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# Q&A WITH...

BACTERIA, USP TESTING, AND QUALITY CONTROL EXPERT

## JOSHUA SNYDER

QUALITY ASSURANCE MANAGER FOR

eurofins | Built Environment Testing

**Q:** What are the key distinctions in quality control for bacteria and USP testing when comparing environmental labs to compounding pharmacies?

**A:** The main distinction is the scope and purpose. Compounding pharmacies must adhere to strict USP requirements and FDA regulations, taking a zero-tolerance approach to contamination risk. Environmental labs, governed primarily by EPA regulations and ISO standards, test a much wider range of samples that are mostly "dirtier," from uncontrolled environments.

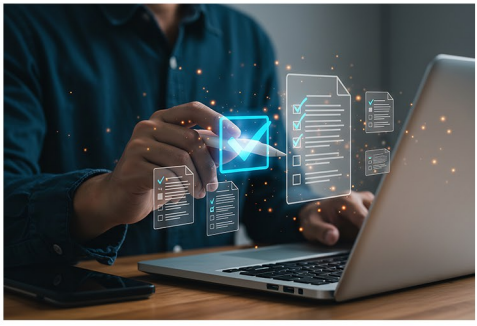
**Q:** As QA Manager, what's your biggest challenge in ensuring consistent bacteriological analysis in your labs, and how do you tackle it?

**A:** Bacteria are very diverse, so many specialized methods are needed to identify and quantify them accurately. The key is ensuring qualification, standardization, and traceability of everything influencing the analyses, to control as many variables as possible. This includes qualified personnel, validated procedures, careful selection of vendors, and comprehensive quality control checks.

**Q:** How do your roles on the AIHA LAP and ASTM committees influence Eurofins Built Environment Testing's quality assurance and new testing methods?

**A:** Committee involvement with AIHA LAP and ASTM keeps the company at the forefront of analytical standards. This participation allows benchmarking to industry best practices and identification of areas for improvement, guiding the adoption and creation of rigorously validated methods.

**Q:** What crucial advice do you have for clients regarding sample preparation or result interpretation for bacterial contamination or USP testing?



**A:** Clients should plan extensively before sampling, using qualified staff and documenting the event thoroughly. It is critical to interpret results in their proper context. Ultimately, the value of environmental monitoring for USP and microbial monitoring programs in general is in the visibility of ongoing trends and extreme outliers.