

Biotech hirings and firings

Michael Francisco

Small and mid-size biotech companies continue to reel from the ongoing global financial crisis. Since November, ten biotech firms have declared bankruptcy, according to the Biotechnology Industry Organization, and one-third of 360 public biotech companies have less than six months of cash on hand, according to Burrill & Co. Meanwhile, one in five of Europe's small biopharmaceutical companies are at risk of bankruptcy by the end of 2009, according to a study released by the

trade group European Biopharmaceutical Enterprises.

A search of three job databases for the 25 largest biotech companies (Table 1) and ten largest pharmas (Table 2) reveals that openings are few and far between for most companies, large and small. By contrast, a snapshot of job reductions in March shows that micro and small-cap biotechs are feeling the brunt of the downturn (Table 3). *Nature Biotechnology* will continue to follow trends in the coming year.

Table 1 Who's hiring? Advertised openings at the 25 largest public firms

Biotech company ^a	Number of employees	Number of advertised openings ^b			Top-30 company ^c	Strengths ^d
		Monster	Biospace	Naturejobs		
Monsanto	18,800	1	0	3	NR	
Amgen	17,500	100	89	0	22	Remuneration and benefits/research environment
Genentech	11,174	18	20	113	NR	
Genzyme	10,000	59	0	141	19	Integrity/policies and practices
PerkinElmer	8,700	31	0	0	NR	
Bio-Rad Laboratories	6,400	1	2	20	NR	
Millipore	6,000	20	8	0	NR	
Biomerieux	5,747	24	0	0	NR	
Applied Biosystems Group – Applera	5,000	0	0	0	NR	
IDEXX Laboratories	4,700	25	0	0	NR	
Biogen Idec	4,300	43	24	2	NR	
Invitrogen	4,300	0	0	0	NR	
Gilead Sciences	2,979	2	3	0	NR	
Cephalon	2,796	12	3	0	NR	
Qiagen	2,662	4	2	0	NR	
Biocon	2,543	2	0	5	NR	
Amylin Pharmaceuticals	1,900	39	10	0	15	Remuneration and benefits/training and development
Biotest	1,727	1	0	0	NR	
Celgene	1,685	9	2	0	NR	
Elan	1,610	6	3	0	NR	
Actelion	1,592	0	0	0	NR	
CK Life Sciences	1,333	0	0	0	NR	
Albany Molecular Research	1,226	0	0	0	NR	
Endo Pharmaceuticals Holdings	1,208	0	1	0	NR	
Affymetrix	1,141	1	1	0	NR	

^aAs defined in *Nature Biotechnology's* survey of public companies (26, 753–762, 2008). ^bAs searched on Monster.com, Biospace.com and Naturejobs.com, March 18–20, 2009. Jobs may overlap. ^cData from *The Scientist* "Best Places to Work 2008: Industry" (June 2008). ^dApplies only to ranked companies. NR, not ranked.

Table 2 Advertised job openings at the ten largest pharma companies

Company	Number of employees ^a	Number of advertised openings ^b			Top-30 company ^c	Strengths ^d
		Monster	Biospace	Naturejobs		
Johnson & Johnson	119,200	263	4	0	NR	
Bayer AG	106,200	86	3	1	NR	
GlaxoSmithKline	103,483	6	0	17	28	Remuneration and benefits/policies and practices
Sanofi-Aventis	99,495	0	0	0	NR	
Novartis	98,200	114	17	13	25	Remuneration and benefits/training and development
Pfizer	86,600	100	1	7	20	Remuneration and benefits/training and development
Roche	78,604	42	7	6	NR	
Abbott	68,697	71	13	5	NR	
AstraZeneca	67,400	65	19	9	17	Integrity/communications
Merck	59,800	31	0	2	30	Remuneration and benefits/policies and practices

^aData obtained from *MedAd News*. ^bAs searched on Monster.com, Biospace.com and Naturejobs.com, March 18–20, 2009. Jobs may overlap. ^cData from *The Scientist* "Best Places to Work 2008: Industry" (June 2008). NR, not ranked.

Table 3 Recently announced job reductions in the biotech sector

Company	Layoffs by number	Layoffs by percentage of workforce	Details
Oscient Pharmaceuticals	100	32%	Majority of cuts will be in sales
Phytopharm	15	38%	Part of restructuring announced in 4Q08
Elan	230	14%	Half of cuts in Ireland, half in the US
Trubion Pharmaceuticals	25	25%	a
Penwest Pharmaceuticals	11	18%	Part of restructuring announced in January
Acusphere	40	66%	a
PreMD	6	100%	President/CEO will remain to secure financing and appeal FDA decision
Enzon Pharmaceuticals	22	10%	a
Ambria Biopharma	8	42%	Terminating operations in France

^aNo further details available. Source: Press releases; *BioCentury*, March 2009.

Michael Francisco is Senior Editor, *Nature Biotechnology*.

Corrigendum: Transfection of small RNAs globally perturbs gene regulation by endogenous microRNAs

Aly A Khan, Doron Betel, Martin L Miller, Chris Sander, Christina S Leslie & Debora S Marks
Nat. Biotechnol. 6, 549–555 (2009); published online 24 May 2009; corrected after print 8 July 2009

In the version of this article initially published, Figure 2f is not referenced in the figure legend and is referenced as Figure 2e in the main text. Also, on p.5, right col., para. 1, line 8, miR-21 should be miR-122. The errors have been corrected in the HTML and PDF versions of the article.

Erratum: Venture capital shifts strategies, startups suffer

Peter Mitchell
Nat. Biotechnol. 27, 103–104 (2009); published online 9 February 2009; corrected after print 8 July 2009

In the version of this article initially published, “GSK Ventures” should have read “GlaxoSmithKline’s SR One.” The error has been corrected in the HTML and PDF versions of the article.

Erratum: New relief for gout

Jill U Adams
Nat. Biotechnol. 27, 309–311 (2009); published online 7 April 2009; corrected after print 8 July 2009

In the version of this article initially published, the incidence of gout was incorrectly stated to be in the hundreds of millions worldwide and 300 million in the US (p. 309, para. 2). The incidence is known for industrialized countries, not worldwide. In the US, the number is 3 million. The last five lines of the paragraph should have read, “including about 1 in 100 adult men in industrialized countries (an estimated 3 million in the US according to the Centers for Disease Control).” The errors have been corrected in the HTML and PDF versions of the article.

Erratum: Biotech hirings and firings

Michael Francisco
Nat. Biotechnol. 27, 395, 2009; published online 7 April 2009; corrected after print 8 July 2009

In the version of this article initially published, a company name was omitted from Table 2. GlaxoSmithKline should be listed in third place. The error has been corrected in the HTML and PDF versions of the article.

Erratum: Wyeth preemption case ruling sparks labeling confusion

Malorye Allison
Nat. Biotechnol. 27, 399–400 (2009); published online 8 May 2009; corrected after print 8 July 2009

In the version of this article initially published, Phenergan is incorrectly mentioned in paragraph 2 as Merck’s antinausea drug. Phenergan is made by Wyeth. The original version also states in paragraph 3 that Wyeth is located in Whitehouse Station, New Jersey. The company’s correct location is Madison. The errors have been corrected in the HTML and PDF versions of the article.

Erratum: Academia and the company coin

Jim Kling
Nat. Biotechnol. 27, 411–414 (2009); published online 8 May 2009; corrected after print 8 July 2009

In the version of this article initially published, on p. 411, left column, last paragraph, one of the researchers’ names was incorrectly given as “Martin Feller.” It should have read Martin Keller. The error has been corrected in the HTML and PDF versions of the article.