

Startup CEO Resource Guide

Curated courses, frameworks, books, and podcasts for founders and executives building in biotech, pharma, and the life sciences

Courses

- [**RA Capital University**](#): foundational biotech investing & drug development coursework from a leading life sciences investor.
- [**Coursera: Introduction to the Pharmaceutical Industry**](#)
- [**LinkedIn Learning: Building Business Acumen for Aspiring Professionals**](#)
- [**LinkedIn Learning: Workplace Essentials for Early Career Professionals**](#)
- [**Jim Wells & Michelle Arkin \(UCSF\), Part 1: Introduction to Drug Discovery**](#)
- [**Jim Wells & Michelle Arkin \(UCSF\), Part 2: Introduction to Drug Discovery**](#)
- [**MassBio: Intro to Biotech, Business & Science**](#)
- [**YC Startup School \(Y Combinator\)**](#): free, self-paced curriculum on fundraising, product, growth, and hiring from the accelerator behind the most-funded founder network.
- [**Coursera: Venture Capital & Private Equity \(Wharton\)**](#): the investor-side view of deal structuring, useful for CEOs preparing to raise.

Frameworks, Blogs & Guides

Regulatory & Industry

- [**FDA Learning Portal: Drug and Device Approvals**](#)
- [**FDA Learning Portal for Students, Academia, and Industry**](#)
- [**Thomson Reuters: 10 Ways to Make the Most of Your Internship**](#)

Fundraising, Pitch Decks & Deal Terms

- [**Carta Learn: Portfolio Company Structures**](#)
- [**Carta Learn: Pitch Deck Guide**](#): a free template download plus a slide-by-slide walkthrough of what belongs in an investor deck.
- [**Sequoia Capital's 10-Slide Pitch Deck Framework**](#): widely referenced structure (problem, solution, market size, team, financials) that shaped how most modern decks are built.
- [**NVCA Model Legal Documents**](#): the industry-standard term sheet, stock purchase agreement, and investor rights agreement templates used in most U.S. venture financings.
- [**Mercury: Understanding the Venture Capital Term Sheet**](#): simple breakdown of liquidation preferences, board composition, protective provisions, and what's negotiable.

- **Wall Street Prep: The Ultimate Guide to Cap Tables**: how ownership and dilution work across multiple rounds of financing.
- **Rho: Guide to Active Biotech VC Firms**: a curated list of life-sciences-focused venture investors for founders mapping their raise.

Leadership & Operating Knowledge

- **First Round Review**: a long-running library of tactical essays from operators and investors on the practical mechanics of running an early-stage company.
- **a16z Content Hub (Andreessen Horowitz)**: VC-authored frameworks on fundraising, go-to-market, and scaling.
- **Y Combinator Blog**: startup advice and essays from the accelerator's partners and founder network.
- **Paul Graham: Essays**: foundational writing on how startups succeed or fail; more mindset than tactics, worth returning to when stuck.
- **A Smart Bear (Jason Cohen)**: deep, systems-level thinking on product, positioning, and business fundamentals.
- **Stratechery (Ben Thompson)**: sharp strategic analysis of technology and business models; useful for sharpening competitive thinking.
- **Lenny's Newsletter**: product, growth, and career insights from operators, especially useful once a company has users and needs to scale.
- **Not Boring (Packy McCormick)**: accessible essays connecting business strategy, technology, and market trends.

Books

- **The Billion Dollar Molecule by Barry Werth**
- **Genentech: The Beginnings of Biotech by Sally Smith Hughes**
- **Venture Deals by Brad Feld & Jason Mendelson**: considered the standard founder's primer on how VC term sheets and deal mechanics actually work.
- **The Lean Startup by Eric Ries**: the validated-learning framework for testing a business idea before scaling it.
- **Zero to One by Peter Thiel**: on building something genuinely new rather than competing in an existing market.
- **The Hard Thing About Hard Things by Ben Horowitz**: the operational and psychological realities of running a company.
- **The Outsiders by William N. Thorndike Jr.**: eight unconventional CEOs and how disciplined capital allocation drove outsized returns.
- **Financial Intelligence by Karen Berman & Joe Knight**: a jargon-free guide to reading and using financial statements, useful for non-finance CEOs.

- **Atomic Habits by James Clear**: practical systems for building the small, consistent habits that compound into leadership effectiveness.

Podcasts

- **It's Bigger Than Biotech**
- **The Readout Loud**
- **Business of Biotech**
- **Acquired**: narrative deep dives, hosted by Ben Gilbert and David Rosenthal, into how major companies were built and financed.
- **20VC (The Twenty Minute VC)**: hosted by Harry Stebbings; frequent investor interviews on what VCs look for in founders and deals.
- **Masters of Scale**: hosted by Reid Hoffman; scale-stage frameworks on hiring, growth, and leadership once a company has traction.
- **Lenny's Podcast**: hosted by Lenny Rachitsky; specific, tactical conversations on product, growth, and career decisions.

Chameleon Firm Resources

- **Chameleon Strategies Consulting — Website & Blog**: HR and executive advisory insights for biotech, pharma, and life sciences leaders. See the Insights tab for our 2026 HR Wellness Foundation Series by Sophia Fulton.
- **Chameleon Law Group — Website & Blog**: employment law guidance and compliance updates for growth-stage life sciences companies. See the Blog tab for our 2026 The Executive Playbook: Leading Her Way series by Sophia Fulton.