

Industry Facts & Figures

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The traditional lab route takes nontraditional turns as chemists venture into alternative paths.

“I encourage young people to get degrees in science, math, and engineering with the understanding that you can leverage your education into nontraditional careers. You can even get to a CEO position with that kind of education,” said Lissa Goldenstein, CEO of Argonaut Technologies (www.argotech.com), in the April 2003 issue of *Modern Drug Discovery* magazine (p 41; www.moderndrugdiscovery.org).

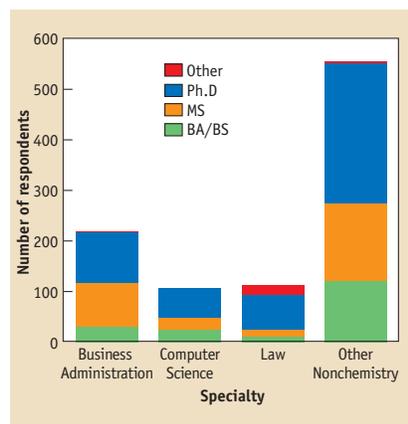
Maybe the CEO path isn't exactly on your five-year plan, but with the record unemployment reported in this year's ACS member salary survey (see “Another Good Year/Bad Year”, p 33), it might not be such a bad time to entertain this “leveraging” sentiment.

There will always be many who thrive on getting their hands dirty in the lab or maintaining direct contact in a supervisory role, but others who are scientifically trained have a lot to offer in a gamut of other fields. This latter population is reflected in another finding of this year's salary survey—991 of the respondents (more than 10% of the respondents in the workforce with a B.S. or higher) indicated a work specialty in their current or most recent jobs under the category of business administration, computer science, law, or “other nonchemistry” (see figure).

As industrial chemists rise in the ranks, they often gain exposure to the broader corporate environment, which sometimes provokes other interests and, in the process,

expands their view of career options. Companies frequently provide the opportunities to pursue these interests and still retain some level of contact with the science.

For instance, Jason Forman is a chemist who worked in an industrial lab for several years after earning his B.S., but his



Respondents to the 2003 ACS member survey who reported “nonchemistry” work specialties (Source: 2003 ACS Comprehensive Salary and Employment Survey).

curiosity led him in a different direction. “I liked my interactions with other groups such as manufacturing and purchasing,” he says, “but realized that I didn't understand all of the factors that went into their business decisions. My company supports my M.B.A. classes and also [gave me] a transfer where I have much more exposure to the ‘business’ side.” This has allowed

an on-the-job education as well as classroom learning.

At a career workshop at the Mid-Atlantic Regional ACS Meeting (MARM) held in June, Anita Meiklejohn from Fish & Richardson P.C. (www.fr.com) discussed careers in intellectual property law—a field, she says, where there is an ongoing demand for people with chemistry backgrounds. And not all positions even require a law degree—although companies and law firms may pay tuition if you attend while working. Also at the MARM workshop were Ed Watkins from Schrodinger, L.L.C. (www.schrodinger.com), who talked about his transition from bench chemist to software developer—two increasingly linked pursuits as computers continue to take on more significant roles in the research process—and Nancy McGuire, an editor with ACS's chemistry.org, who tracked her route from the lab to science writing. “Science writing lets me combine several of my interests—science, research, communication, and creativity—in the course of a typical workday,” says McGuire. “I'm finding out all kinds of interesting things, and I'm passing this information on to others.”

Further Reading

Alternative Careers for Scientists; www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Hangar/4707/alt-careers.html.

Woodburn, J. H. *Opportunities in Chemistry Careers*, VGM Career Books: Chicago, 2002.

Kimberly S. Cleaves and David Filmore are associate editors of *Today's Chemist at Work*. Send your comments or questions about this article to tcaw@acs.org or to the Editorial Office address on page 3. ♦

Business Bits

Symyx Technologies (www.symyx.com) and **Hazard Evaluation Laboratory** (HEL, www.helgroup.co.uk) entered into a limited license agreement involving several of HEL's parallel pressure reactor products . . . **Chemical Diversity Labs** (www.chemdiv.com) opened a new

research institute in Moscow that is expected to double the company's capacity in a year . . . **Kendro Laboratory Products** (www.kendro.com) is centralizing its U.S. manufacturing and distribution operations in Asheville, NC . . . **Pall Corp.** (www.pall.com) is leading intensive technical training courses at the Industrial Biotechnology Learning

Center at the University of Puerto Rico (<http://ac.uprm.edu/biotech>) for enhancing process-scale manufacturing filtration practices . . . **W.R. Grace and Co.** (www.grace.com) has acquired the HPLC business of **Argonaut Technologies** (www.argotech.com), which has been marketed under the Jones Chromatography brand name.