

**Natalie Dakers**  
**President and CEO, Centre for Drug Research and Development**

Natalie Dakers applies knowledge and experience gained when she was president and CEO of Neuromed Technologies Inc. to her current job heading Vancouver's Centre for Drug Research and Development, as well as to the many corporate boards that keep her busy. Dakers sits on the boards of Genome Canada, Genome British Columbia, BC Biotech and of the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research.

Her day job also gives her sway. "The centre gives me a lot of influence because I work with the academic, industry and government sectors. It's the intersection of those sectors that's relevant because we're working with early-stage technology out of the eight institutes in B.C.," she said. "The work I'm doing with these institutes is to take this early-stage technology and advance it."

Dakers's influence also comes from the relationships she has built by sitting on committees such as the Premier's Advisory Council of Science and Technology, AceTech Academy for Technology CEOs and the Canadian Stroke Network's planning and priorities committee.

Dakers started her career as an aquaculture research biologist at Vancouver's Pacific Aqua Foods Ltd. in the 1980s. She joined the University of British Columbia's Industry Liaison Office in 1989 as senior technology transfer manager and stayed until 1997 when she helped found Neuromed and worked as its chief operating officer.

**What professional achievement are you most proud of?**

Leading the team building Neuromed Technologies because we developed a novel drug and filled an unmet need. Building biotechnology companies is a tough job.

**What's the greatest barrier you've had to overcome in your career?**

I don't feel that I've had a major barrier to overcome. I had a lot of challenges but I can't say that there have been any barriers.

**Who had the biggest influence on your career?**

I haven't had the benefit of a single mentor but I've worked with some smart people who have set a high standard for success. They have influenced me.

**What network or organization has most helped you in your career?**

When you're doing business you're spending a lot of time with people at various meetings. I can't say that there's a single one that's had the most influence on me.

**What was your toughest decision?**

I've had to make a lot of difficult decisions and the hardest ones are ones that affect other people.