Talking Points for Job Searching, Interviews and Toxicology Careers

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Disclaimer

• The information in this presentation is based on my experiences and opinions. Please keep in mind that every company and hiring manager has different views and different priorities.

• You will be best served by finding a variety of sources, taking it all in and trying to paint a big picture.

• But even with that, you still have to be comfortable in your actions. Trying to mold yourself into something you think others want will make you appear to be stiff and uncomfortable. Not a good way to show up.
Non-Academic Industry Jobs

- Petroleum
- Chemicals
- Food
- Pharma
- Agrichemicals
- Consulting
- Government

- Testing labs
- Consumer products
- Personal care
- Trade organizations
- Advocacy groups
- Military
- Many more.....
Where to look for jobs

- Scientific society job pages
- Internet job sites (monster/hotjobs..)
- Specific company pages
- Recruiters (try to identify the top ones in your field, usually by word of mouth)
- Social media/networking
- **Work your professors.** That’s what they are there for. Some of them actually have friends (really!) and those friends work at these companies.
- **Network at meetings.** Do the grad student lunches. Go to the company booths. Go to company posters and talk to their people (**mention expert lunch here**)
How Choosey Should I be?

• **DON’T** be picky. You first job is FAR more important than what the job is

• **ALWAYS** job-hunt from a position of strength (which is employed). Saying “current job” beats “last job”

• Your goal is to differentiate yourself from the pack. Getting away from “no experience” is your first goal!

• **Don’t** isolate by region. A lot of native Texans don’t want to leave the state. Avoid that. In a worst case, you do 3-5 years someplace and then come home when a job opens. Far better than 3-5 years in a 2d or 3d postdoc.

• Chances are you won’t get the ideal job right off the bat. That’s not a problem.

• Let’s face it, social security won’t be there and the retirement age will be 80. Get your career started now!
Interview Do’s

• Be flexible
• Be self-aware of your good and bad points
• Be open to other aspects of the job that may not appeal as much
• Be confident, not cocky
• Honest
Interview Don’t’s

• Don’t be pathetic (I’ll work a year for free, half-salary, 80 hrs/wk). They don’t want it and in most cases can’t do it regardless due to law or internal HR rules.

• Cocky/know-it-all. Trust me, you don’t walk the walk.

• Elitist. Your Ph.D is cool, but not THAT cool. They have more non-Ph.D’s than Ph.D’s, and no one will call you “doctor”

• Lie/BS/Pad your CV

• Boring. **Have some fun.** You’re either going to get the job or you won’t. Freaking out won’t help. This will be one of the most absurd experiences in your life outside of a wedding. You may as well laugh about it.
Both Sides of the Situation

- The company is looking to hire, which means they are short-handed or expect more work than their group can handle. The good thing is that no schools teach industrial tox that I know of. The staff came from where you are and they know what you bring to the table. If they are contacting you, they are willing to train.

- You may not understand why they want you based on their posting. That’s OK. Quite often they aim high but will take lesser experience. Apply for better jobs, not lesser jobs. It may say 5-10 years required. Ultimately, they may look lower. They won’t hire you for a lesser job.

- Many of the HR requirements today included lame scripted (“targeted selection”) interviews that ask for examples of when you have lead groups, dealt with challenging situations and worked with difficult people. It’s very frustrating if you’ve never done that. My answer? Think outside the box. Give examples from school, from your non-academic life and so on.

- My best example? When asked about dealing with customers I said everything I know about business I learned as an 11-year old paper boy. Be there on time, with what they want, where they want it and keep it dry. Customer service. That was well received.

