new therapeutic areas have Bachelor’s or Master’s degrees. They’re working alongside M.D.s and Ph.D.s.

“This is such a diverse organization, we want people who bring a different perspective and understanding, so we can expand globally,” explains Susan Bunz, human resources and corporate services vice president at Pioneer Hi-Bred, a Dupont business, the plant genetics company that ranked #4 this year (a big leap from #19 in 2010). The Iowa-based company’s 3,000 plus scientists work at 110 research locations in 24 countries. “Our culture is very collaborative. People share a ‘can do’ attitude, want to work in a very dynamic environment, and know how to complete a project.”

RETIETING OUTSTANDING SCIENTISTS
The world’s best scientists are always on recruiters’ radar screens, and employers know that people often change jobs. “It’s one thing to attract new talent, another to retain them;” says Bayer’s Iams.

“You must provide an environment that recognizes accomplishment and celebrates the entire team,” Iams continues. Bayer offers growth programs, such as internal education activities, so an employee always feels, “I’m learning here.” Motivators include letters of recognition, awards (some monetary), and performance-based bonuses, which are sometimes reinvested into company shares.

However, many biotech/pharma companies are moving away from broad eligibility for stock options, according to Grossman. Regeneron, though, remains “absolutely committed to employee ownership. Every new hire will be a shareholder.” The company recently introduced an on-site “mini-MBA program” with Rutgers University professors presenting a broad view of the industry’s business issues. Beyond classrooms, “we give scientists very challenging roles, where they can contribute to the fullest extent of their abilities,” adds Grossman.

From microbiology to etymology to agronomy, Pioneer Hi-Bred uses a diverse range of expertise. A scientist’s specific assignment depends somewhat on his or her degree, explains Bunz. Ph.D.s are at the senior scientist level; a B.S.-degree holder would be an associate or assistant researcher. Thanks to the educational support Pioneer provides, “employees can go back to school while they’re here, when they see that additional education will increase their promotional opportunities.”

Novo Nordisk encourages scientists to “focus on a specific job aspect that will forward their research, and their personal development,” says Chinn. Every employee is required to prepare an “Individual Development Plan.” They can opt to attend symposia, specific educational programs, or other learning opportunities. The company gladly provides tuition “to further their employees’ education. We hope it’s holistic—not just to help Novo Nordisk, but to improve their own specialized skills,” he explains.

Vertex holds weekly “social hours” where scientists and other staff members share perspectives. The company also has unique employee incentives, such as the Vertex Nobel Prize for outstanding research and the recently introduced Science Technology Exchange Program (STEP), a sabbatical opportunity. Bench scientists whose proposals are accepted get to “STEP out” of their usual roles and pursue a new path for three months. The program was developed by seven Vertex scientists working in a focus group on improving career paths and recognition.

In many professions, accomplishments and recognition bring promotion into management. “For a scientist, that means moving away from the bench,” Smith observes, “but you may not want to have a hundred people reporting to you.” Genzyme offers a popular, four-level alternative track: Fellow, Senior Fellow, Distinguished Fellow, and one coveted slot as Presidential Fellow. “If you want to stay at the bench, a Fellow here can be paid as much as a senior vice