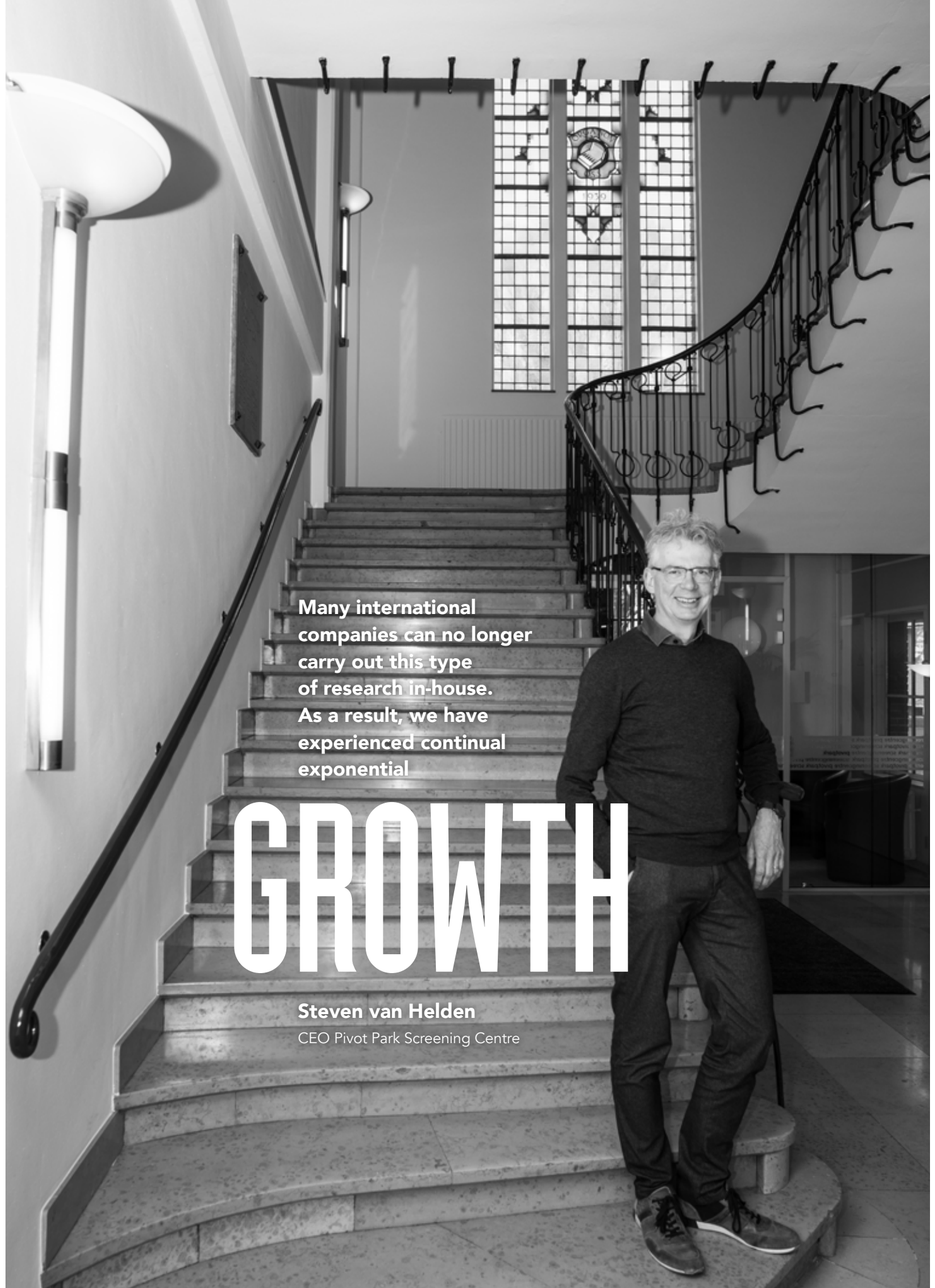
Pivot Park Screening Centre investigates leads. The company has a unique library of more than one million assays and an advanced robotic screening infrastructure, one of the largest in the world. PPSC supports the early stages of lead research through High Throughput Screening, HTS. These analyzes are important for determining a possible application and estimating the time to arrive at a usable medicine.

pivotpark screeningcentre



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GROWTH

Steven van Helden
CEO Pivot Park Screening Centre

Pivot Park Screening Center (PPSC) is responsible for High Throughput Screening (HTS) in order to analyse active compounds, antibodies and genes to accelerate drug discovery. Substances are automatically tested in large numbers for their binding efficacy to proteins that naturally occur in the human body.

Hundreds of thousands of compounds tested daily.

Steven van Helden has been involved with HTS since 2003, initially with Organon and then later as one of the founding members of PPSC (founded in 2012 as a spin-off of Organon/MSD). The company is continually researching active substances for the development of new medicines, these are referred to as 'leads'.

"We have a unique library of 300,000 compounds, which we make available to customers," says Steven. He explains how a potential lead is tested on a microtiter plate, in which no fewer than 1536 different substances have been applied. We make an analysis based on the 'key-and-lock principle' to ascertain which substances bind well to the protein and which do not. Once we have these findings, we use them to estimate what the possible applications of a lead are and how much time it will take to convert into a useful drug. The time savings that HTS provides in drug research is of great importance to our clients. This process uses what we refer to as the 'yellow robot'. It's an advanced assay system that was put into operation in 2012, and is regarded as one of the largest in the world. "We can test compounds on a significant scale. The robot is regularly improved and updated, and in addition to our own library, we are also testing larger and larger collections. Sometimes we test more than a million substances within one week."

Since its foundation, PPSC has experienced accelerated growth. "MSD left Oss and left the yellow robot, which had just been installed at the time. Fortunately, MSD helped out with a smooth transition. I then put together a team of colleagues I had worked with at MSD, and that's how we started PPSC. It was a unique opportunity. After all, the robot was already here and so was the expertise – you can't just move that." Van Helden points out that more and more large pharmaceutical companies are outsourcing the search for leads. "Many international companies can no longer carry out this type of research in-house. As a result, we have experienced constant growth. We have many large international customers, but we also serve research labs at Pivot Park."

Although the yellow robot is still among the best in the world, there are plans for a new one. Van Helden: "The yellow robot is instrumenal in our future growth. We haven't reached our maximum capacity yet, so we have still got a lot more to do and can develop much further. We want to replace the current robot in around five years. In the US, 'collaborative robots' are being developed for this type of research that are more user-friendly and offer more functionality. We currently have around 30 employees, but as the company grows, he thinks PPSC will take up more space: he has taken an option on part of the new building that will soon be built at Pivot Park. "PPSC will stay at Pivot Park, we're in the right place here. Moreover, our presence is important for the international image of Pivot Park; we are an important part of the Dutch drug discovery infrastructure."