

CareerSmart Advisor™

Strategies & Solutions for Your Career Success

A Note From Dave

ExecuNet's 13th annual *Executive Job Market Intelligence Report* has revealed an upcoming growth trend in the pharmaceutical/medical/biotechnology industry, which may yield career options that executives have not yet fully explored. This issue's cover story takes a look at the senior-level crossover potential in biotech, where executives can leverage their business acumen and experience.



We pack a couple of instructional items in this issue that members are sure to find valuable. First, in our *Learnings From Landings* article, Laura Bentley shares her job search experience along with a sample marketing plan. The one-page document worked so well for her that she wanted to pass it along to her fellow members. Inside the *Executive Toolbox*, our member services department includes some tips on how to best manage your e-mailbox.

This issue also contains articles on successful implementations — one is about executing ideas, and the other is a book review on the systemization of performance management. Author Robert W. Rogers sheds additional insight on the performance management process in his comprehensive responses to our questions.

Finally, a big "thank you" is owed to all the ExecuNet members who participated in this year's *Executive Job Market Intelligence Report*. As you can see, the report contains deep insight into the marketplace, which should assist members in developing and executing their career plans. Please enjoy your complimentary copy included with your *CareerSmart Advisor*.

Sincerely,

Dave Opton
Founder & CEO
ExecuNet

Out of the Lab and Into the Boardroom: Jobs in Biotech

By Robyn Greenspan

Biotechnology is in the spotlight as states debate controversial plans for stem cell research. While many opportunities are expected to emerge as plans get underway, there are a number of other less-contentious verticals within the biotechnology industry where senior-level executives with an interest in science can find careers.

What is biotechnology? The term is often used as an umbrella for a number of industries — pharmaceutical, healthcare, medical device and equipment, life sciences, research and testing. Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO), a Washington, DC advocacy group, defines biotechnology as "a collection of technologies that capitalize on the attributes of cells, such as their manufacturing capabilities, and put biological molecules, such as DNA and proteins, to work for us. It is the use of biological processes to solve problems or make useful products."

Biotech by the Numbers

According to Ernst & Young, biotechnology industry revenues surged from \$8 billion in 1992 to \$33.6 billion in 2002, while BIO found that investment in the industry catapulted from \$3 billion in 1993 to \$20.9 billion in 2004 (including a record \$4.9 billion for venture-stage companies).

Economy.com expects the biotech industry's 2002 workforce of 713,000 to swell to 814,900 workers in 2007, and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics projects an employment increase of 23 percent in pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing between 2002 and 2012.

Government Outreach

The President's High Growth Job Training Initiative has allocated \$17 million to address the workforce needs of the biotechnology industry. The initiative was designed to stimulate attraction and retention efforts in emerging industries, and education and workforce alliances in San Diego and California's Bay Area, Delaware, North Carolina, Iowa, Ohio, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Florida are slated to receive the funding.

Continued on page 4

Learnings From Landings A Solid Marketing Plan Readied this Member for Her Short Search.....	2
Your Career Advisor How Do I Successfully Propose and Get Approval for a New Idea?	3
Ask the Expert Legally and Ethically Speaking, Résumés Should Always be Truthful	6
Executive Toolbox E-mail Settings that Increase Communication, Enhance Productivity	6

Learnings From Landings

A Solid Marketing Plan Readied this Member for Her Short Search

“**B**efore anything else, preparation is the key to success,” said

Alexander Graham Bell; and Laura Bentley realized the importance of that statement in her recent job search.

However, it took some time before Laura could even get to the preparation stage.

“It took me a while to get motivated to look, because I was so comfortable where I was, but I wasn’t happy. The reality is you have to recognize when it is time to make the move and accept it,” Laura says.

““

Networking was fantastic once I learned that I had to give as much as one would give me.

””

“I joined ExecuNet in July, and it took me a long time to get my résumé to where I liked it. I also had to get my marketing plan read, and I had to learn how to communicate with recruiters. Also, it took a few months for me to find out that if I did not *exactly* match the specs of the jobs posted, I would not get a bite.”

Continued on page 7

Sample Marketing Plan

“My marketing plan talked about my objectives, what position I was seeking and my skill set. It described my criteria for companies (large cap, healthcare) and cultures, along with a list of targeted companies,” Laura explains.

