characteristics. Senn-Delaney applied a statistical process to those ratings to create a unique ranking score for each company rated by at least 30 respondents.

This year’s top 10 employers fall naturally into three groups. Genentech, Monsanto, Genzyme, and Boehringer Ingelheim occupy the top tier, with ranking scores over 90 out of 100. Next in order come Schering-Plough, Roche, and EMD Serono, garnering between 71 and 89 ranking scores. And Millennium, Gilead, and Eli Lilly complete the top 10 list with scores up to 70.

Not surprisingly, the top 10 employers scored well on several of the top six drivers. Genentech, for example, earned top grades or close to top grades on all six. Scheller puts that down to the company’s dedication to doing excellent research. “Science drives what we do here,” he explains. “Decisions are made by scientific process and based on scientific data. We follow what the science shows us will be the best for the patients.”

Sherri Brown, Monsanto’s vice president of chemistry, attributes her company’s high grades in leadership in a similar way. “We are a technology-driven company,” she says. “Our products come from innovation. So it’s important for our scientists to do cutting-edge work.” Genzyme also cites innovation to explain its high scores in innovative leadership, social responsibility, and loyal employees. “Innovation is risky,” Gregory says. “We’re a company with a relatively high tolerance for risk.”

Innovation and Cultural Comfort

Innovation emerges as the major theme of almost every company in the top 10. “We continually strive to create an environment where our scientists have the freedom and flexibility to innovate,” says Bernhard Kirschbaum, executive vice president for research at Merck Serono, which operates in North America as EMD Serono. “We place tremendous value on integrity and innovation,” says Millennium’s Gansler. “Innovation is fundamental to all aspects of our business,” adds Nobert Bischofberger, Gilead’s executive vice president, research and development, and chief scientific officer.

Cultural comfort between company and employees provides the other main set of drivers evident in top employers. Boehringer Ingelheim, for example, sees stability as the key to its high rating in employee-related drivers. “It’s really important that we are privately held and don’t have to worry about the stock price,” Nurnberger says. “It enables us to provide a more stable environment for our employees for building strong teamwork within the organization.”

Steven Paul, executive vice president of science and technology and head of R&D, explains the importance of employee loyalty to Lilly. “We like to say we hire people to work for their entire career,” he says. “This is increasingly challenging as priorities and programs change and as we restructure the way we pursue biopharmaceutical R&D. However, we believe we’ve done it in a way that values our scientists and their critical contributions to the success of our company.” Much the same applies to sanofi-aventis, a company that has consistently ranked highly, often in the top tier.

Tailoring Treatments

A particularly attractive, and demanding, area of research focuses on tailoring treatments to individual patients. “The thing we’re particularly proud of is our innovation in personalized medicine,” Genentech’s Scheller says. “We’re developing diagnostics for every drug in our pipeline.” EMD Serono, Kirschbaum says, “focuses on the development of targeted cancer therapies on three therapeutic platforms: targeting the tumor cell, the tumor environment, and the immune system.” At Lilly, adds Paul, “We have the overriding mantra of tailored therapies—the right drug for the right patient at the right time for the right duration. We try very early on to identify subgroups that will do best on specific drugs.”

One member of the top 10 employers shows that challenging research in biotechnology is not restricted to the pharma and biopharma industries. “No longer is agricultural research following behind what happens in pharma,” Monsanto’s Brown declares. “The convergence of technologies applying to agriculture is fabulous,” adds her colleague Padgette. “You can walk into a lot of our laboratories and the work is the same as in a pharmaceutical company.”

Several other themes emerged within the contexts of the key drivers of leadership, social responsibility, and respect for employees. “It’s my job to keep science as a fun enterprise for people here at Genentech,” says Scheller. “Scientists love getting up in the morning, thinking about data, and trying to solve scientific problems that help patients.”

At EMD Serono, says Kirschbaum, “We strive to create an environment that fosters growth and professional development continued »