

The Next Level:
Life after a PostDoc
What Now?! Industry? How?

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Talk Outline

1. Finding a job in industry

- State of the market

- What to look for

- Where to look

- How to look

2. Getting a job in industry

- Cover letter & CV

- Interviews (phone, informal, formal)

- Thank you notes

- The offer letter

3. Tips from people who hire

- Interviewing & job hunting tips from:

- Hiring managers, HRs, CFOs, Project Managers

- Scientists and Research Associates

Background: Education

- Graduate school, PhD Neuroscience
 - Loyola University, Chicago
 - 1999-2005
 - Steroid hormones and peripheral nerve injury
- Postdoc
 - HMS/MGH (Charlestown)
 - 2005-2008
 - Drs. Pamela McLean and Brad Hyman
 - Effects of Chaperones on Parkinson's Disease
- Scientist, Seaside Therapeutics
 - 2008-present (past 6 months)

Background: Professional

- Seaside Therapeutics
 - Cambridge
 - Drug Development for Fragile X Syndrome and Autism
 - Virtual Company (2005)
 - Transitioned to a 'Tangible' Company (2008)
 - Leased office and lab space



www.seasidetherapeutics.com

Background: Professional

- 1st Scientist hired
- Initial tasks included:
 - Setting up the laboratory
 - Ordering equipment
 - Ordering consumables
 - Establishing permits and licenses
 - Establishing safety procedures
- Planning/Implementing biomarker experiments
- Helping to hire new staff

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Current State of the Market

- For local information:
 - The Journal of New England Technology
 - Masshightech.com
 - Weekly publication of New England biotech companies
 - Great source for current/local market news (*e-mail alerts*)
- Smaller companies hit hardest?
 - CombinatoRx (-65% of staff)
 - Charles River Laboratories (+60 jobs)
 - Pfizer, New Research Unit (+70 jobs)
- When interviewing, do not be afraid to ask how much money the department has (and for how

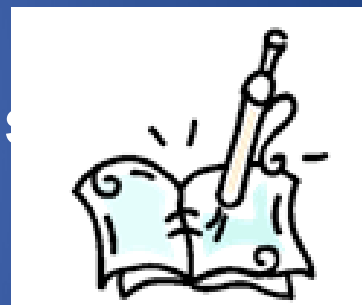
When to look for a job

- When to start looking?
 - PhD positions usually want 2-5 yrs postdoc experience
 - Start looking *before* your fellowships expire
 - Start looking before your PIs funding runs out for your project
 - Be aware of PIs funding status. If funding is tight, start looking
- How long will the search take?
 - Typical (PhD Scientist in industry)
 - Search ~1yr
 - >100 applications, 5 Interviews, 1 offer
 - Not uncommon!!
 - My experience
 - 6 applications (neuroscience-related, only), 3 interviews, 1 offer
 - This search STILL took ~1yr!!
- Good idea to plan on it taking at least *one year* to find a job in industry



What to look for in a job

- What do you excel at?
 - Keep a journal
 - What do you like/not like about your postdoc?
 - What are you good at?
 - Find a job to compliment your strengths
 - Good writer? Scientific editor
 - Sociable? Pharmaceutical sales
 - Technical? PhD-level customer support (*Mol Dev*)
- Or just peruse & see what appeals to you
 - Monster.com
 - Search “Scientist”, “PhD”, “Boston”
 - 48 hits, Browse the list



Where to look for a job

- The internet/Register
 - Monster.com
 - Indeed.com
 - Massbio.org
 - Biospace.com
 - Newscientistjobs.com
 - Naturejobs.com
- Company websites
 - Example, Neuroscience-based companies
 - Amgen, Biogen, Vertex, Genzyme
- MGPA website
 - ‘Career Postings’
 - ‘Search Engines for Academic and Industry Positions’



How to look for a job

Network



How to look for a job

- NETWORK!
 - Tell everyone you are looking for a job
 - Old professors, high school teachers
 - You never know who can help
 - *Neighbor, fellow gym member*
- Get your CV to a hiring manager
 - Ask anyone you know who might know someone at the company
- Attend networking events
 - Biotech Tuesday (*local networking event*)
 - HBA (hiring managers are at events!)