Objective: Senior-level marketing executive opportunity in the healthcare industry that focuses on strategic planning, team-building, and long-term business goals.

Capabilities and Qualifications:

- New market penetration and product development
- Market research, strategic analysis and planning
- Collateral development
- Global collaboration
- Open to relocation

Strengths:

- Creating and sustaining market leading brands
- Driving growth in targeted markets
- Innovation and critical thinking
- Relationship building and communication

Target Company Characteristics:

- Transparent and communicative culture
- Autonomous division of parent company, >\$1.0 Billion
- Ability to set and achieve market goals

Target Companies:

- Acme Health, California
- Widgets & Gadgets, Oregon
- Summertime Corp., Florida
- Apex of Montana
- Tops Division of Health, Rhode Island

FastTrack Programs – April 2005

Hosted by Dave Opton, founder and CEO, ExecuNet

- 4/6 — **Running Under the Radar** — Karen Armon
- 4/12 — **How to Land the Job You Want When You’re Over 45** — Jean Walker
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- 4/13 — **Converting Interviews to Offers with DISC** — Linda Dominguez
- 4/19 — **Winning Plans: What To Do To Find Your Next Job** — Linda Dominguez
- 4/20 — **Winning Networking: Great Contacts Become Offers** — Bill Belknap

Register today to guarantee your participation in the programs of your choice! Call ExecuNet’s Member Services at 1-800-637-3126 or visit www.execunet.com/fasttrack.cfm

Your Career Advisor

How Do I Successfully Propose and Get Approval for a New Idea?

By Deborah Brown-Volkman

Do you have a great idea that will save your company a lot of money? Or, will your idea save you time and make your job easier? Would you like to propose this idea to your boss, the CEO or Board of Directors, but are unsure whether the idea will be accepted or rejected?

Every one of us has a good idea inside. Sometimes we act on our ideas and sometimes we choose not to. But sometimes an idea is so good that you know it needs to be implemented. You know in your gut that it's a perfect fit. You know it will make a big impact. But how do you get consensus so it can happen?

Three steps will take an idea from concept to reality.

Step 1: How to Find Out if Your Idea is Good Before You Propose it

Believe in Your Idea: If you hear yourself saying: "My idea won't work" or "No one is interested in making changes anyway, so why try." Guess what? You are stopping yourself before you get started. You have to believe in your idea before anyone else will. Belief doesn't guarantee acceptance, but it does give you a strong place to begin. "I want" gets the process started. The rest is implementation to make your idea real.

Map Out Your Idea: What exactly is your idea? Get it on paper. Write down the problems your idea solves. How will your idea make something better, stronger or faster? It's important to have these answers, because you will be asked these questions. Mapping out your idea will make it clear for you as well as the other people.

Tell Others About Your Idea: Telling others about your idea will help you recognize obstacles. Yes, it would be easier if everyone loved your idea right away and agreed with you, but the business world does not work this way. People have

Deborah Brown-Volkman is the creator of the Career Escape Program™ and author of *Coach Yourself to a New Career: A Book to Discover Your Ultimate Profession*. For more information: <http://www.surpassyourdreams.com>, <http://www.career-escape-program.com>, info@surpassyourdreams.com or at (631) 874-2877.

opinions that shape who they are, and this will affect how they see your idea.

This is not bad news. You want to understand their thinking, so you can discover their objections. Everyone has objections but once you know what they are, then you can address them. You would much rather know an objection first, thus researching an answer beforehand, than have an objection presented to you for the first time in a front of room full of people.

One note: you'll know if your idea is good when people say they like it and want to get involved. "I don't think it will work" or a blank stare is a clear sign of an obstacle. Use it as an invitation to pick their brain to find out how the idea could work. A more difficult response to read is the "sounds good." You may want to believe that people always mean what they say (especially if you are attached to your idea), but they might be acting polite or nonconfrontational. Try to engage passive responders to learn their true opinions.

Read, Read, & Read: Internal documents, memos, annual reports and meeting minutes hold the key to vital information about whether your idea is appropriate at this time. Timing is key to an idea being accepted. Know what's not working, so you can position your idea as the vehicle for making things work better now.

Step 2: How to Back Up Your Idea With Concrete Facts and Figures

Once you have a good inclination that your idea will work, then it's time to get the facts and figures you need to back it up.

