Christine Karslake, PhD

CEO

Quest Strategies

Christine is the CEO of Quest Strategies. She has a lengthy and distinguished career in innovation and entrepreneurship that spans more than twenty years in Saint Louis. She founded a successful start up in the pharmaceutical intermediates space which achieved a 30x return on investment. She was Venture Partner/Principal with Prolog Ventures where she sourced investments, analyzed about 2000 business plans, conducted due diligence on approximately 70 companies, invested in companies and sat on six Boards. Many of these were Saint Louis startups such as Divergence (exited to Monsanto) and Veran Medical. With Veran, Christine sourced the deal and suggested that they be moved to Saint Louis. Following Prolog Ventures, she was the Leader of the New Ventures Group at Sigma-Aldrich. Prior to venture capital, she managed portfolios of $100M and $300M investment for Monsanto. She has led large, cross-functional/global strategies for an $8B franchise of Monsanto, for Sigma-Aldrich and the majority of Mallinckrodt. She has completed more than 40 buy-side and sell-side transactions including the recent $7B of acquisitions at Mallinckrodt. She was most recently the VP of Innovation and Entrepreneurship for the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership where she was responsible for managing the Helix Fund, the Accelerate St. Louis business plan competition, the Export Accelerator, five incubators with about 800 clients and co-chaired the regional Accelerate program. Her background is quite broad with expertise in agriculture, nutrition, pharmaceuticals, genomics and other life science tools, clean tech, diagnostics, medical devices, chemicals, and life science IT. She continues to be on the Selection Committee for Arch Grants as well as mentoring several St. Louis start-ups. She has great passion for attracting strategic start-ups to Saint Louis, making financially sound investments, mentoring companies and helping them to find successful exits. Christine has a Ph.D. in chemistry from Purdue