, **Least Burdensome Approach\***

Leverage by early engagement and partnership with FDA

\* : Minimum amount of necessary information, most efficient manner, right time

# What is a Medical Product?

## For Disease

DIAGNOSE

CURE

MITIGATE

TREAT

PREVENT

AFFECT STRUCTURE or any FUNCTION of body  
CHEMICAL ACTION within or on body (Drug only)

## Software as a Medical Device (SaMD)

DIAGNOSE

TREAT

DRIVE clinical  
management

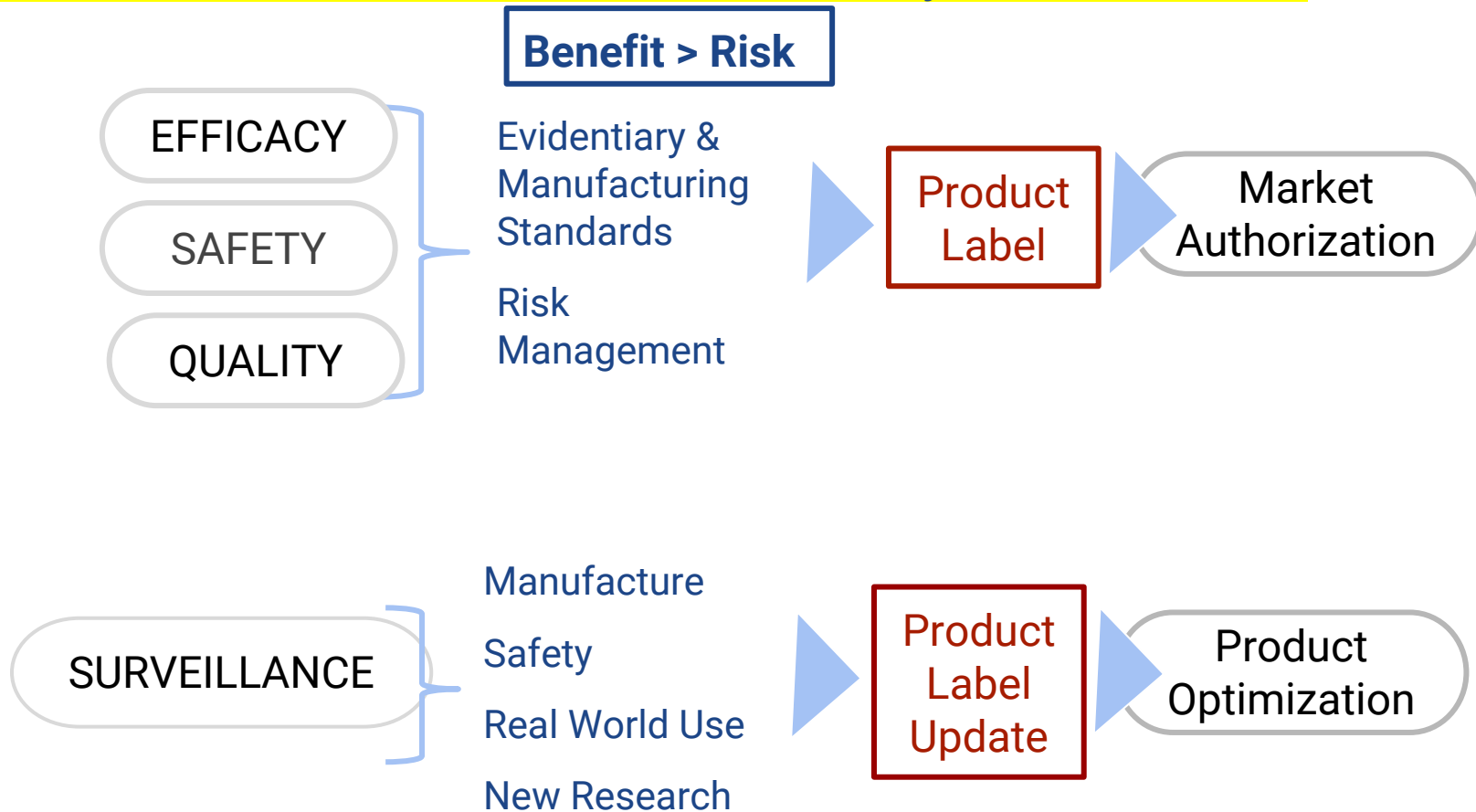
INFORM clinical  
management



General Fitness / Wellness Trackers (count steps, sleep comfort....)  
SaaS for consumer use/convenience/entertainment (hail ride, order food, ....)

