

# Swiss Biotech Success Stories award winner 2022

## Etienne Jornod

---



Etienne Jornod has been the Executive Chairman and Co-Owner of OM Pharma since October 2020.

Mr Jornod looks back at over 25 years of entrepreneurial achievements starting by transforming the Swiss drug wholesaler Galenica into Vifor Pharma. The key to this success was recognizing the importance of iron in oxygen transport and turning a 30-year-old product (iron sucrose) into an injectable medication containing small doses of iron that could be delivered along with erythropoietin to treat anemia in patients with chronic kidney disease.

This advancement paved the way for development of ferric carboxymaltose, a novel iron complex that consists of a ferric hydroxide core stabilized by a carbohydrate shell, that allows for controlled delivery of iron to target tissues throughout the body.

Etienne Jornod and the Vifor Pharma team further expanded the success of this company thanks to a joint venture with Fresenius-FMC, the largest global network of dialysis centers, creating Vifor FMC Renal Pharma. This joint venture enabled, among others, the launch of Mircera® (methoxy polyethylene glycol-epoetin beta) in the US in partnership with Roche. Within weeks, Mircera® achieved annual sales of over CHF 500 million in the US and is currently supplied to over 3,500 dialysis clinics in the US and its territories.

In his new position, Etienne Jornod is committed to advancing the “New OM Pharma” to become a highly innovative and research-based enterprise. The transformation will include new research aimed at extending the use of bacterial lysates for the prevention and treatment of a wide range of immuno-inflammatory diseases that affect millions of children and adults, including asthma, atopic dermatitis, recurrent wheezing and other diseases of the respiratory and urinary tract systems.

The company will also begin development of new chemical entities aimed at improving the lives of patients with diabetic macular edema, pancreatitis, and both renal and pulmonary fibrosis. More than CHF 250 million has already been committed to these initiatives.

“We are building, together with our employees, a highly innovative biopharmaceutical company based on the unique bacterial lysate expertise developed over decades by OM Pharma, with the goal of improving patients’ lives,” says Mr Jornod.