

MARCO SCHAAF COMBINES PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL AND COMPANY GROWTH

"I keep challenging myself"

Marco Schaaf saw his quality control team grow from two to nine people. Moreover, the range of his work has both broadened and deepened. While maintaining a good balance between work and spending quality time with his two young sons. "I keep challenging myself."

You only had one job: not a phrase that applies to Marco Schaaf. During a production run – when Neuroplast is manufacturing their stem cell product for patients – the quality control manager is engaged throughout the entire, lengthy process. At the beginning, at the end, even after the end, and several times in between.

Marco and the Quality Control (QC) team continuously analyze and check stem cell mixtures and samples. Marco: "We develop our stem cell product from the patients' own bone marrow. When the bone marrow arrives, we thoroughly check if the sample complies with the specifications we have scientifically established, in order to clear the material for manufacturing."

Intermediary between team and management

Once the bone marrow has entered the production line, QC performs several tests in parallel to monitor the process steps done in the cleanroom. Marco: "Even after Neuro-Cells® is produced and on its way back to the patient, we are still heavily occupied with QC tests to make sure everything is really in order." In this way the consistency in Neuro-Cells® quality is preserved from batch to batch. Only if compliant, the product is administered.

Marco does not only perform tests. As the team's manager, he is also responsible for creating the test outlines and for planning and organizing quality processes. "I am the intermediary between the strategy set by management and execution by the team. Vice versa, I am also the one to ask management for things the team needs to perform their tasks."



Marco Schaaf

NEURO-CELLS® IS A LIVING THERAPY SUPPORTED BY GROWING CLINICAL EVIDENCE

Neuroplast is a clinical stage stem cell biotech combatting the common cellular processes in neurodegenerative diseases. Neurodegenerative diseases include traumatic spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury and frontotemporal dementia.

There is a lot left to learn

With all his knowledge on scientifically proven desirable ranges of clotting, composition of stem cell mixtures, volumes, sterility and not to mention nine years of experience in cell biology in oncology, one might be tempted to think he knows all there is to know about the behavior of stem cells. "Quite the opposite," Marco explains. "There is a lot left for us to understand and learn."

"I am a proud father of two boys. I am a stay-at-home dad one day per week and I value that precious time with my family a lot."

Neuro-Cells® is different to other stem cell technologies, as it calls upon the self-healing capacity of human stem cells instead of genetically engineering them. When you actively do something with cells you have to understand very well what the effect of your manipulations will be on the short and long run. "In our process, we remove cells that we don't want and leave in what we know has a positive effect on neurodegenerative diseases by restoring a disturbed balance," Marco explains. "But how this interaction of different stem cell types works exactly, is something to research further."

The quality control manager believes that a better understanding will benefit patients even more. "If we identify the optimal timing to provide treatment after a diagnosis, for example, we can maximize effect," Marco states. "We might not make everyone walk again, but if we can prevent the need for adult diapers, it's a major contribution to people's quality of life." Marco works very closely with the R&D team to increase this understanding.

Industry over university

Marco has always been driven by bringing concrete value to patients: "I deliberately chose to work in industry instead of at a university." He knows the difference, because he did work as a PhD and later postdoc in a laboratory before. "In those jobs, I gained my first experiences in formulating tests, which I really liked.

But the actual clinical application of our results was very distant from me."

"This job at Neuroplast brings me so much closer to the patient's bedside," Marco explains. "We are bringing a new, even revolutionary product to the market. I like to translate requirements from authorities into concrete actions and plan them efficiently."

Marco appreciates the size of and dynamics within Neuroplast. He has seen the quality control team grow from two to nine people within four years. In larger companies, roles are more fixed. Here, my responsibilities grow along with the company." According to Marco, this is also a great enabler for personal development: "In this environment, I can keep challenging myself."

Work-life balance

The quality control manager is able to balance his professional progress with his private life very well: "I am a proud father of two boys. I am a stay-at-home dad one day per week and I value that precious time with my family a lot. And this goes well with my personal growth in the company."

"If we can prevent the need for adult diapers, it's a major contribution to people's quality of life."

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Neuroplast is always looking for new talent, clinical partners, and investors to accelerate realizing our mission: Using stem cell technology to regenerate futures.

**Contact us via info@neuroplast.com
or follow us on LinkedIn**