# How to Market a Medical Product?

Establish RASE: Reasonable Assurance of Safety and Effectiveness





# MEDICAL PRODUCT STARTUP IS PARTICULARLY TOUGH

Novel Products

Competition

Pivots

Budget

Resources

Funding

Investors

Timelines

Value

Proposition

ROI



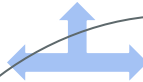
Understanding  
the regs

Constantly  
evolving  
landscape

Information  
Overload

Unclear  
Pathway

# The Starting Point (devices)



your business concept

**Concept - Prototype** The technology

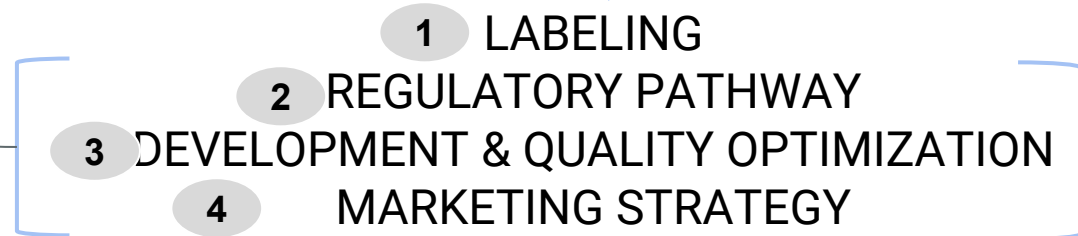
**Use and Claims** What is its use, in which populations, which conditions, what outcomes...

**Competitive Strategy**

- Substantially equivalent (limited differentiation from 'predicate')
- Not be substantially equivalent (differentiation)
- No relevant predicate (trailblazer)



your FDA strategy



# I. Labeling

Primary source of  
legal information for  
patient, caregivers,  
physicians, payers

**Intended Use\*** (overall purpose of device)

**Indications for Use\*** (population, condition, endpoints  
.....*substantiated by VALID SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE*)

Contraindications, Warnings, Precautions

Instructions for Use: Physician, Patient

Device Description

Specifications

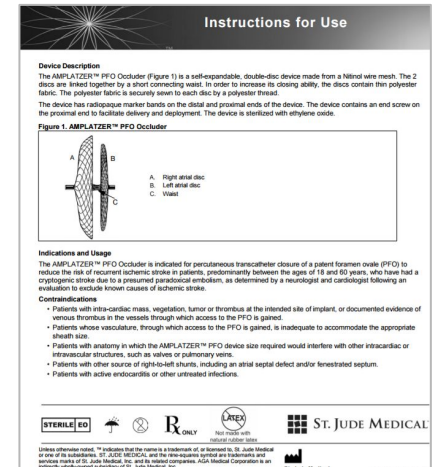
Safety

Effectiveness

\*

START

REVIEW  
REVISE  
UPDATE



## II. Regulatory Pathway

Determined by proposed  
labeling, associated risk,  
legal existence of  
'predicate'

**Medical  
Product  
&  
Accessory**

Registration, Listing  
Class I (Exempt)  
510(k) Class II (Predicate)  
De Novo Class I/II (No  
predicate)  
PMA Class III  
Humanitarian Device  
Exemption (rare disease)

**Tool  
for Medical  
Product  
dev. \***

Medical Device  
Development Tool (MDDT)  
Case for Quality  
Accreditation Scheme for  
Conformity Assessment  
(ASCA)  
Software Pre-Certification  
(Pre-Cert)

