



Name: Matthew Heisler

Background:

- **Educational Background:**
 - BS in Biochemistry, MS in Biotechnology with concentration in pharmaceutical analytical sciences. Both from Northeastern University
- **Your first job after college:**
 - Research Associate at Repligen
- **How did you land your first job after college?**
 - Interned (CO-OP) in the R&D group at Repligen during University

Current Position:

- **What is your current title and name of the company you work for?**
 - Senior Scientist at Repligen
- **How did you land this job?**
 - Internal promotions from research associate, senior research associate, associate scientist, scientist, senior scientist.
- **3-5 job skills required for your role:**
 - Critical thinking & attention to detail
 - Molecular cloning & subcloning
 - Microbial & mammalian cell culture techniques
 - Troubleshooting of instruments, experiments, and equipment
 - Oral communication which includes presentations to scientific and non-scientific audiences.
- **What does a typical day/week at work look like for you?**
 - Over the last year I have moved from 75% lab work and 25% desk work to the reverse. The most common laboratory activities include genetic transformation of *E. coli*, microbial cell culture, DNA isolation, fermentation development, and protein characterization. The most common “desk-activities” include report writing, plasmid & expression vector design, primary literature searches, preparing research presentations, and meeting with colleagues.

- **How are you still applying your undergraduate STEM degree to your current role?**
 - My degree gave me the background necessary to think & communicate fluently in topics such as microbiology, cell culture, molecular biology, protein analysis, general analytical techniques, and more. There are certain skills that can only be learned on the job but it would not be possible to contribute as anything more than a research technician without a solid background in biochemistry and biotechnology.
- **What's next for your career?**
 - I am currently exploring avenues to apply my knowledge of the biotechnology field outside of the laboratory through a leadership/managerial track with an eye on commercial and business development

Perspective:

- **What was your big career break?**
 - Landing a co-op in the Bioprocessing R&D group at a small biopharmaceutical company that has gone on to focus exclusively on their bioprocessing business and grow exponentially over the last 10+ years.
- **Best Career Advice you ever received:**
 - Not everything you read in college textbooks is going to accurately apply to your job. You need the baseline STEM knowledge, but there is so much knowledge that can only be gained on-the-job.
- **What was your Biggest Career Failure/ Regret? How did it help guide your career path? What did you learn from them?**
 - Not spending enough time early in my career time considering career paths outside the laboratory. This was something I didn't consider at all until halfway through my masters degree which was 8 years after my first biotechnology position. It takes more than an R&D lab to run a biotechnology company and there are many opportunities to apply a scientific background.
- **How do you decide when it's time to move on from a position or which new direction to take?**
 - I have sought out new opportunities when I didn't feel like I was learning something new or did not feel adequately mentally stimulated.

- **What advice do you have for recent STEM graduates?**
 - Ask questions! None of the senior scientists are judging you for asking questions even if you feel you “should” know the answer. There are times to try to figure things out on your own but asking why and talking out thought processes will benefit you for the rest of your career.