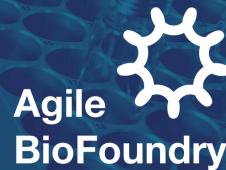


Industry Speakers

Agile BioFoundry Fall 2026 Industry Day



Liz Clarke | Founder & CTO, Industrial Microbes

Liz is a founder and CTO of Industrial Microbes, a Bay Area company that uses engineered *E. coli* to convert ethanol and CO₂ into poly-3HP, a polymer intermediate for acrylic acid, acrylonitrile, and acrylate esters. Her work spans synthetic biology, metabolic engineering, and C1 feedstock conversion. She was previously a scientist at LS9 Inc. and holds a Ph.D. in Biophysics from UCSF and a B.A. in Physics from UC Berkeley.



Grant Gavranovic | VP of Automation Sales, Unchained Labs

Grant is based in the San Francisco Bay Area and supports clients globally. Prior to his current role, Grant held both commercial and technical roles focusing on lab automation at Unchained Labs, Freeslate, and Symyx Technologies. He received his B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering from Texas A&M University, and Ph.D. degree in Chemical Engineering from Stanford University.



Victoria Hsiao, Ph.D. | Director of Strain Engineering, Amyris

Victoria is the Director of Strain Engineering at Amyris, where she leads the design and optimization of microbial strains for biomanufacturing. Her team works across metabolic and enzyme engineering, pathway balancing, and host chassis optimization to translate biological designs into high-performing production strains. Over her 10 years at Amyris, Victoria has contributed to more than seven molecule development programs and progressed from scientist to director. She holds a Ph.D. in Bioengineering from the California Institute of Technology.



Irina Koryakina, Ph.D. | Senior Scientist, Enzyme and Strain Engineering

Irina has 10 years in industrial biotech taking target molecules from lab to market, and has a proven record of rapidly optimizing biocatalysts. Irina is passionate about new technology developments to accelerate genome and enzyme engineering through a combination of core automation, data science, and AI strategies.



Kunal Mehta | Director, Business Development, Ginkgo Bioworks

Kunal has over a decade of experience in technology development, product selection, and building partnerships for biomanufacturing. As Director of Business Development at Ginkgo, he designs new programs in biology R&D, AI data generation, and automation with commercial and government partners.



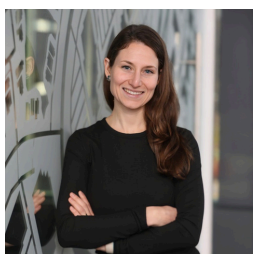
Michael Leavell, Ph.D. | Senior Vice President, Bioengineering, Recombia

Michael Leavell is a senior executive and accomplished scientist in industrial biotechnology with over two decades of experience. Currently serving as Senior Vice President of Bioengineering at Lesaffre, he oversees the strain engineering team and biofoundry, which support the Lesaffre Business Units spanning food, health, and biotechnology markets. Previously, he spent 19 years at Amyris, Inc., where he rose to Senior Vice President of Research and Development. Throughout his tenure, he participated in the commercialization of more than 15 products, translating scientific innovation into market-ready solutions. His scientific contributions span more than 30 peer-reviewed publications and patents. Dr. Leavell holds a Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of California, Berkeley (2003), providing him with a rigorous scientific foundation that has shaped his career in biotechnology innovation and leadership.



Michael Wang | Senior Scientist, Enzyme Development, ZymoChem Inc.

Michael is a Senior Scientist at ZymoChem Inc., where he builds novel biosynthetic pathways. His work combines protein-focused research (e.g., genome mining, enzyme engineering, and high-throughput screening) with collaborative strain and bioprocess engineering to make those pathways productive at industrial scale. He has collaborated with ABF groups at LBNL and LANL, using their tools in proteomics, AI, and biosensor development to accelerate ZymoChem's biomanufacturing progress. Michael received his Ph.D. in chemistry from Princeton University, where he studied de novo protein design with Prof. Michael Hecht.



Magdalena Stoeva | Senior Manager, R&D, Pow.Bio

After her Ph.D. at UC Berkeley probing the physiology of sulfate-reducing microbes using genetic, multi-omics and culture techniques, she transitioned to developing and testing probiotic formulations at Pendulum Therapeutics. At Pow.Bio, Dr. Stoeva leads the design, operation and scaling of the two-chamber continuous production platform across multiple customer products and hosts.



J. Casey Lippmeier | Chief Technology Officer, Checkerspot

As CTO of Checkerspot, Casey's mission is to deliver technologies for the manufacturing of high quality ingredients for food and nutrition products. Prior to joining Checkerspot, Casey held several executive and senior technical roles at vertically integrated multinationals including Conagen, DSM, and Martek Biosciences. In these roles he developed strains, bioprocesses, world-scale biomanufacturing, and commercialization capabilities required to supply markets for novel food and nutrition ingredients as well as for biopharmaceuticals, flavors & fragrances, personal care, and agriculture.

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Mark van Zee | Co-founder and CEO, Saku Biosciences

Mark van Zee is the CEO and Founder of Saku, a company he launched after earning his Ph.D. in bioengineering and running headfirst into a hard truth: biotech doesn't have an R&D problem, it has a scalability problem. For the past decade, he's been obsessed with closing that gap and invented the PicoShell technology, the first screening tool specifically designed to evolve producer cell lines to enhance biomanufacturing output. Mark moves fluidly between the science and the business, equally at home in the lab and the boardroom. What sets him apart is his conviction that biotechnology isn't just another industry: it's the next great frontier. And if built the right way, it has the power to reshape how we make medicine, food, materials, and ultimately, a better world.



Colin Maxwell | Sr. Scientist, Ruby Bio

Colin Maxwell is the head of strain engineering at Ruby Bio. Ruby uses a unique yeast-based fermentation platform to produce surfactants, oleochemicals, and sweeteners. His work at Ruby has focused on developing techniques for model hosts and using them to improve strain performance and product composition. Colin earned his Ph.D. in biology at Duke University, studying yeast genetics and synthetic biology, and previously worked at Zymergen on platform development and strain improvement.



Dr. Juergen Polle | Professor of Biology, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York; Founder and CEO, KaffeeTenango Inc.

Dr. Juergen Polle is a Professor of Biology at Brooklyn College, City University of New York, and the founder and CEO of KaffeeTenango Inc., a biotechnology startup developing coffee production through the cultivation of coffee plant cells. He has over 30 years of experience in microalgal biotechnology, genomics, strain development, cultivation, and industrial scale-up. Combining academic research with extensive industry experience, he focuses on developing nontraditional biological production systems for commercially viable applications.



Ashley Arnell | Program Manager, BioMADE

Ashley Arnell is a Technology Program Manager at BioMADE, where she has spent nearly four years driving complex innovation programs across bioplastics, algal oils, fermentation scale-up and scale-down, DSP optimization, strain engineering, and more. Before joining BioMADE, Ashley worked as a strain engineer with a strong focus on lab automation, giving her a unique end-to-end perspective on both the science and the systems that power modern biomanufacturing.