

naturejobs

**JOBS OF
THE WEEK**

This year's list of the top 100 places to work in the United States as decided by *Fortune* magazine contains only two life-sciences companies. Biotechnology firm Genentech of South San Francisco made the top 10 with a ranking of number 5, and the US arm of pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca in Wilmington, Delaware, came in at number 83. This is something of a decline for such companies — the previous two years saw four life-sciences firms, among them Genzyme of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Amgen of Thousand Oaks, California, grace the list.

A place in this listing is secured only after a long and involved vetting process. Four hundred employees at AstraZeneca, for example, were surveyed on issues such as how much they valued their work, camaraderie in the workplace and leadership in the company. The firm also had to describe in detail its employee benefits — such as educational opportunities, training, childcare facilities and pay — as well as supplying essays written by various people from within the company. Andrea Moselle, a senior manager in AstraZeneca's personnel department, attributes the *Fortune* listing to factors such as the firm's child and disability care, and programmes such as 'College Coach', which advises parents on how to help their children with college applications and getting financial aid.

But it is the miscellaneous perks that make some of the companies listed stand out. Genentech gives a daily subsidy of \$4 to employees who come to work by bike, on foot, on public transport or who use the carpool. Google, which received the number 1 ranking for the second year running, gives employees \$1,000 towards the purchase of a hybrid or electric car, and has a discount programme for California employees who install solar panels in their homes. But perhaps most impressive is Chesapeake Energy of Oklahoma City, a natural-gas producer that is number 61 on the list. It pays for its employees to earn their scuba-diving certification in the firm's own Olympic-sized pool. Maybe life-sciences companies should try investing in wet suits and oxygen tanks?

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