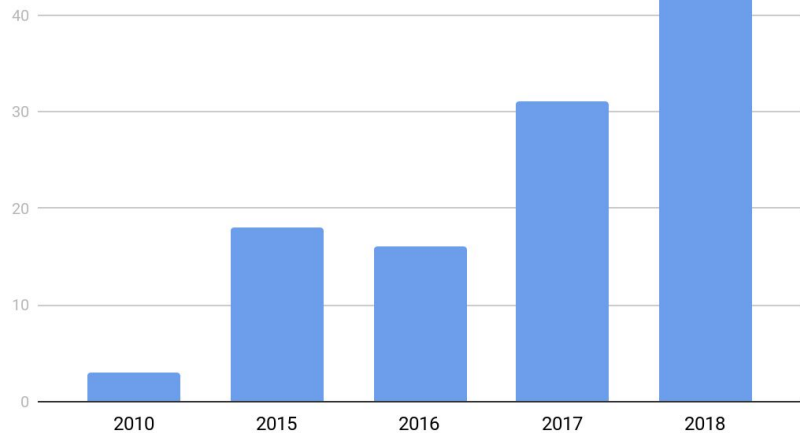
\*: Recent initiatives, pilot programs

# Labeling - Risk - Regulatory Pathway



Low Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk
Class I: ~ 47% Pathways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ~ 95% Exempt</li> <li>- Few De Novo</li> </ul>	Class II: ~ 43% Pathways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 510(k)</li> <li>- 510(k) exempt</li> <li>- De Novo</li> </ul>	Class III: ~ 10% Pathway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PMA</li> </ul>
Impact of Proposed Label		
Surgical Apparel- <i>Exempt</i>  Wrap for Restless Leg Syndrome- <i>De Novo</i>	Hearing Aids: Air Conduction- <i>510(k) exempt</i> Bone Conduction- <i>510(k)</i> Self-Fitting - <i>De Novo</i> App for addiction therapy- <i>De Novo</i>	Pacemaker Artificial lung

# De Novo Pathway



DATA SOURCE: FDA

**Trending for CMU Startups**

Trailblazing...novel device showcasing advanced technology

Unique, patient focused labeling

First to Market

Strategies to delay competition

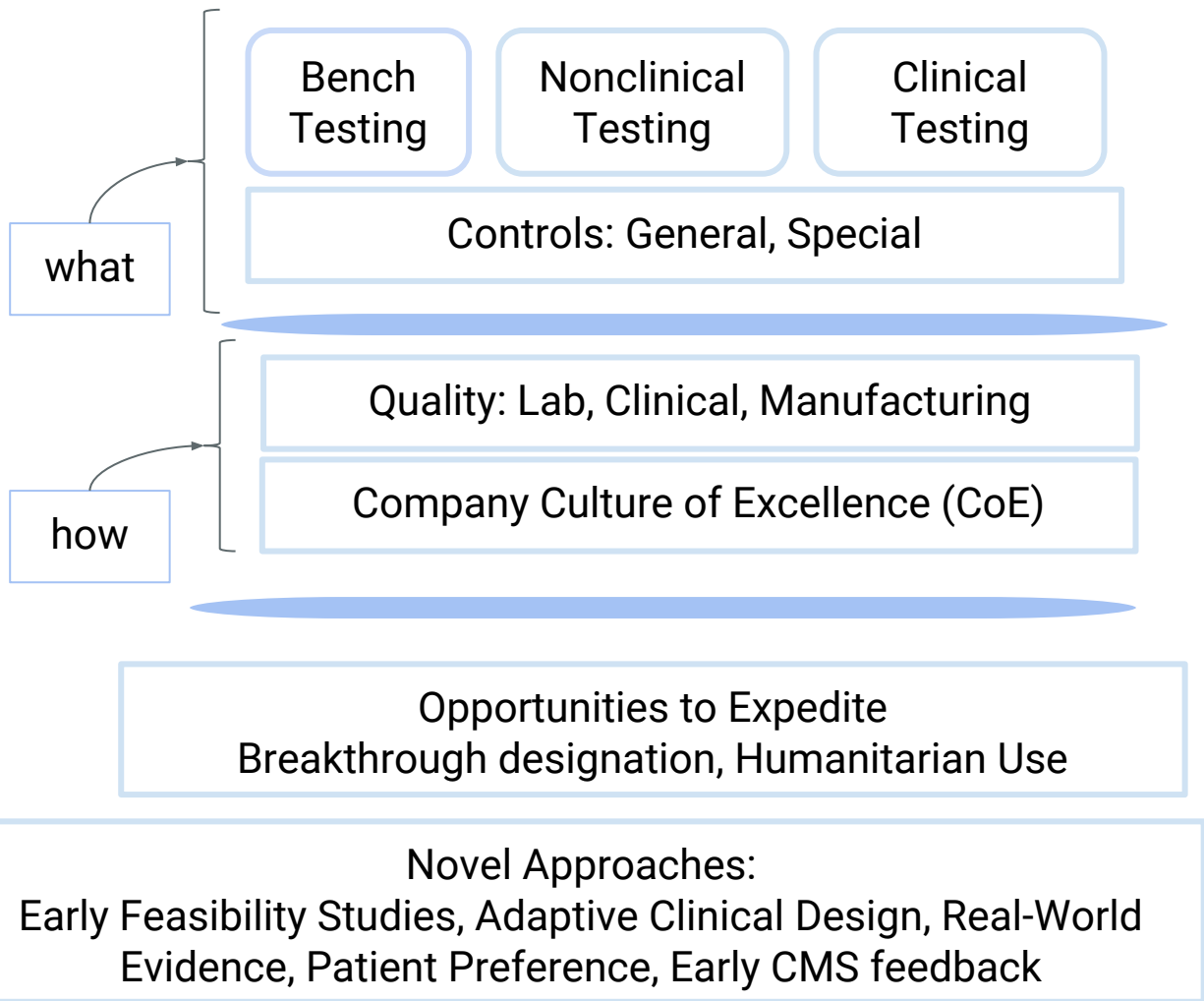
### III. Development & Quality Optimization

