

Why consumers are losing interest in genetic testing

At-home DNA testing companies [23andMe](#) and [Ancestry](#) each laid off about 100 employees over the past month, cutting around 14 and 6 percent of their workforces, respectively.

23andMe pointed to declining sales as the reasons for the layoffs, and Ancestry CEO Margo Georgiadis cited “a slowdown in demand across the entire [DNA category](#)” in a blog post.

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That’s probably because the market is saturated, and most people who would want to buy a DNA test kit already have, says David Mittelman, founder and CEO of the forensic genomics company [Othram](#).

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23andMe CEO Anne Wojcicki speculated that [genetic privacy concerns](#) could be one reason for the dip in sales. But Mittelman doesn’t think that plays a big role. “I’m sure some people are worried about privacy,” he says. “I think people are burned by privacy more with Facebook than with genetic testing.”

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[I]nstead, they’re turning their focus towards health. Ancestry says it’s [shifting focus towards Ancestry Health](#), and plans to introduce new products that give customers information about their health risks. 23andMe plans to concentrate its research on a drug development arm, which has already proven lucrative: it started partnering with pharmaceutical companies in 2018, and in January, the company [sold the rights to a drug it developed in-house](#).

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