Research: Every industry has an association or trade publication. What can they tell you? Where is your industry headed? What are its problems? What is needed or not being provided today? Where are you falling behind as a company, and what do you need to catch up or get back on track? How does your idea fit into this picture?

Great places for research also include trade shows, teleclasses and conferences, which help predict the future and increase your knowledge. Business magazines tell you where the corporate world is today and where it is headed tomorrow.

How can your idea translate into numbers? Decision-makers love numbers that include dollar amounts (saved or earned) or percentages (time saved, customers retained or won, etc.). This will make your idea seem worthwhile. Need to gather numbers? A good place is the Internet. Look for quotes and statistics. Also look at internal documents. How much have bad ideas cost your company, and how will your idea be a profitable winner?

Create A Game Plan: How will your idea be implemented? Who does what, when and how? What's the timetable to take your idea from concept to reality? You want to cover all of your bases and answer as many questions as you can anticipate before you present your idea for approval.

Step 3: How to Get Your Idea Approved

What's in it for Me? How will your idea benefit them? Will it save them time? Will it make their job easier? Will they look

Continued on page 8

Jobs in Biotech

Continued from page 1 Nonscientific Positions

Senior-level opportunities in discovery and preclinical research, as well as process/product development operations, typically require candidates from a science discipline; but there are jobs in biotech companies for more traditional business experience.

For example, chief financial officer and chief technology officer positions can often be filled with professionals who have limited life science backgrounds, as their primary functions are not dependent on biotechnology experience.

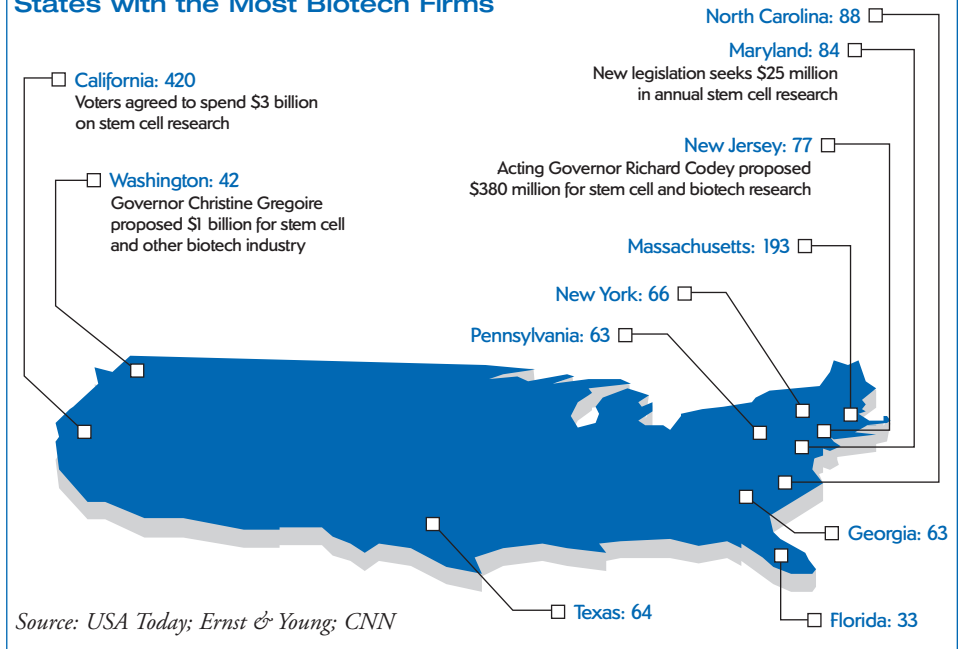
Additionally, biotechnology careers are available for those currently employed in computer science, information technology, regulatory affairs, quality control and assurance, manufacturing, facilities and infrastructure management, and transitioning military.

An October 2004 report for The US Department of Labor Employment & Training Administration Business Relations Group identified categories across small biotech companies for those without pure science backgrounds:

- **Regulatory Affairs:** These positions may require close collaboration with government officials, as they guide products through the steps to meet US Federal Government standards for safety and efficacy.
- **Quality Systems:** Individuals employed in these occupations are responsible for monitoring products to ensure they meet company and regulatory standards. Included in this category are director, supervisor and analyst.
- **Finance, Administration and Information Systems:** This category includes chief financial officer, accounting manager, application systems specialist, as well as professionals with the ability to design and maintain databases and data storage generated by the research and development of new products.