#### EVIDENCE

- establishing RASE
- desired Labeling

Apply 'Least Burdensome Principles'

NEED FDA alignment



## FDA Quote : "Most, if not all advertising, is labeling"

# Medical Device Advertising

17 Pins • 368 Followers

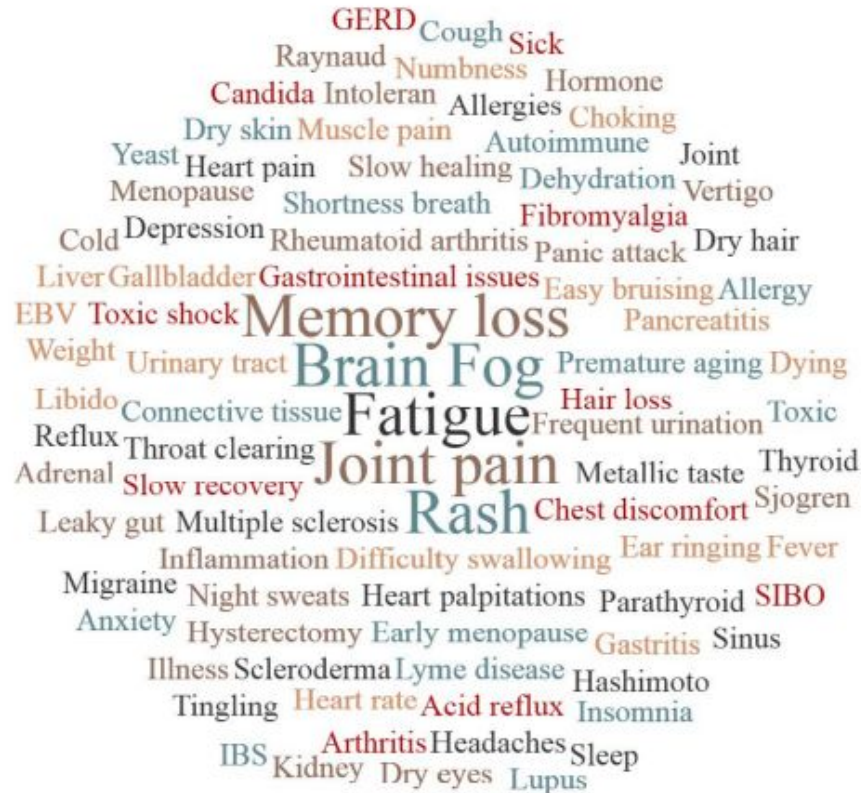