- Another example: In dealing with difficult people, I told them how I worked as a security guard in a hospital on midnights and dealt with drunks, lunatics, distraught people and the worst… frat boys. I told them to beat that. Also well received.
“Targeted Selection”

• They want to see if you can think on your feet, and if you can apply real-life situations to work.
• The process is really not designed for you as new people, so you may have to wing it or say “I’ve never done that”.
• Feel free to remind them at some point that you don’t seem to fit the scripted questions very well.
• Be sure one way or another to fit in things that you’ve done in your life that show you’ve done more than drink beer and play X-box.
• Remember, this is a cattle-call and you have to differentiate yourself from the herd. (tell them the med student joke)
Real Life Example of “Targeted Selection”

• Tell me about a situation where you went above and beyond the call of duty. What happened? Why did you do it?
• Give me an example of being in a situation where things were not going well and you turned it around. What did you do? Why did you do it? What was the outcome?
• What was the most difficult task you've had to learn? What did you do to learn? What was the result?
• What is a recent responsibility you have taken on? Why did you assume this responsibility.
• Give me an example of when you worked the hardest and felt the greatest sense of achievement. What did you do? What happened?
• Tell me about a recent frustrating experience. Why were you frustrated? What did you do? What were the results?
• Tell me about your favorite club or activity? What specifically makes it your favorite? What has been your role/how have you progressed?
• Tell me about your job search strategy. What actions have you taken? Results?
• When did you feel the most significant achievement in a work situation? What did you do and why was it so rewarding?
• How do you spend your free time? What do you like about and why?

http://www.pacificu.edu/offices/hr/training/interview/pdfs/TargetedSelection.pdf
What I look for in a CV
(and this is only my view)

• Get to the point: I have a dozen of these to read plus all of my other work.
• Don’t make me hunt through the fluff to get to the meat. Make the important stuff stand out.
• Know when it’s too much: You don’t need 20 pages. You want a lean, mean, CV.
• Some people are interested in your extracurriculars. I’m not at all. I skip right over it. Don’t care a bit. I want a scientist, not a cheerleader. I don’t care you were the lead in Brigadoon, or that you were in student council or national honor society.
• Don’t EVER lie to me. If you do, you’re in the garbage.
• Don’t BS me. See lying.
• If you say that you can do something or that you know something, you had better be able to back it up (see “don’t BS me”).
• Stand out from the crowd. And no, I don’t know how. But you have to differentiate yourself from the rest of the new grads. Impress me. Be creative
• Have someone read the CV that doesn’t know your history. If they are confused, I’ll be confused too.
• Find a classmate that got a job and look at theirs. It worked for them....
• Remember, every reviewer is different. Take every “how to interview, how to write a resume” with a grain of salt. Use good judgment, common sense and work in your comfort zone.
• NOTE: Use a professional e-mail address: “aggie4ever”, “hookemhorns”, “toosexie” and “StudLee” aren’t appropriate.
Example of BS

• As a grad student with Dr. Ansari, we interviewed candidates for a tech position. A new grad with a BS from A&M applied, and filled out the UTMB resume form. At the bottom was a dozen or so check boxes of techniques that the applicant could select. This person checked every one of them. So we asked what he knew about ELISA, and he said “I did it in biochem lab class”. When questioned further, he watched it being done.....Once. So that was his idea of “qualified with this technique”. Needless to say, he did not get the job.

• To me, that’s BS. Don’t tell me you’re qualified or an expert on something if you are not. To me, by saying you’re qualified, that means you can walk in, sit down and get right to work at something. “Expert” means you know everything there is to know about it.

• There is absolutely nothing wrong with admitting that you are not an expert in everything. I don’t expect you to be. I want you to be willing to learn and do what we need. But I DO want to know the extent of what you can do.

• Keep in mind that most schools don’t train you for industry. No GLP, no guideline studies, no regulatory affairs. I realize it. Every hiring manager knows this. Keep that in mind. We’ve been where you are now, and we know what you know (probably).

• I encourage you to look into things like GLP, OECD/EPA guideline studies, TSCA, REACH and so on. I discourage you from overstating what you know about them.
Interview Tips

• Phone interviews are common to see if you are a good fit. They are surprisingly tough because you can’t get a visual cue from the people on the phone if you’re confusing them. Tread carefully. They can’t see you smile or wink. Play these more straight than a face-to-face interview.