“High-tech human resource professionals transitioned into biotech because

States with the Most Biotech Firms



biotech is a fairly new field,” says Pamela J. Love, director of marketing and member services, Washington Biotechnology & Biomedical Association (WBBA). “However, biotech’s first choice would be a related health discipline before looking outside in other industries.”

Dr. Scott Gottlieb, a former senior policy adviser to the Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and author of the *Forbes/Gottlieb Medical Technology Investor newsletter*, says that many biotech companies are chasing the opportunities pharmaceutical companies usually pursue, such as reformulation of successful drugs.

With that in mind, biotechnology has more of an appetite for pharma-experienced executives. “Researchers used to become the chief executives, but companies are looking for managers with experience integrating biotech with pharma,” Gottlieb says. “As the industries become more dependent on each other, there is more need for experienced managers.”

The Challenges for the Semi-Scientific

While there appears to be room in the biotechnology industry for professionals with diverse skills and experience, transitioning into the field can be difficult for those without any scientific background.

Love says that crossover attempts are

not uncommon, particularly in the Seattle area. “When the dot-com bomb happened, we had a lot of technology executives looking to transition. But most of the biotech executives I know rose up through the ranks or they came from hospital, healthcare or pharmaceutical companies.”

Historically, biotechnology CEOs and presidents often have deep scientific backgrounds, with strong research experience and an advanced level of education. The easiest way to become a biotech CEO, says Love, is to go to school, get a PhD, find some science that you love, get a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and then find your own venture capital when you outgrow the grants.

To attempt ideal positioning in the reverse is more challenging. “Some may try getting a Bachelor’s degree, doing laboratory work, getting an MBA and then breaking into management in biotech,” says Love. “But once you have an MBA, there are income expectations, and it would be difficult to then pursue a lab or science discipline.”

However, mounting pressure to earn profits is causing biotech companies to look outside their scientific ranks for top leadership.

How to Break the Barriers

“The knowledge of science must be there,

Continued on page 5

but biotechnology is not unlike other industries — it has to be managed like a business and go beyond the normal profit and loss,” says Daniel G. Eramian, vice president of communications at BIO.

“Ten to 15 years ago, many of our CEOs were scientists who understood the technology but didn’t have strong business or accounting background. It is changing somewhat with more professional managers moving in. They know how to make the right moves in the organization and the right partnering moves,” explains Eramian.

“You don’t have to be an expert in the science, but you need to know the product,” advises Eramian. “Pick a target product and pick a niche. Have a good sense as to what products are out there and are needed.”

WBBA’s Love notes most of the excitement that is happening in biotech is in companies with fewer than 100 employees. “Typically, companies will wait for growth of 50 to 100 people, and then they will look outside for executive experience. The board of directors will have a key person become the Chief Science Officer, and then hire outside for CEO leadership and management.”

“But, if you don’t understand the science,” warns Love, “You can’t be CEO.”

What You Need to Succeed

“Credibility” tops the list of qualities for a successful biotech CEO.

“You are asking shareholders to wait 10 years, asking the media to wait for 10 years, and asking investors to invest money in something that may not pay off for 10 years,” says Eramian. “Bringing a drug to market from basic research is so hard and long and so expensive, one of the things a good biotech CEO needs is credibility.”

“Demonstrated credibility in another industry can crossover. You are asking people to take a lot on faith for a very long time,” says Eramian. “You’re asking people to believe in the company and YOU. Pay attention to your own personal credibility. A biotech CEO who doesn’t have a product has got to convince investors and Wall Street that this is

Biotech Terms for the Semi-Scientific

- **Bioinformatics:** The science of informatics as applied to biological research. Informatics is the management and analysis of data using advanced computing techniques. Bioinformatics is particularly important as an adjunct to genomics research, because of the large amount of complex data this research generates.
- **Computational biology:** A subdiscipline within bioinformatics concerned with computation-based research devoted to understanding basic biological processes.
- **Cross-licensing:** Legal, contractual procedure in which two or more firms with competing, similar technologies and possible conflicting patent claims strike a deal to reduce the need for legal actions to clarify who is to profit from applications of the technology.
- **Functional foods:** Foods containing compounds with beneficial health effects beyond those provided by the basic nutrients, minerals and vitamins. Also called “nutraceuticals.”
- **Technology transfer:** The process of transferring discoveries made by basic research institutions, such as universities and government laboratories, to the commercial sector for development into useful products and services.