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Getting a job in Industry:

Cover Letter

- Write a NEW cover letter for EACH application
 - Time consuming, but worth it!
 - 1st opportunity to interact with the company
- Make it formal
 - Make a PDF, attach to e-mail
- Be Short/concise
- Explain why you are applying for the position (*next slide*)
- Summarize yourself (*next slide*)
- Address the job description in context of your qualifications (*next slide*)

The CV

- Reformat your CV for EACH application
- Use Keywords (*HR searches*)
- Read, read, reread it
- Have someone else read it
 - ESPECIALLY if english is not your 1st language
- 1st Paragraph is most important
- Objective 1st, then education (*next slide*)
- Use bullet points (*next slide*)
- Be different, stand out (*next slide*)

Getting a Job in Industry: The Phone Interview

- Purpose?
 - Will this person fit?
 - Are they easy to communicate with?
- Who is it with?
 - HR or hiring manager
- Be prepared!!
 - Research the company
 - Science/Literature
- Reserve a quiet/private room in your building/lab
 - Land lines ONLY, Do NOT use a cell phone (*signal, CNY*)
 - Test the phone line before hand, call someone else first
- Have in front of you:
 - The job description, your cover letter and CV, notes about the company
 - A type-written list of questions!!!
 - LOTS AND LOTS OF QUESTIONS!!



Getting a job in Industry: The “Informal” Interview



- Purpose?
 - Will you fit in with potential co-workers?
- Who is it with?
 - Hiring manager, potential co-workers/teammates
- It is not informal!
 - Wear a suit, this may be the only chance to get in the door
 - Make good 1st impression
 - Be interested/interesting & confident
 - Be prepared (*practice* mock interviews)
 - Bring copies of all materials
 - Manuscripts, cover letter, CV
 - Ask questions!



Question Examples: Informal Interview

- Group dynamics, what is the team like?
- Specific research-related questions
 - About compounds, mechanisms, indications
- Pipeline, where is it going?
- What are they looking for, specifically in this hire?
 - Specific knowledge, technique?
- Career development opportunities?

Getting a job in Industry:

The “Formal” Interview

- Purpose?
 - Will you fit in with the company, more broadly?
 - Will meet with more people this time
 - Give a scientific seminar
- Who is it with?
 - Hiring manager/future supervisor
 - Depending on company size: CEO, CFO, Dept. Directors, VPs, Scientists, Research Associates
- What will it involve?
 - A scientific seminar (~1hr)
 - 5-6 interviews with any of the above (~30m each)
 - Lunch with staff
 - A long, long, tiring day
 - 5-6 interviews, ~30m each, 3 hrs + seminar + ‘working’ lunch=>6 hrs, atleast!

Getting a job in Industry: The “Formal” Interview

- Be Prepared!!!
 - A seminar (~1hr)
 - Incorporate relevant experience, when available (*ex: behavior*)
 - Practice it: In front of other scientists
 - Research your interviewers
 - You will get a schedule w/ names on it
 - Look them up (next slide)
 - Bring copies of all materials
 - Manuscripts, cover letter, CV
 - Write lots of Questions before you go!
 - Tailor them to each interviewer (next slide)

Formal Interview:

Tips for asking Questions

- Look up the people you are interviewing with
 - Pubmed, google
 - Try and ask them specific questions relating to their history and areas of expertise
 - Demonstrates good research abilities
- Example, Seaside has a unique, non-VC based business plan
 - I talked to the CEO and CFO about the business plan
- One of the VPs went to grad school in my hometown.
 - We talked about that
- Even if it is not 'scientific' it show good research skills

'Thank You' Letters

- Send e-mail 'Thank Yous' after each interview stage
- Make it more formal than a simple e-mail
- Type it on letterhead, format as a PDF, attach to an e-mail (*next slide*)
- Individualize the letter
 - Try to write a different letter for each person
 - Highlight parts of the conversation interesting to you
 - Show evidence of conversational processing

'Thank Yous'-Avoid

- Do NOT send a hand-written note
 - It takes too long
 - It is not professional
- Do NOT ask to be 'linked-in' with interviewers
 - It is too soon



The Offer Letter

- Hiring manager should alert you that an offer is being made
 - A written offer will be 'FedEx'ed to you
- Review (>)
 - Salary, signing bonus (if applicable), start date, benefits (health, dental, retirement ect.), vacation allotment, # of sick days, stipulations of annual merit raises
 - Company stock/investments
- Negotiate
 - Your ability to do this could indicate what type of employee you will be
 - 'Everything's negotiable'



