



PROVENCE PROMOTION

SuperSonic Imagine tell us

Ultra-sound for super sight!

Test the elasticity of human tissue by ultra sound Elementary? More like revolutionary! Because until now the resulting imagery had never been achieved. Although more sensitive than a conventional echography, the technology is designed for extremely specific clinic applications; detecting cancers at the earliest possible stage, but also non-invasive treatment of tumours. Jacques Souquet was a World Research Director at Philips Medical, and left the Dutch giant in May 2005 to concentrate on this project. He is the founder and president of the "SuperSonic Imagine" start-up and in the following he gives us a brief history of a company that has received every possible aid ... from Provence Promotion.



Jacques Souquet, founder and president of the Supersonic Imagine start-up

> Back to France... tempt me!

Jacques Souquet : After 22 years in the United States, returning to France was the result of a challenge and also of a wish to live in Provence. Although I have been told many times that France is not traditionally the country for transforming academic ideas into products, and that there are more advantages in the United States for creating a company... I continued with the concept! It is obviously easier in the United States to find out how to create a company: just go into any library and you will find a detailed and efficient book on the subject. It is not as easy in France! This is where our meeting with Provence Promotion was decisive.

> A round table... for a solid appetite!

We needed assistance with many aspects of the development of our project that uses an extremely innovative technology – too innovative to interest large groups! Provence Promotion was convinced by our very specific applications that satisfy current medical needs for the detection and treatment of cancers (of the breast, the prostate, liver and thyroid), and was able to respond very quickly, organizing a round table with all our future partners including institutional, financial, political and economic partners.

Thus, we were able to meet with the ANVAR, Ministry of Industry, the General Council and the Regional Council, and joined the Impulse regional nursery. After completion of these first steps, Provence Promotion continued to act as coordinator to help us raise subsidies, and helped us find risk capital sources that we did not already know, etc.

> A few minor arrangements between (new) friends...

We are now set up in 300 m2 of new buildings built on the Plaine de l'Arbois, a genuine achievement constructed with Pays d'Aix Développement.

But the biggest of our challenges was to get persons to come from the United States. The Provence Promotion team solved all the related routine problems that could otherwise quickly make the move impossible. Schooling in bilingual schools, work permit for employees, job seeking, money transfer... Provence Promotion provided decisive help for all these small but extremely important details!

> Sea, sun and Aix...

Our priorities included finalising fund-raising with investors, which now appears to be progressing well. SuperSonic Imagine is planning to develop a prototype within 18 months, and then another year will be necessary for carrying out clinic evaluations (United States and Europe).

We expect our team to increase to 13 persons by the end of the year. At the moment 45% of the team consists of Americans. Our ambition is to encourage French nationals and also Americans to move to Provence through Provence Promotion's Home Sweet Home program. The fact that the enterprise is close to Aix-en-Provence will help French families from America, and also Americans, to make the first step towards us.

And the first step is half way there ...

What does SuperSonic Imagine make?

SuperSonic Imagine's mission is to develop a revolutionary medical technology to measure and display elasticity of tissues. The diagnostic thus made with this ultra-sound based technology goes beyond conventional diagnostics.

Its objectives are to:

- supply a much more advanced detection tool for palpable or non-palpable cancer lesions;
- increase the relevance of the diagnostic by better characterisation of lesions,
- develop a new non-invasive and more economic solution for therapeutic purposes – by focusing ultra-sound on the tumour.

Breast cancer is the second cause of death by cancer in the United States, causing more than 40 000 deaths in 2004 occurring in about 6 persons out of 1 000. This cancer is caused by proliferation of epithelial cells in the mammary gland and its radiological manifestations are closely related to the imagery method used. The methods used for diagnostic of breast cancer at the present time are X-rays (mammography), ultra-sound (echography) and magnetic resonance (MRI). The technology invented by SuperSonic Imagine is beneficial in 3 phases, namely screening, diagnostic and therapy (with monitoring of the risk of relapse). It could also be transposed to other cancer types such as prostate, liver and thyroid cancer.