Source: BIO

something they need to stick with, and people have to believe you and what you say is true.”

“It’s difficult in scientific organizations to have enough credibility without a PhD, Medical degree, Juris Doctorate, Master’s in Public Health or some combination,” says Love.

Additionally, says Eramian, “You’ll need good business sense, because you are managing companies that burn millions of dollars on research with sometimes no profits or income to show for it.”

Eramian also cites good financial management skills, patience, and the willingness to always tell the truth. “If your company runs into a speed bump in the course of bringing the drug to market, you have to tell the truth. That is very, very important.”

The roles of truthfulness and traditional business acumen in biotechnology were highlighted in ImClone Systems’ securities fraud scandal, which led to the indictment of CEO and founder Samuel Waksal. An immunologist, Waksal leveraged his claim of creating a potential cancer cure into a multi-billion dollar company. When Waksal learned that his drug’s rejection from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was imminent, the information created a flurry of insider trading activity.

Skills Can Determine Best Fit

With some research, you are likely to reveal specific areas ripe for penetration in particular biotechnology companies. For

example, organizations with ties or associations to government might benefit from a CEO skilled in government relations.

In another case, a venture capitalist that specialized in biotech investments had to act as CEO for a company he considered funding, when there wasn’t strong business leadership.

For those passionate about science and determined to crossover from another industry into biotechnology, Love recommends advanced research and preparation.

“The first step before going back to school to get a science degree is to hang out with the people in the industry,” suggests Love. “Join groups and go to events, and network. Don’t stand around in the hall drinking coffee. Attend presentations, take notes and get involved if this is something that interests you.”

An Encouraging Case Study

Len Bargellini became the director of channel product management for a bioinformatics company using an unconventional approach. At the end of a successful sales and marketing career with AT&T Wireless, managing product relationships and business development, Bargellini began to look at industries that would undergo high growth in the next 10 years.

His research led him to biotechnology; but without a base of scientific knowledge, his opportunities were limited. “I talked to people in the industry, made the rounds, and took courses over several

Continued on page 8

Ask the Expert

Legally and Ethically Speaking, Résumés Should Always be Truthful

Q Upon advice from a résumé consulting service, I have eliminated career experience older than 20 years from my résumé. The same source suggested I include a statement that I had “additional career experience in the following areas...” based on the presumption that any (future employer) could hold me accountable for withholding information used to make a hiring decision. My question is this: Has some legal precedent established the résumé as a legal document, more than a personal marketing piece?

Ethically...

A. The résumé is indeed a personal marketing tool, and it therefore gives you great flexibility in what you choose to say and not say about your background.

For this reason you're entitled to leave off the first 20 years of your work experience if you feel it would be advantageous to do so. After all, your résumé is not your autobiography. Instead, it's a snapshot of your background designed to generate

interviews with prospective employers, so they can learn more about you.

By adding the statement “Additional experience in the following areas . . . ,” you completely cover yourself against charges of misrepresentation. While concealing your age, which is usually the reason for omitting early work experience, you're stating that you have more experience than the résumé presents. It's then up to the reader to try to decide if you have five more years of experience or 25. Some people will give you the benefit of the doubt and lean towards the low side. Others won't.

Clearly, there's no watertight solution to the age-discrimination problem.

John Marcus writes résumés for executives nationwide. He is the author of The Résumé Makeover, which is hailed as “the authoritative guide to résumés.” See John's ExecuNet Career Guide at <http://members.execunet.com/promo/pdf/JobSearchSabotage.pdf>.

Legally...

A. Any document can be a “legal document,” meaning it can be used in litigation to support the position of either party.

Many employers require candidates for employment to complete applications which require the candidate to affirm that he or she has included all information about past positions. These applications typically note that if the employer determines that a candidate has falsified information on his or her application or résumé, such falsification could be grounds for discipline, including termination, if the candidate is hired. Many employers consider omissions to be a falsification and may use this as a ground for discipline. Since employment is typically at-will — that is, employees can be terminated for any or no reason — résumé omissions alone will suffice as a basis for termination. Hence, candidates are well-advised to at least mention that they have other career experience that will be provided upon request.

