

# Applying and Interviewing for Employment in Industry Workshop

This summary gives an overview of the topics covered for those of you who couldn't attend the workshop or would like a hard copy / refresher of key points made by the volunteer presenters and panel of University of Minnesota and industry representatives.

## General Advice

- Be prepared for the fact that you'll most likely be doing something completely different in a few years.
- Although you're new career will most likely take you down a different path, remember that you can use past knowledge and skills in your search, interviews, and possible new career.

## Resume

- A resume will not get you a job, but it is usually crucial in getting an interview.
- Your resume and cover letter are indicators of your written skills, so make sure both are flawless. (i.e. check word usage, spelling, name of company/contact)
- Some details to include in your resume that might help you stick out are: skills and background specific to the company or position you're applying, long term goals, outside activities, etc. However, don't over-embellish and be realistic.

## The Search and Application

- Look at companies as a place to start a career and not just as a potential job.
- Research companies to know their "personality" i.e. scale of research/production, size (global, national, local, etc.), potential for promotions, etc. Get an idea if they'd be a good fit for you.
- It's really never too early to start looking for jobs. If you think it's too early to start applying, call and ask for a time frame for hiring into the position. Even if you interview and don't get the job, you may be kept in mind for another position.

## Interview Preparation

- Make sure to adequately research the company you're interviewing with since it will become obvious to interviewers your level of understanding of the company, reflecting on your interest in working for them.
- Have a 1, 5, and 10 min summary of your research memorized or well-rehearsed so you can adequately explain it to different interviewers (scientists, HR, management, etc.).
- Practice interviewing and try to anticipate possible questions.
- Prepare questions to ask during the interview. Keep in mind you are also interviewing the company that you may get an offer from and eventually work.
- A few ways to find out who will be interviewing you are talking to HR, figuring out from provided job titles, or asking pre-interview dinner hosts.
- Be prepared to sell yourself. Make sure you've thought about who you are and what your best assets are before entering an interview.

## **Interviewing**

- An interview tests your communication skills. Keep in mind that if you can't talk to an employee at a certain level (i.e. management) you've probably hit your ceiling for advancement in that company or even may not get hired.
- Be prepared for a full day of interviews. You will most likely be interviewed by a cross-section of many disciplines, educational backgrounds, and interests. Be prepared to say the same thing with a different spin multiple times.
- Keep in mind there is a social element to interview. The interviewers are finding out if they would enjoy working with you and if you fit the company.
- At some point during the day of interviewing (usually first) you will need to give a research presentation and answer questions.
  - Tailoring your talk to fit their company may help your chances, but make sure you feel comfortable with what you're talking about since you're selling your communication skills.
  - Highlight collaborations, especially if in different fields, if applicable since it shows you can work well with others.
  - Point out roadblocks in your research and your solutions since it shows your problem-solving skills.
  - If you don't explicitly mention, be prepared to answer what part of your research was actually your, and only your, contribution or idea.
  - This may be the only part of the day you talk about your research or even science.
- Behavioral interviewing will take up the majority of the day since most companies strongly believe that previous performances are a good indication of future performances.
- Be aware of how things may be interpreted when you say them. If you're interested in management positions, it may be best to say you're looking for leadership opportunities since it implies the same thing, but also shows you're willing to prove yourself before entering management.
- After an interview, it is a good idea to send follow-up letters to interviewers that include something to show you paid attention and were interested during the interview. If you choose to send letters, make sure to send one to all interviewers.

## **Once you're in**

- Be prepared to change. The companies bottom-line is now your bottom-line also.
- Rough timeline
  - 1<sup>st</sup> week – orientation
  - 1<sup>st</sup> month – learn about the structure of the company and who is important. You shouldn't be repeating things that have already been accomplished
  - 1<sup>st</sup> year – for a research project, you may be given a solid project to work on, in addition to another project which allows for freedom and creativity.