

What needed to distinguish yourself...
Anonymous from Reddit – 2021

Ph.D. or Masters from a reputable college or university? Yes. because they have established that they can persevere and know a lot of the processes and statistics behind the algorithms and cool stuff in data science. They may not have actual work experience - internships usually only provide minimal experience, but we can develop the rest. From there on out its a matter of how do they think through problems and can they produce great insights for all levels of associates (from store management on up to the CEO and C-suite execs)? Lots of people go to the top data science schools thinking its a guarantee of a great paying job. That's not true. Many fall out as they can't do the work, are way too slow or just have zero creativity and can't think outside the box. If they don't have the ability to think outside of the box they need to get in another profession. I would say only about 10% - 20% of the graduates from top data science programs at schools like Stanford, MIT, Harvard, UNC, Duke, etc. stay in data science positions. Being a data scientist can be very stressful and fulfilling at the same time. Many can't hack it. Now if a grad student takes a bootcamp that might give them a 1% better chance of getting a job with us over another equal applicant. But in my book and with most companies that hire data scientists its real, actual projects, experience and documentation that will make one outshine the rest and get the job and the highest offers. That is why I typically do not hire out of a bootcamp. One cannot learn enough of the underlying processes and thought processes from them. Instead take some data and play with it, build stuff and then document what you and no one else has ever built. Take processes that are currently widely used and improve upon them. Say, "I can make this better."

I never went to a data science school and only have a 4 year degree in MIS (Management Information Systems), but I have built novel processes that are so accurate that the CIA, NSA and thousands of universities all over the world including the big names (Harvard, Johns Hopkins, MIT, Cambridge, Stanford, NC State, UNC Chapel Hill, etc.) all use them in their teaching programs and research. I have documentation that makes it so that if I apply for a data science position no one else stands a chance regardless of their educational background. They consider me the unicorn. If it were to even get out that I was considering to look for other positions that hoards of companies would be all over me a kin to Michael Jordan when he was drafted into the NBA. Hiring managers have me on speed dial. At conventions everyone knows me and respects me. This is how you get the top jobs in data science. Be the **unicorn**.

Find a facet of data science that really interests you and create something amazing. start with the easy stuff and even then, take it to new extremes and go where no man or data scientist has gone before. Want a great way to impress people like me that get thousands of applications for each job opening? Take a local company that has no data analytics or data science and do something amazing with their data. Do it for free. I like to see people that take the time to help others.

Do some clustering for a local charity of their donors. Identify clusters of where these customers live and then identify and visualize 5 mile circles of these clusters. Then use rMarkdown to properly document this for your potential teammates. **Take a local tattoo shop and forecast their sales with multiple models, then do a rMarkdown document that shows and contrasts accuracies, custom models and more and why each is important and so on.** Maybe take some data and predict human behavior (shopping, voting, etc. preferences). Maybe veer into human sentimentality processes. These are the things that will get you a personal phone call from someone like me (a top data scientist for a multi-billion dollar, international company). Not a bootcamp.

Be a maverick, dive in and learn and then contribute and give back to the data science and local communities - the rest will take care of itself. If you do this and don't stop (not hard because good data science becomes addictive) you will see doors open up and you will be amazed at how far you will go. It will feel good to hear from hiring managers, "what can I do to get you on my team?" There are a lot of data scientists and a lot of jobs out there, but be **the unicorn**.

Do stuff that matters and make a difference. Help others (key component here for me) and continue to learn and give back. The rest will take care of itself. If you do this, while the bootcamp graduates are going to hundreds of interviews and most will not find a job in data science or will wash out, you will be the one that has hundreds, if not thousands, of hiring managers after you.

I wish you the best of luck.
-anonymous