Tonianna Florentino is a partner at Collazo Carling & Mish, LLP, a law firm devoted exclusively to providing expert, cost-effective representation and strategic advice to management on the full range of complex labor and employment law matters. She can be reached at (212) 758-7782 or tflorentino@ccmlaw.com. ■

Executive Toolbox

E-mail Settings that Increase Communication, Enhance Productivity

ExecuNet Help Desk Specialist Yves Galliotte says that he often gets calls from members wondering why they haven't received a requested e-mail or job alert.

The problem could stem from the members' individual spam filtering program, which will prevent some messages from reaching the inbox. “Enhanced spam control settings built into e-mail accounts can result in possible e-mail blocking actions,” explains Yves.

“At times, if the junk/spam filtering is set too high, an e-mail from an unknown or unrecognizable sender would be routed to a spam/junk folder or even trashed. It depends on the settings that were enabled, and on the e-mail client,” says Yves.

Each e-mail application has its own methods for spam blocking along with settings that allow for some customization. For example, Yahoo! Mail has a “Spam Protection” feature where users

can enable or disable “SpamGuard” and “Image Blocking” tools.

To ensure that valuable communications don't wind up in the trash, ExecuNet's Member Services Department recommends:

- Checking the spam/junk folder on a regular basis as a precaution. Some e-mail applications impose a time limit as to how long messages are visible before being permanently removed.

Continued on page 7

Learnings From Landings Continued from page 2

Armed with a list of target companies, Laura used her marketing plan, strong résumé, and “30-second commercial” to approach her contacts, resulting in a new position as marketing director after just two months of searching. “I did my marketing plan in September and began properly networking and getting the right information out. My offer came in November.”

“

I had great tools and I worked hard to target who I wanted, what I wanted and how to get there.

”

In the process, Laura learned the value of strengthening her business relationships. “Networking was fantastic once I learned that I had to give as much as one would give me,” said Laura. “Networking is about sharing information; and to be very effective, you should do as much as possible to assist the person you are contacting.” Laura quickly realized, “Networking is not about getting what you want, it is about helping someone else, so that you they may be helpful to you.”

Q. What techniques or strategies “worked for you?”

Targeting the companies I wanted to work at and then networking with as

many people as possible who may have a connection with my target companies. Some may just know a friend or knows a friend, etc.

Q. What mistakes would you tell people to avoid?

I should not have started networking until I had the right script and understood what networking really was before pursuing it.

Q. Did anything during the process come as surprise?

The biggest surprise is learning and experiencing just how powerful the “30-second commercial” is when done right.

Q. Was the marketplace what you expected it to be?

I expected a tough market and yes, if I wasn't open to relocating, then I would still be searching.

Q. What did you think about your experiences in interacting with the recruiting community? Any advice you would pass along based on your experience?

Recruiters work for others, but never for the client. Treat them with respect, communicate constantly with them, and just remember that it may be luck if they help you. I found the retained recruiters had more serious appointments, so if they liked you, it helped.

Q. Did things go as quickly as you expected or not? If not, why not?

Things went faster than expected because I had great tools and I worked hard to target who I wanted, what I wanted and how to get there.

Q. If you were to advise a fellow member to do only one or two things really well in this process, what would that be?

Understand what you want and then prepare your “30-second commercial,” develop your list of target companies; network your marketing plan (not résumé) with colleagues to reach your target companies.

Q. What two or three things that you did do you feel were the most effective for you?

1. Producing a very strong résumé.
ExecuNet helped me realize I did not have my résumé where I needed it. I highly recommend people get their résumé critiqued by ExecuNet. [Members are entitled to a free résumé review: http://members.execunet.com/e_home_résumé.cfm]
2. Developing my Marketing Plan and researching my target companies helped me identify where I really wanted to work.

Q. If you had it to do over again, is there anything you would change?

Yes, I would not begin networking until I knew what I wanted and how I was going to approach my network contacts. I also could have created a stronger cover letter. It was okay but I should have created one that listed my qualifications and how I applied them in the body of the letter.

