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## How to succeed in business

**D**ecoding acronyms such as VC and IPO was once primarily the domain of a professional bearing another acronym — the MBA. Then, in the biotech boom that anticipated the sequencing of the human genome, life-science PhDs started schooling themselves. Now, even undergraduates are getting in on the act, taking courses tailored to teach a scientist how to think like a board chairman.

The evolution in business education has mirrored the involvement of scientists in business-plan competitions around the world (see page 676). But for scientists to excel in both science and business in a world where, like it or not, academic and industrial science are increasingly linked, young scientists could use more training to compete with their business-school colleagues.

California, with its globally dominant life-science hubs in San Francisco and San Diego and a growing medical-devices hub near Los Angeles, is one of the leaders in business training for scientists. The University of California at San Diego has for the past few years offered biotech business courses which are attended by biotech workers, graduate students and even visitors flying in from other continents. The University of San Francisco offers a course called 'From Idea to IPO' that walks life-science graduates through the whole business-plan process. And this spring, the University of California at Irvine launched an undergraduate entrepreneurship course for scientists and engineers. This filled two 40-student sessions to capacity, with a waiting list to boot.

The demand for such courses — whatever the training level — surely isn't limited to California, or to the life sciences. More offerings like these all over the world would help academic scientists speak the language of business. This is always a useful skill, even for those who plan to stay in the lab rather than move into the boardroom.

Paul Smaglik  
Naturejobs editor



## Contents

### SPECIAL REPORT

Glittering prizes p676

### CAREER VIEW

Scientists & Societies  
Membership drive  
**Graduate Journal**  
Networking savvy  
**Movers**  
Zhenan Bao p678

### WWW.NATUREJOBS.COM

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Information on the  
scientific job market

FOCUS

SPOTLIGHT

RECRUITMENT

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS