

# Organic Process Research & Development

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## *Editorial*

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### Company Name Changes

This editorial arose out of discussions with my nontechnical co-workers at Scientific Update who were asking me to list the changes in company names that have taken place over the past few years, mostly due to M & A activity. However, many chemists and chemical engineers, particularly those entering the industry for the first time, may also be confused by the constant company name changes. So here is my guide (based on memory, so no guarantees on accuracy).

Of course, M & A activity is not new; my former employer ICI was built up by M & A in the early 1900s, but by the 1980s had decided to split into ICI and Zeneca, the latter including pharmaceuticals, agrochemicals, speciality chemicals, and so forth. By the 1990s Zeneca had merged with Astra to become AstraZeneca, but the agrochemicals part merged with Novartis agrochemicals to become Syngenta. The speciality chemicals, fine chemicals, and other parts eventually became Avecia, which is also now starting to carry out M & A activity (e.g., the purchase of Torcan in Canada). Astra itself was, I believe, formed from several Swedish companies before taking over Fison's R & D unit in the United Kingdom, now part of AstraZeneca. Fison's manufacturing plants are now part of Rhodia. Rhodia, of course, is another name that did not exist in the 1980s and now has taken over a large number of speciality chemical companies worldwide. Rhodia–Chirex was formed from the constituent names, but Chirex came out of the old Sterling Organics, United Kingdom (via Sanofi and maybe other names).

Rhodia itself came from the separation of Rhone Poulenc into Rhone Poulenc Rorer pharmaceuticals and Rhodia, but the agrochemical part of this organisation now is part of Aventis Cropscience (although another merger with Bayer is changing the name yet again). Aventis Cropscience came out of Hoechst and Schering agrochemicals units (called Agrevo). The U.K. units, before they were part of Agrevo,

Schering, or anyone else, used to be part of Fisons and Boots agrochemicals units and had the name FBC at one time.

Boots pharmaceuticals, the discoverer of ibuprofen, is no longer in existence (except as a U.K. high street pharmacist), having been taken over by BASF under the name Knoll in the 1990s. BASF's pharma business was, however, sold to Abbott, although BASF still makes generic APIs.

I was earlier mentioning Rhone Poulenc Rorer (RPR), which for many years owned May and Baker in the United Kingdom. RPR recently became Aventis Pharmaceuticals when it merged with Hoechst Marion Roussel (HMR). HMR, arose out of Hoechst in Germany, Roussel (formerly Roussel–Uclaf) in France, and Marion Merrell Dow in the United States, the latter also comprising several companies from the past.

My other former company, SmithKline (or SK&F as it was when I joined and was briefly Smith Kline Beckman) merged, shortly after I left in 1989, with Beecham, whilst Glaxo (which had previously taken over Allen and Hanbury's) had merged with Wellcome to form Glaxo Wellcome. Now, the great names of Wellcome and Beecham have disappeared with the merger of the giants to form Glaxo-SmithKline (GSK).

In the United States, the early mergers were between Bristol Myers and Squibb, but BMS have recently acquired DuPont Pharmaceuticals, formerly known as DuPont-Merck. Also in the United States the merger of Wyeth and Ayerst was followed by Cyanamid, under the umbrella of American Home Products (AHP). I understand that AHP now wishes to change its name to Wyeth!

I will remember the day that Monsanto purchased Searle Pharmaceuticals in the 1980s since I was visiting the R & D site of Searle in High Wycombe on the day the takeover was announced. Workers at Searle generally thought it would be great for Searle. A few years (or was it months) later, the U.K. R & D site had been closed, and my next visit there was to recruit redundant chemists! Monsanto-Searle has gone

through many changes since then, including the recent merger to form Pharmacia. Pharmacia, of course was a Swedish company, itself formed by earlier M & A activity in Sweden, but the merger was with Upjohn in the United States to form Pharmacia and Upjohn. Now, of course, the Upjohn name has been lost. Monsanto, however, had divested its bulk chemical operations as Solutia, but this company has now begun purchase of fine chemical organisations such as Carbogen and Amcis in Switzerland.

Many staff who worked at Wellcome or Glaxo in the United States in manufacturing eventually became part of Catalytica, but the recent acquisition by DSM (Holland) means another name change. DSM have been on the acquisition trail for years, with purchases including Chemie Linz in Austria. The other large merger in the 1990s was the formation of Novartis from the constituents Sandoz and Ciba Geigy. I believe that the name Novartis is now used only for pharmaceuticals since the former Novartis agrochemicals section merged with Zeneca to form Syngenta. The speciality/fine chemicals parts of Ciba and Sandoz did not form part of Novartis, and Ciba Speciality chemicals still exists. Parts of Sandoz, however, merged with parts of Hoechst to form Clariant, who took over BTP in the United Kingdom and many other companies. BTP had previously taken over the conglomerate MTM who owned a variety of companies including Lancaster Synthesis.

In the fine and speciality chemicals areas there has been lots of M & A activity with Degussa joining with Huls and SKW Trostberg, but divesting its Asta Medica pharmaceuticals arm. In the United Kingdom the Laporte group has purchased a number of sites including Fine Organics, former Shell manufacturing units, and owns manufacturing sites in many countries including Raylo in Canada. Laporte, Fine Chemicals operations, now form part of the Degussa empire.

New start-up companies often change their names several times. I remember visiting a new company, Enzymatix, in the early 1990s which had been set up by Chris (now Sir Chris) Evans. Subsequently, this company went through name changes, including Chiro, Chiroscience, Chirotech, Ascot Fine Chemicals, but is now part of Dow. The Chiroscience R & D part was bought by Celltech.

Another large U.S. merger was between Pfizer and Warner Lambert/Parke Davis, the latter itself a product of a merger. Warner Lambert had previously taken over Agouron Pharmaceuticals in San Diego and Godecke in Freiburg Germany.

The Dutch group Akzo, which includes names such as Organon and Diosynth has also been active, with Diosynth taking over some of Courtaulds sites in the United Kingdom. The former Courtaulds site in Scotland at one time belonged to Johnson Matthey, who are also on the acquisition trail, now owning McFarlane Smith in Scotland and Pharmeco in the United States and recently Avocado in the United Kingdom.

In France the merger of Sanofi and Synthelabo took place in the late 1990s. Sanofi had in the past acquired other companies including Chinoin in Hungary. Also in France the company Sipsy, formerly part of the Jouvenal group, was acquired by PPG of the United States in the 1990s to form PPG-Sipsy.

Where will it all end? Will we be left with just a few conglomerates in the future? I hope not. As M & A activity continues, new start-ups, both in pharmaceuticals and fine chemicals continue to appear and often expand quickly, providing employment for many chemists who are “released” after M & A activity is followed by “downsizing”.

M & A activity may be good for the stockmarket, and the accountants, lawyers and consultants that benefit, but it is not good for staff morale, nor for innovation. Innovation needs the right environment to flourish, and that is generally in smaller companies where freedom to explore new ideas is encouraged. Larger companies become bureaucratic and stifle innovation, with one or two exceptions.

My apologies, I forgot to tell you what M & A stands for. Is it Merger and Acquisition—or what merger and acquisition lead to—Muddle and Apathy?

Many thanks to all who volunteered to review articles after last month’s editorial. More reviewers are still required.

Trevor Laird  
*Editor*

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