What I do:

My role is to network with the right people and gather business intelligence to ensure my company is at the forefront of the marketplace. I ensure that the business intelligence I gather is accurate and reliable.

“Business development” means that I am constantly in contact with prospects, including managers at research centres, distributors, and business prospects. My job entails that I put the right people together on the business and science sides. Once I’ve made the prospect, it’s the role of the marketing and sales teams to take over.

I travel at least 30 per cent of the time. I work all over North America, Europe and Asia. Travel is increasingly bringing me to China and India, which are very strong emerging markets in the bio economy area.

What education and skills do candidates need for this position?

You should definitely have a sciences background, possibly at the Masters or Ph.D. levels. Business and legal training are also assets. However, having a degree at any of these levels does not necessarily ensure that you can be a strong business-development person.

I recommend starting with a large organization, learning how it operates, working on personal skill sets, including sales; negotiation; communications; and seeking mentoring opportunities inside and outside the industry. Negotiation, communication, and interpersonal skills are essential in the role of business development. Because I work around the world, it is also important that someone in my role appreciates cultural differences in business and the private world. Also, the ability to work independently and be a good project manager is important.

People in this field need patience, flexibility, and listening skills. One needs to communicate effectively with people on many different levels, especially in negotiating.

What are the best parts of your job?

The best thing about my job is working with intelligent, motivated people on the business and science sides. People are interested in the fact that I work for such a large company that is constantly at the forefront of developing new products.