**HCB** by HCB Health



**Medical Device AD**



gov



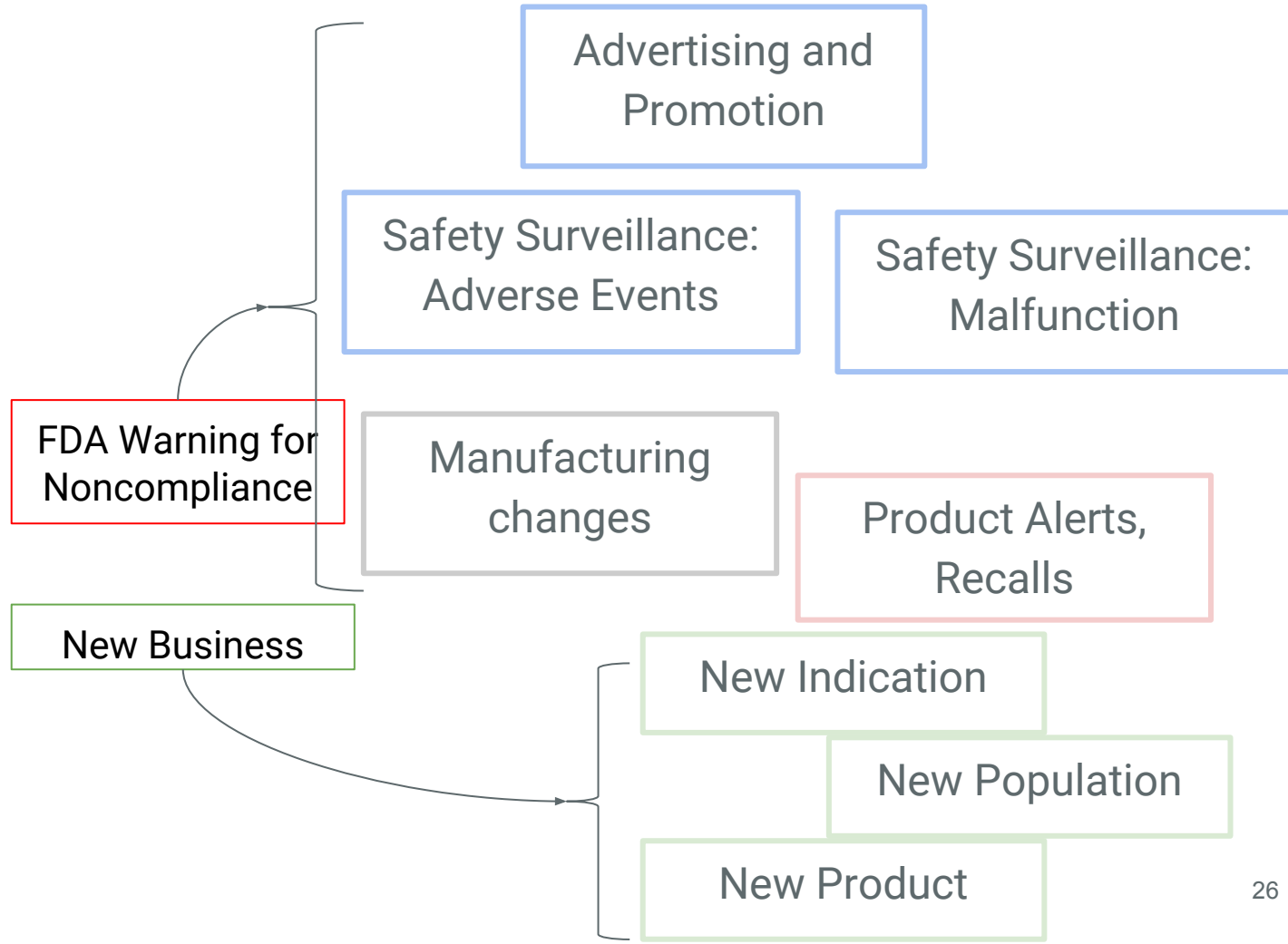
**FDA Quote : "FDA monitors reports of adverse events and other problems with medical devices, alerts health professionals and public ..**

