

First-quarter biotech job picture

Michael Francisco

The first quarter of 2012 saw the number of advertised biotech sector jobs jump significantly compared with the fourth quarter of 2011 (*Nat. Biotechnol.* **30**, 195, 2012), as seen in one of the three representative job databases tracked by *Nature Biotechnology* (Tables 1 and 2). Monster.com showed 493 openings at the 25 largest biotech companies compared with 264 in the last quarter. Biospace's and Naturejobs's numbers, however, remained steady (175 and 19 in the fourth quarter to 155 and 20 in the first quarter, respectively). Pharma sector hiring numbers were likewise similar.

Announced expansions include GlaxoSmithKline's new site at Ulverston, UK, which will cost \$553.9 million as well as another \$158.3 million to improve two sites in Scotland. Bayer has said it plans to open a life sciences incubator at its US Innovation Center in San Francisco by late summer. The incubator will house three to four companies in areas that align with Bayer's portfolio. Additionally, Ipsen Group said it will invest \$45 million in its R&D and technical operations facility in Milford, Massachusetts. The company also plans to relocate its US headquarters from Brisbane, California, to Bridgewater, New Jersey, with 100 employees.

Table 1 Who's hiring? Advertised openings at the 25 largest biotech companies

Company ^a	Number of employees	Number of advertised openings ^b		
		Monster	Biospace	Naturejobs
Monsanto	21,400	6	0	0
Amgen	17,250	36	29	0
Life Technologies	11,000	70	1	1
Genzyme	10,100	72	0	0
CSL	9,992	0	0	2
Bio-Rad Laboratories	6,880	21	16	0
bioMérieux	6,378	13	0	0
PerkinElmer	6,200	60	1	0
Novozymes	5,655	0	2	2
Biogen Idec	4,850	77	1	0
IDEXX Laboratories	4,800	21	1	0
Biocon	4,478	0	0	0
WuXi PharmaTech	4,465	0	0	0
Shire	4,183	48	0	0
Celgene	4,182	6	30	10
Gilead Sciences	4,000	0	29	4
Cephalon	3,726	0	0	0
Qiagen	3,587	0	0	0
Endo Pharmaceuticals	2,947	0	0	0
Actelion	2,441	4	2	0
Illumina	2,100	26	0	1
Vertex Pharmaceuticals	1,691	29	34	0
Biotest Pharmaceuticals	1,627	1	5	0
Dendreon	1,497	3	4	0
Albany Molecular Research	1,421	0	0	0
Total		493	155	20

^aAs defined in *Nature Biotechnology's* survey of public companies (29, 585–591, 2011). ^bAs searched on Monster.com, Biospace.com and Naturejobs.com, 11 April 2012. Jobs may overlap.

Meanwhile, several pharmas announced large job cuts in the quarter. Takeda said it will reduce headcount by 2,800 or 9% of its workforce by the end of 2015, mostly in Europe and the United States. AstraZeneca announced a new restructuring initiative that includes 7,300 employee cuts, with 2,200 R&D, 3,750 general/administrative and 1,350 operations positions affected. Finally, contract research and contract manufacturing organization Albany Molecular Research in New Jersey announced a restructuring and headcount reduction as it winds down all internal R&D, saving about \$10–11 million annually.

Other fourth-quarter downsizings within the life science industry are shown in Table 3.

Table 2 Advertised job openings at the ten largest pharma companies

Company ^a	Number of employees	Number of advertised openings ^b		
		Monster	Biospace	Naturejobs
Johnson & Johnson	119,200	634	4	0
Bayer	106,200	18	0	0
GlaxoSmithKline	103,483	25	0	2
Sanofi	99,495	0	0	0
Novartis	98,200	81	37	4
Pfizer	86,600	0	42	35
Roche	78,604	13	42	6
Abbott Laboratories	68,697	0	46	0
AstraZeneca	67,400	2	32	1
Merck & Co.	59,800	0	0	0
Total		773	203	48

^aData obtained from *MedAdNews*. ^bAs searched on Monster.com, Biospace.com and Naturejobs.com, 11 April 2011. Jobs may overlap.

Table 3 Selected biotech and pharma downsizings

Company	Number of employees	Details
Active Biotech	25	Will reduce headcount by up to 32% to about 55 following a comprehensive overview of the organization, saying its partners will increasingly handle projects as they move along in development.
Alnylam Pharmaceuticals	61	Will restructure and reduce headcount by 33% to about 115 to focus on development of its ALN-TTR and ALN-APC programs. The cuts will come from across the company and are expected to save about \$20 million in 2012.
Human Genome Sciences	101	Will reduce headcount by 8% to about 1,200. The cuts will come from manufacturing, R&D and administration.
Myrexis	52	Plans to reduce headcount to 10 by June 30, following a February announcement that the company retained Stifel Nicolaus Weisel to evaluate strategic alternatives and suspended development of all its preclinical and clinical programs.
NeurogesX	43	Will restructure and reduce headcount by 57% to 32, which is expected to reduce 2012 operating expenses by about \$12.2 million.
Optimer Pharmaceuticals	7	Will restructure and reduce headcount by 3% to about 270. The cuts will come from basic research, which the company will discontinue while retaining development capabilities.
Orexo	75	Will restructure its R&D to focus on its neurology programs and will reduce its headcount to save \$4.5 million annually.

Source: *BioCentury*.

Michael Francisco is a Senior Editor at *Nature Biotechnology*.