

naturejobs

**THE CAREERS
MAGAZINE FOR
SCIENTISTS**

One of the most common questions I've been asked at careers panels in the past few years is: "How can I get into industry?" The frequency is not limited by geography: I've heard this same question in the United States, France, Germany, Britain and Japan. This regularity underscores the need for young scientists to learn about the career options that exist outside academia. It also implies that they erroneously view industry as some kind of a monolithic entity, a sort of black box. This week, *Naturejobs* concludes a year-long series about industry jobs — what they are, how to prepare for them, where they can lead — with a feature that focuses on sales and marketing (see page 238).

Perhaps the single biggest lesson that can be drawn from this series is that industry offers a huge variety of opportunities. Jobs exist at many different stages of product research and development, and on both sides of the bench. Each stage requires a different set of skills, and has its own entry points. For example, pharmaceutical companies working on small-molecule drugs tend to hire synthetic inorganic chemists straight out of graduate school and then train them to make the kinds of molecules they seek. But someone in drug discovery — an earlier stage of the product pipeline — is more likely to come from a senior academic position or from within the corporate ranks.

Off-the-bench areas also exist at multiple points in the pipeline. Skills such as regulatory affairs and intellectual-property development come into play as products are being discovered, designed and developed. 'Soft skills', such as project planning and communication, can bridge the gap between the various teams in an enterprise; and scientists who have both those skills as well as a 'hard' research background can excel away from the bench.

We hope that our exploration of the functions and skills throughout the pipeline (see www.naturejobs.com) has given scientists a better understanding of their career options, and will make it easier for them to move in or out of industry, up and down the pipeline, and from one side of the bench to the other.

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