

GenerationNext

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Pharmaceutical Technology has joined with INTERPHEX to found GenerationNext, an award program to recognize emerging leaders in pharmaceutical science and technology.

The ancient Greeks thought that the future lay behind them. They pictured themselves standing in a river of time with their backs to the current. Events, like the floating debris of some great upstream storm, would sweep out of the unseen and unseeable tomorrow, appearing first in a confused jumble of motion in the peripheral vision, then coming into focus, gaining perspective, and finally resolving themselves into a comprehensible picture before fading into the distance.

The idea of the future being ahead of us is so deeply ingrained now that the old Greek concept seems absurd at first reading. It grows on you, though, because it so precisely describes our direct experience. One imagines Leroy “Satchel” Paige in the agora of Athens, warning, “Don’t look back, the future may be gaining on you.”

We’ve been thinking about the future recently, and, more specifically, about the problem of identifying today the people who will become leaders in our field tomorrow. This is a vital concern to any publication that aspires to quality: we have our links to today’s eminences because we built relationships with them as they were building their careers. Done right (it never is done perfectly right), the process is continuous.

The problem with finding the next generation of leaders is, of course, that they belong to the future; their fame and reputations flourish in the day after tomorrow, and we, with our backs to the current, cannot see them clearly.

To meet that challenge, *Pharmaceutical Technology* has joined with the INTERPHEX Conference & Exhibition to found GenerationNext, an award program to recognize, as our tag line puts it, the “emerging leaders in pharmaceutical science and technology.”

We’re casting a wide net, looking for the men and women who will guide our industry in five, ten, or twenty years. We’re looking for people who have begun to distinguish themselves for work on the technical, scientific, and regulatory issues of pharmaceutical technology. We’re looking for people active in every phase of drug production from

the first formulation and process designs to the end of the full-production packaging line, people who contribute to unit operations, process design, analytical testing, quality control, drug formulation, drug delivery, information technology, policy, and a host of other areas.

We have one principal restriction: they should be 35 years old or younger on next New Year’s Eve.

The nominations are open. Nomination forms are available online (www.pharmtech.com/generationnext). Forms will also appear in this magazine and will be mailed to senior scientists and engineers in industry and academia.

For the final judging, we’ll convene a panel of authorities—people who would have won GenerationNext citations a decade or two ago, who understand first-hand that excellence may take different forms in different situations.

What qualities, other than “excellence,” will distinguish the nominees? It’s hard to predict: “pharmaceutical science and technology” embraces so many activities, each demanding particular constellations of traits and talents. Still, it seems to us that the people who will receive the first GenerationNext Awards in New York at INTERPHEX 2006 next March will show solid contributions to the field based on:

Leadership, the ability to recognize the need for constructive change, to envision the route to change, to rally people to the cause of change, and make change happen in the too-often restrictive GxP environment.

Innovation, the ability to recognize new relationships and the gift of discovery and invention.

Execution, the ability, vital to our industry, to refine well-established tasks and execute them flawlessly millions of times in succession.

Education, the vocation of those who gladly learn and gladly teach—as teachers in academia, to be sure, but also as mentors in industry.

But we may be getting ahead of ourselves. Let’s see what the nominators say. Or, as Robert Frost put it in “What Fifty Said,” “I go to school to youth to learn the future.”