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- General Advice and Interviewing tips from:

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Human Resources (HR)

- Be careful what you post on-line
 - If you have a 'facebook' page, is it acceptable?
 - What comes up if you 'google' yourself?
- Smile
- Make Eye contact
- Be enthusiastic
- Have good manners
- Do not be rude to the secretary/support staff
 - Often they are the 1st people the hiring managers consult, post-interview
- Prepare for Human Resource questions (next slide)

(Tough) Human Resource Questions

1. Tell me about yourself
 - Prepare a brief summary of career, end with a personal note
2. Why are you leaving your current position?
 - Because my funding ran out is not a compelling answer
3. What are your strengths?
 - Try and cite an example from your experience
 - Are you a good manager? Did you mentor a technician in your PD?
4. What are your weaknesses?
 - Keep it short, business-related and correctable
 - Don't say 'perfectionist'
5. Describe your perfect job.

A Hiring Manager

- Network!!!!
- Proof-read the CV & cover letter
 - Especially if english is not your 1st language
- Write a nicely structured letter
 - Talk about your scientific interests
 - Why are you a good match
- Try keep the CV to 2 pages, if you can
- Interview:
 - Be prepared
 - Talk about science, that is why you are being hired
 - Know how you are going to fit the company's needs
 - Be able to concisely recap your own work
 - Do not ramble on *nervously*
 - *Practice the 2m 'tell me about yourself' question*
 - *Should be mostly career-oriented, with a bit of personal at the end*

CFO

- The Offer Letter
 - It is OK to negotiate, it shows you understand the value you are adding to the company
 - Your salary is based upon:
 - Years of Postdoc experience
 - Years of relevant experience
 - Salary is not the only negotiable point
 - Vacation/sick days
 - Benefits
 - Retirement
- The interview
 - Research the company, not just the science
 - Have questions prepared about the company
 - It's future, job security, future expansion
 - If it is a small company, ask how many years of funding they have
 - Answer questions directly and thoughtfully
 - Demonstrate that you have understood/processed the question by answering it directly
 - Responses should be more than a few sentences long

Project Manager

- Basic advice:
 - Ask questions!
 - Ask the same question to multiple people
 - Are the answers the same?
 - Research the company/field before you go!

?????!!!!!!

Project Manager Interview Advice:

- Questions he likes to ask:
 - What do you like most about the company?
 - If you could change one thing about the company, what would it be?
 - If you could change one thing about your manager, what would it be?
- Worst Questions/Responses in an interview
 - Is 'so and so' single?
 - I don't have any questions
 - I already asked all my questions
 - I think I understand everything
- Red Flags
 - Do not ask about compensation
 - Be Honest! If you had a bad previous experience, explain it

Scientist-early in industry career

- Ask questions!
- Appear/Be interested
- Demonstrate your scientific ability
 - Avoid too much small talk
 - Talk about science, be excited about it
- It is OK to laugh, but know when to be serious
- Show evidence of being a team player & hard worker

Scientist-15yrs industry experience

Interview Advice:

- Ask questions!
- Try and have a discussion, avoid interview interrogations
- Practice “Human Resource” questions
- Ask questions about the company/interviewer
- Dress for success
- Be confident and genuine
- Skills & experience are important, but it is more important how you will fit in

Research Associate

- Have a conversation, make it easy for the interviewer
- Do not speak down to the RAs
 - ‘they will report to their boss that you were mean and that will make you look bad’
- Do not swear (*it happened!*)
 - ‘just because I am not in a position of authority does not mean I think it is cool if you curse’
- Ask questions, but make them good (redundant, I know!)
 - Not obvious ones : ‘what is your therapeutic area of interest’
- When giving a talk, give enough background for everyone to understand

Take Home Points

- The search will be long, but worth it...
- Take the time to do things correctly
- Prepare
- Ask Questions (for the last time!) 😊
- Do not get discouraged
- Do not give up
- Good luck!!!

Thank You

- MGPA
 - For the Invitation
- Industry colleagues
 - For thoughtful discussion & help
- You
 - For your Attention & Questions!!