Final thoughts: “I will continue networking and keeping my contacts up to date, because it is a career-long network.” ■

Executive Toolbox Continued from page 6

- Add ExecuNet to the list of allowable contacts, thereby permitting e-mail messages to the inbox.

ExecuNet members that use Microsoft Outlook or Outlook Express for e-mail can create rules that improve message flow through sorting. Rules will not only help direct ExecuNet messages into dedicated

folders, but other job search-related e-mails can be sorted as well.

Microsoft Outlook has an intuitive “Rules Wizard” that can guide you through a step-by-step filtering process. To access the “Rules Wizard,” look under the “Tools” menu.

Another method for creating an e-mail rule in Outlook is to highlight the appropriate e-mail message in the inbox, and right click the mouse. There will be a

selection, “Create Rule.” Click on “Create Rule” and the wizard will have already started the process for you.

Government anti-spam regulations have inspired Internet service and e-mail providers to improve their protection features. While the details may differ by e-mail application and version, spam blocking and message sorting features are prevalent and likely to be part of the program you are currently using. ■

Jobs in Biotech

Continued from page 5

quarters while I was still working in order to get a deeper understanding of science,” says Bargellini.

Through networking, Bargellini found the bioinformatics niche, which would combine his knowledge and experience with the burgeoning biotechnology industry. “I went to the WBBA and they connected me with the Invest Northwest conference. I volunteered at the conference and made contacts.”

Through the conference, Bargellini was introduced to Geospiza, a small firm on a growth path. After learning more about the company, Bargellini took a calculated risk. “I said I would

Research Resources

- Biotechnology Industry Organization (<http://www.bio.org>)
- Bio.com (<http://www.bio.com>)
- BioSpace (<http://www.biospace.com>)
- BioTech (<http://biotech.icmb.utexas.edu>)
- National Center for Biotechnology Information (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>)
- Also check for regional biotechnology associations, conferences and events

work for free for 90 days. I was still doing some consulting in wireless, so I still had an income.”

“After 90 days, we decided to continue for a few more months while the firm finalized an offer comprising salary and stock options. I’ve been working with them now for about a year, and drawing compensation for about six months.”

Bargellini says that he took his

senior-level skills and offered them up for less, but it was a lifestyle change that was well worth it. “Moving from a company that did \$4 billion in sales to a company doing about \$4 million was well worth the change in salary, so that I could afford more time with my family. And, my career has been boosted by the rewards of building a business in a growing industry.” ■

How Do I Successfully Propose Continued from page 3

better in front of others? Without this in mind, your idea will not be accepted.

Prepare a Script: Rehearsing is critical to your success. Get your words down on paper. Then, say them over and over again until you feel very comfortable with your words. This is important, because you may be nervous when you are pitching your idea. Rehearsing will help you stay strong, on track and focused.

Build Support: The best way to get an idea approved is to build support one person at a time. Many people propose ideas in a meeting setting first and find that they are bombarded with objections and questions they were not prepared to

answer. Nothing kills an idea faster than proposing an idea in a group setting first. You will have to discuss your idea in front of groups or in meetings, but you do not want to start this way. The winners in reality shows are those who do not take sides and instead build alliances with everyone. The business world works this way too.

Start with the people you know and trust. Tell them about your idea again. Present your ideas along with the facts and figures you have collected. Answer their objections. Ask for their support. Once you have their okay, you can work your way up or down, noting whose support you have already. Keep building and asking, “Can I have your support?” Or, “What would I have to tweak in my idea

to get your support?” Keep going until you have the majority of the people you need to get your idea approved in your corner.

Even with support, not everyone will be on board with your idea. If you know in your heart it’s a good idea, don’t give up. If your idea is declined, ask when you can propose it another time. Sometimes “no” means “not now.” You want to create an opening to bring up your idea again.

Congratulate Yourself: It takes courage and a belief in yourself to create an idea and get acceptance from others. Congratulate yourself on a job well done. Now that your idea is approved, it’s time to implement it. Have fun and enjoy the process of giving life to something you created. ■

CareerSmart Advisor

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Founder & CEO: David Opton

Executive Editor: Lauryn Franzoni

Senior Editor: Robyn Greenspan

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ExecuNet
295 Westport Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06851
Phone: (800) 637-3126
E-mail: info@execunet.com



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