

## TIBBS Career Blitz - January 2012

### Career Profile of Biotech Industry Researcher: Kelly Mercier, PhD

#### **What is your current title and how long have you worked in your current job?**

I am an applications scientist at LipoScience, a medical diagnostics company specializing in magnetic resonance technology. I have been here since July 2011.

#### **Where did you get your PhD and what discipline was it in?**

I received my Ph.D from the department of Chemistry at the University of Nebraska Lincoln.

#### **Did you do a postdoc?**

Yes, I completed a postdoctoral position at one of the NIH centers (National Institute of Environmental Health Science – N.I.E.H.S). I decided to leave after 3 years when I accepted my position at LipoScience.

#### **What are your main daily responsibilities?**

LipoScience will be adding new tests to the diagnose diseases and disease indicators, and I am a part of the new basic research group that will be exploring the feasibility of measuring different components in biological samples for this purpose. I do a lot of literature reading, experimental design, wet chemistry, data collection and analysis, in addition to internal software testing. I talk a lot with my direct supervisor and the other basic researcher about complications and technical issues. I write and edit reports and presentations for internal teams and external meetings with key opinion leaders and our scientific board.

#### **What are the keys to success in your career field?**

First and foremost, one must be a team player. The data that I generate does not belong to me; it belongs to my company and has to be shared readily. It is also absolutely critical to be able to follow the literature in many diseases and instrument capabilities. I need to stay on top of both, as I am one of the key players in developing the future tests for our diagnostics platform. Writing is also a large component to my job. I am asked to frequently put together reports and presentations summarizing my literature research and the studies that I have designed and carried out.

#### **What were the most important factors in choosing your career path?**

I have wanted to stay in the field of magnetic resonance. Since pharmaceutical research currently does not support a huge number of spectroscopists, it was necessary for me to be flexible in the type of spectroscopy that I would be doing.

I also want to make sure that I had a good work/home balance. I have 2 sons, the first one born when I was a graduate student and the second when I was a postdoc. It was important that I find a career path that allowed me to make a difference in my

area of expertise but be able to make it to special lunches at their school and to the Little Gym in the evenings.

**What 1 or 2 pieces of advice do you have for people who want to land a job like yours?**

Network, network, network, and remember that any professional relationship is a two way street. Offer to help people, and they will offer to help you. My position that I have at LipoScience was a direct result of offering to help someone in my network.