



*PRESS RELEASE*

*See attached graphic.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Hardy Diagnostics Now 100% Employee Owned**

***Jay Hardy sells remaining shares to employees***



Directors of Hardy Diagnostics. L to R: Chris Catani, Kimball Lombardi, Chris Massey, Andre Hsiung, Jay Hardy, Ryan Burks, Eddie Mendoza, Mike Welch, Sue Pruett Photo by Teresa Rodil

SANTA MARIA, CALIFORNIA, October 8 – Hardy Diagnostics is proud to announce that the company’s Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) has purchased the remaining 30% of company shares, making it 100% employee-owned.

“I have wanted to do this for a long time,” said Jay Hardy, President and co-founder of Hardy Diagnostics. “By selling the company to the employees, who built it into what it is today, they get to share in the rewards of ownership, just as I have. They get to influence the future of the company—the better they perform the more they will benefit.”

Companies that are employee owned are known as ESOPs. Over time, employees are granted real shares in the company at no cost to them. According to the National Center for Employee Ownership (NCEO), there are about 7,000 companies in the U.S. that are ESOPs like Hardy Diagnostics and only about 2,500 are 100% employee-owned.

As an employee-owned company, Hardy Diagnostics is not obligated to outside shareholders who care only about the bottom line. This ensures the freedom to emphasize other values, like community involvement, environmental responsibility, and the wellness and satisfaction of the workforce as whole people. "Our employee ownership program also ensures the long-term viability of the company and eliminates the fear of Hardy Diagnostics being swallowed up by a larger conglomerate," said Jay Hardy.

Due to employee involvement, ESOPs generally have a superior track record compared to other companies. An ESOP is 25% more likely to stay in business. ESOPs have 25% higher job growth over the last 10 years compared to the non-ESOP. Employees at ESOPs have retirement accounts that are 2.5 times greater than their non-ESOP counterparts and they were four times less likely to be laid off during the recent recession.

Hardy reports that, "The Company's growth rate stands at 17% so far this year, which is evidence of a highly dedicated and motivated workforce." Hardy Diagnostics' stock price increased 34% last year.

Christian Alduenda, a sales representative at Hardy Diagnostics, said, "The ESOP gives people working here a sense of ownership and pride; we know we own a business. It drives us to want to work harder since we get to be part of the decision-making process."

Hardy Diagnostics' ESOP also brings significant tax advantages which will make the company more competitive and will help to offset the costly Medical Device Tax imposed by the Affordable Care Act.

Jay Hardy plans to remain as President and the current Board of Directors will continue to serve the company.

"A company made of hundreds of owners who really care about their work is a powerful, if not unbeatable, force in the marketplace," states Jay Hardy. "I get a great deal of satisfaction, when an employee tells me that they actually look forward to coming to work each day" he adds.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT HARDY DIAGNOSTICS** - Hardy Diagnostics is an FDA licensed and ISO 13485 certified manufacturer of medical devices for microbiological procedures in both clinical and industrial laboratories. Hardy Diagnostics was founded in 1980 in Santa Barbara by Jay Hardy and Robert Shibata after they completed their Medical Technology training in the laboratory at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital.

Hardy Diagnostics manufactures over 2,700 different products for the culture and identification of bacteria and fungi. Among its offerings are products used to culture and detect pathogens commonly reported in the news, such as *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria*, MRSA, and Influenza. In addition, the company manufactures reagents and media for use by molecular biology researchers. Over 9,000 laboratories throughout the nation rely on Hardy Diagnostics for their supplies.

Today, Hardy Diagnostics employs over 300 people and maintains nine distribution centers throughout the U.S. Manufacturing takes place at its headquarters in Santa Maria, California and at a recently opened facility in Springboro, Ohio. The company also exports products through over 65 foreign distributors. The company's mission is to "partner with its laboratory customers to prevent and diagnose disease." For more information, visit [www.HardyDiagnostics.com](http://www.HardyDiagnostics.com).

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