## IV. Marketing Strategy

Beginning of Product Lifecycle

Demonstration of Company Responsibility

Gateway for Product Enhancement



## Why Early and Continued FDA engagement?

Align of desired **Labeling** and **Streamlined Development Pathway** - particularly for De Novos

Obtain strategic FDA feedback to **refine Differentiation Options and Decision Making**

Critical for successful **Funding** - particularly SBIR/STTR, DoD

Important for **VCs** as well - particularly after Theranos debacle

Adds to **Exit Strategy and Valuation**

No fees

FDA White Oak  
Campus in MD

# CAUTION



FDA is NOT a consultant- prepare accordingly

Up-to-date Regulatory Intelligence vital - best positioning of company proposals

Poor briefing document - unanticipated FDA queries, suboptimal feedback

All captured in meeting minutes - permanent in FDA database

Poor performance - FDA's assessment of company merit and capabilities



FDA strategy and engagement NOT a DIY activity - wise to invest in right expertise

# Effective FDA Meetings

Build partnership  
Be Well Prepared

Requests for Feedback and Meetings  
for Medical Device Submissions:  
The Q-Submission Program

Draft Guidance for Industry and  
Food and Drug Administration Staff

**RIGHT  
TIMING**

- Draft Labeling + device description + study proposals substantiate
- Strategic questions NOT covered by FDA public info
- PRIOR to initiating critical studies

**RIGHT  
CONTENT**


- Well written briefing document with “Specific Questions” - not information dump
- Utilize guidance documents to the fullest

**RIGHT  
CONDUCT**

- Be in the lead w/ collaborative attitude
- Make sure all questions covered
- Give counterpoints - grounded in science, data, regs

**RIGHT  
PEOPLE**

- FDA Liaison expertise
- Technical and Therapeutic expertise
- Special FDA experts (eg Payor strategy)



# **AbiliLife FDA Engagement and Product Roadmap**

# Label Development : Differences in wording impacting Evidentiary Requirements and Submission Strategy

Alert for High Fall Risk \$\$\$

Versus

Reduce Fear of Fall \$\$\$\$

Versus

Prevention of Fall \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

# Continuous FDA Engagement

2016



FDA Pre-Submission  
Meeting: Full portfolio

CMS Contact

Comment on draft  
FDA Guidance

Member, Coalition for  
Software guidances

2017



Pre-Submission Supplement:  
Software Platform

Followup FDA T/Cs

Battelle/CMS contact on  
Quality Payment Strategies

FDA MDDT designation  
Submission

2018



Pre-Submission Supplement:  
Portfolio, Life Cycle  
Optimization, Rare disease  
development

Parallel FDA-CMS feedback

Private Payer, VA engagement



# 2017-2018: Calibrace+ Post-Marketing Experience

## CORE COMPETENCIES



### Orthotic Back Brace for Spinal Disorders

- Certified durable medical equipment company (Board of Certification/ Accreditation)
- HCPCS codes L1310; L0650; L0651; L0648; L04574
- Utility Patent - Pending
- Clinical Trial - Pending
- National Science Foundation STTR grant Phase I

## PAST PERFORMANCE

- Hospital Providers:
  - VA Denver Healthcare System
  - VA Philadelphia Healthcare System
  - VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System
- Insurance Providers
  - TriNet
  - Medicare
  - Blue Cross Blue Shield
  - Cigna

## DIFFERENTIATORS

-  back brace engineered by AbiliLife
- Provides upper torso support
- Decreases fear of falling
- Used for 600+ diagnosis codes
- Made in America 

ICD-10 code, L0457; eligible for use for over 600 diagnosis codes

Real-World Evidence

## PORTFOLIO OPTIMIZATION

### Calibrace+:

- Extension of population: Neuromuscular diseases
- Extension of indication: Lower back pain

### Smart Calibrace

- Extension of population and subgroups
- Patient Reported Outcome endpoints meaningful to both FDA and CMS

# 2018: Patent Allowed Claims

Attorney Docket No. 0085022-000003

## IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:	)	<b>PATENT APPLICATION</b>
	)	
Williamson, et al.	)	PHYSIOTHERAPEUTIC,
	)	AMBULATORY, AND
Application No.: 14/728,138	)	MOBILITY VEST
	)	
Filed: June 02, 2015	)	Group Art Unit: 3772
	)	
Confirmation No. 7702	)	Examiner: Lewis, Kim M.

