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NEWSLETTER — EPISODE CONVERSATION

Great science doesn't commercialise itself

Fifteen years in B2B sales, a hard look at the commercial blind spot in clinical research, and why AI-native startups are really selling behaviour change.



Pavel Trofimov
Founder, Lab-2-Business (L2B)

Pavel Trofimov spent roughly fifteen years in international B2B sales across complex technical markets before he moved into clinical research — and he arrived noticing something the rest of us had stopped seeing. The science is extraordinary. The delivery is precise, engineered never to make mistakes. And the commercial side, the part that turns all that capability into revenue, is often left to whoever happens to be in the room. Usually the founder. Usually a scientist who never trained for it.

In most regulated industries, that work sits with a dedicated team. In clinical research, it frequently sits nowhere. That gap became Lab-2-Business.

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AI-native startups aren't selling software. They're selling behaviour change — and the ones who get people to change fastest could own the market.

— PAVEL TROFIMOV

THE CEILING

Founder-led growth only takes you so far

Early on, a business runs on the founder's own network and credibility. It works — until it doesn't, and the thing that got you here quietly stops scaling. Pavel's point is that recognising that moment, rather than pushing harder on a personal network that has already maxed out, is most of the battle.

DON'T GET STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

Be genuinely different, or be the leanest — never the muddle between

A business wins by being worth paying more for, or by being the lowest-cost option. The dangerous place is "premium, but also cheap" — distinctive at nothing and impossible to price. The same trap sits inside clinical trials: a flawless dataset nobody can interpret or act on is expensive to produce and quietly worth very little.

AI-native tools aren't selling a product — they're selling behaviour change

The new wave of AI tools in clinical trials isn't really asking people to buy something; it's asking them to change how they work, measure and invoice. That's a far harder sell, and it's why so many brilliant tools stall. Pavel's prediction: once the early adopters move and the regulatory picture settles, the companies that change people's behaviour fastest could end up owning the market — and parts of the old industry may simply collapse.

AFTER WE STOPPED RECORDING

One exchange stuck with me. I mentioned being approached last week by what turned out to be three different AI "personas" — three names, three profiles, one identical opportunity. Pavel wasn't surprised.

The lesson we landed on: validate that you're talking to a real human before you share anything of value. Get on a call. Challenge back. It's a small discipline that's about to matter a great deal more.

A commercial lens on an industry that rarely turns one on itself. Worth your time whether you build the science or sell it.

Until next time,

Adam



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