

Kenneth N. Drew

Vice President, Flamma USA, FLAMMA



Flamma has a long history of dealing with high value chiral materials such as amino acid derivatives. How is this seen from innovator companies developing traditional small molecule APIs and/or peptide drugs?

If your small molecule has a chiral piece within its structure, you should be speaking with Flamma. In fact, other competitors within the CDMO space often contact us to see if Flamma can make the necessary intermediate or RSM for them.

With this said, Flamma has a portfolio of projects in which many of the molecules being developed contain no chirality at all. This is a testament about the service that Flamma has provided over the years and the word-of-mouth reviews and recommendations from within the industry. Flamma never promises that we can do it all but we can help with the development of many drugs from early stage to commercial.

How do you build a long-term relationship and trusted partnership with customers?

Building relationships can take years. In the pharmaceutical industry, we do not have years to be a trusted partner. We have a first project. Our goal is to provide the customer three things: (1) A fair price quote, (2) a realistic timeline for delivery, and (3) material that is delivered on time within the specifications desired.

At Flamma, we do not tell you what you want to hear. We tell you the truth regarding what we can accomplish for you. We do not want to be the hole in your Gantt chart. We avoid this by taking advantage of our scientifically trained business team. Our business team is led by Ph.D. organic chemist along with a Ph.D. organic chemist (myself) who leads the efforts in North America. We understand the technical dynamics of projects and provide transparent, open communication from the start of the project.

We will often turn down projects or lose project because we cannot commit to the timeline desired by the customer. This approach to doing business establishes a trust. The customer knows that Flamma will always be straight and not overcommit and underdeliver. We have been told this is a very refreshing way to do business.

How is Flamma able to integrate its customer's projects and provide a reliable supply chain?

Flamma has open, honest discussions with customers to ensure that we can provide the service that they desire and expect. Each project has its own requirements and the goal is to find what works best for the customer. For example, we may suggest that by working on the first part of the project at Flamma Honkai, we will be able to compress their timeline while Flamma USA works on the last steps of the synthetic pathway concurrently.

Some customers are leery of working in China. Customers that know Flamma understand the benefits of working at multiple sites under the same corporate umbrella. Flamma is one company with active participation from our Italian executive management team at all sites.

The ability to leverage our sites allows Flamma to move the project smartly to the proper facility to help the customer succeed and simplify the supply chain.



What value does Flamma bring to its customers?

Flamma is family run and privately held. This is far different than other CDMOs. The Negrisoli family is actively involved with the day to day operations of Flamma. Their passion to create a positive experience for not only the customer but the employees is very evident.

Having an integrated supply chain that can connect Italy to China to the USA is something very unique for a CDMO. This in itself is extremely valuable to customers and clearly a reason to work with Flamma.

Flamma has grown significantly over the past 10 years. What do you think is driving this growth?

Flamma has reinvested in itself and customers see this. Therefore, they bring new projects and they also speak to their contacts who often discuss the pros and cons of the CDMO marketplace. Flamma routinely invests millions of dollars (and euros) in buildings, laboratories, equipment, safety, land, and much more in order to give customers a better experience and also provide employees with the tools to be more efficient and productive.

Flamma is one of a very select few CDMOs to own manufacturing facilities in Europe and China. What separates Flamma from the others with facilities in China?

When presenting Flamma, I will often say that we do not have a Chinese facility but we have an Italian facility that just happens to be located in Dalian, China. Many people are untrusting and leery to work in China.

This is understandable for many reasons that need not be explained here. Flamma brings value as a CDMO since our facility, Flamma Honkai, is run with heavy Italian oversight.

Our Flamma Honkai management team is composed of people who have been with Flamma for decades meanwhile our Italian team is in daily communication with the Chinese team. Communication is clear and critical to succeed.

I have personally been a part of teleconferences where the Honkai team will be on a call at 10PM on a Friday night to speak about a project with a customer. The dedication shown is incredible and always appreciated by our customers. It is one of the reasons they continue working with Flamma and recommend us to their industry contacts.

Flamma has several team members from Italy that moved to China to be part of the team there. They range from project managers to analytical & organic chemists to engineers. This enhances the customer's experience with Flamma.

You call yourself the "Thinking CDMO". What do you mean by this?

There are many good CDMOs that help innovator companies reach their goals. One of the differentiators that Flamma brings forth is the ability to be an extension of the innovator's team. Flamma feels very strongly that success comes from a singular vision and goal. Flamma becomes part of the customer's team, working together, to achieve success. Being part of the team means that you must also have a voice and use your brain. You are not a pair of hands that awaits direction when problems occur. Flamma is actively involved to be creative. Communicating with ideas to solve problems. Thus, the Thinking CDMO.

With the addition of Flamma USA, what has changed at Flamma?

The addition of Flamma USA provides innovators another option when deciding where to place their early stage small molecule project. This allows Flamma to provide innovators with a CDMO that can take the project from the early, pre-clinical stages onward to small-scale GMP manufacturing.

As the project matures, Flamma can look to strengthen the supply chain by leveraging our GMP facility in China, Flamma Honkai, to prepare early stage intermediates or RSMs and then move along to our GMP facilities in Italy for manufacturing.

Working to combine resources at Flamma USA and Flamma Honkai helps early stage projects compress those all-important timelines. There is a piece of mind when working with Flamma since Flamma Honkai, unlike other CDMOs in China, is 100% owned and managed with daily oversight from Flamma Italy.

FlammaGroup.com