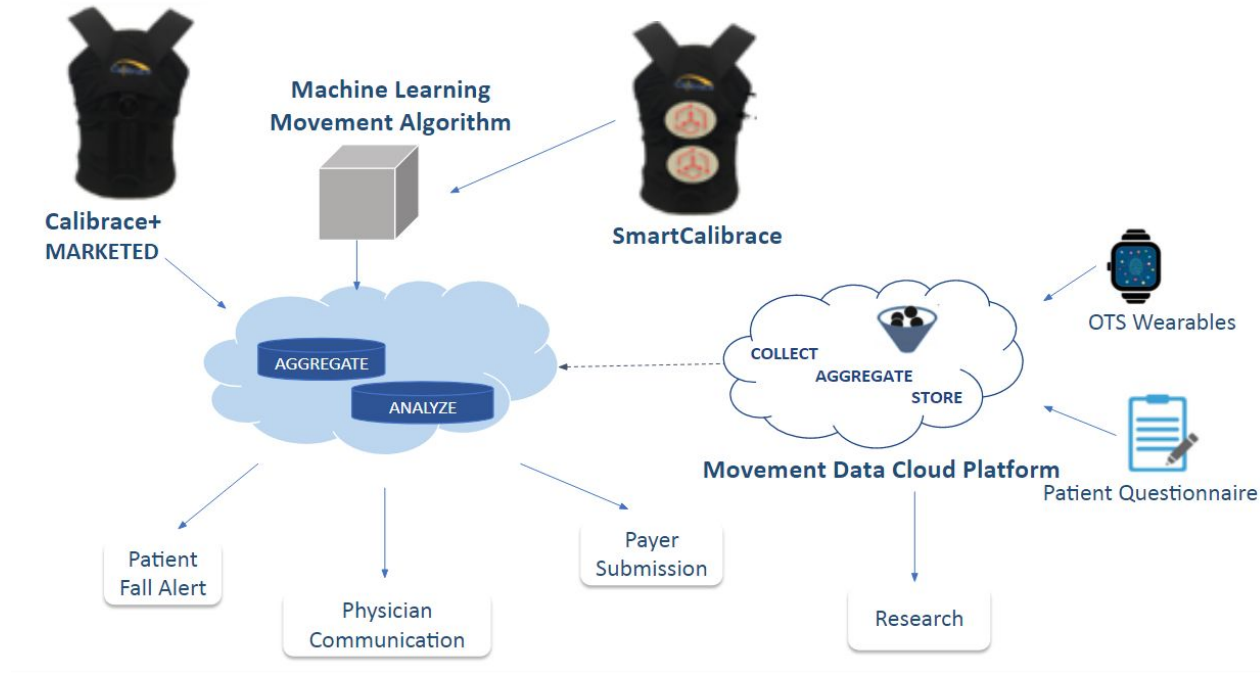
### ALLOWED CLAIMS

## PORTFOLIO OPTIMIZATION

Additional Device Description  
Claim:

*Only back brace that improves  
posture and balance by lifting the  
shoulders up and back and giving  
entire back support*

# 2018: AbiliLife Optimized Portfolio based on Post-Marketing Experience - FDA Pre-Submission Supplement Meeting





# Conclusions

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## **Impact of FDA Engagement on**

E.g. Manufacturer, Distributor, Investor,  
Grant Applications

## **External Communications**

Value Assessment of Portfolio

## **Portfolio Value Enhancement**



## Summary of Learnings as an Entrepreneur

- Interact with the FDA early and often
- Make sure that your investors understand the FDA process
- View the FDA as a partner and not as a foe
- Understand the value of having an FDA approved product for when you value your company