• I represent a 10 BILLION dollar company with 14,000 employees world-wide and so many products that I don’t know them all (actually, I do, but it sounds better that way). I don’t expect you to know my company in depth. I do expect you to have checked out the webpage and see what we are about.

• Normally, companies put their best stuff first on the web, so at least know that, and know the market segments. Also, you may want to find one segment or product that really interests you and review that.

• When they ask if you have questions, **ASK QUESTIONS!!!** If you don’t have a question about a job you’ve never done at a huge company with hundreds of products, I don’t want you.

• Believe it or not, you want to have them sell themselves to you as much as you want to sell to them. Ask them why they’re the best. Ask them why this is a good area to live in. Ask them what they bring to the table.

• My favorite: I always asked for a generic org table. I said I wanted to see how the people I was going to talk to fit in the organization. That got a lot of good comments, and most people said “no one ever asked for that before”. You’re going to interview with 8-10+ people over a day and half. It’s confusing

• Don’t be petty or get too granular. Don’t talk specifics on salary, benefits, vacation unless asked. Don’t forget, for almost all of that, they have a set core that you will fit into and there’s normally no option or discussion on it, so why bother until they offer you the job?
Standard Job Interview

• Fly in the day before
• Have casual dinner with the host, or a group
• Interview in hour blocks, including lunch, with (normally) one person or group per hour.
• You may be asked to give a seminar.
• Meeting with HR is common.
• You may meet only with the hiring group, or you may meet with people outside of the group, especially if the job parameters are already set.
What Do I Do For..

• They ask ME about salary? Try to find a common number, and shoot them that with “it’s up for discussion”. Basically, they want to know if you are locked in at WAY too much. And that really does happen. If you go too low, they aren’t going to lock you in. Basically, they have a scale you are already set into.

• They ask “what are your faults”? Tell them. Within reason. And then hit them with a positive. “I need to learn to network more”. “I’d like to learn how to be more proactive” and so on. No one is perfect.

• The sit-down with HR. What do and don’t I discuss? First, see what they show you. Take it from there. Remember, most benefits are not up for negotiation in the big picture. You can ask if there is a pension, how much vacation is offered and so on. Avoid “when can I start taking vacation”, “when do I get a raise or promotion” and so on. Focus more on “what do you offer” rather than “when do I get it”. You can also ask about career development, certifications, continuing ed and so on.
LLumar® Window Film blocks up to 99% of damaging UV rays – the leading known cause of skin cancer and premature aging.

Eastman is supporting The Skin Cancer Foundation’s Road to Healthy Skin Tour, which strives to save lives by detecting skin cancers early on and educating the public about skin cancer prevention.

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Eastman has completed the acquisition of Solutia Inc. marking a significant step in the company’s growth strategy. Learn more

Sustainability

The way we do business is by balancing environmental protection, social responsibility and economic growth now and in the future. It’s also the way we define sustainability.

Positive Progress in Our Sustainability Journey

Eastman has released its 2013 Sustainability Progress report, an overview of progress made against the company’s sustainability strategy, progress, goals and advancements. Learn More

Products

( SDS, Data Sheet, Comparisons)

Our Technologies

Eastman Innovation Lab

Our Stories

REACH
A Day in the Life

• Answer e-mail (not as boring as it sounds). Mainly short questions and managing ongoing issues
• Deal with assigned products. Keep up on all aspects
• Trade organization work
• Regulatory issues, both new and ongoing (TSCA reset, REACH, EDSP...)
• Business/Legal support
• Stewardship
• Ongoing studies
What am I Doing this Week?

• Chair of REACH testing group for H4R consortia. ~ 7 million USD program. 14 OECD 422 studies ongoing, and 14 developmental/2-gens to come
• Evaluating the safety of an existing product for a new use
• Setting up testing programs to get food contact approval for 2 resin families in Europe
• Evaluating test orders for 3 chemicals through the EU REACH program
• Answering business questions on the EPA endocrine disruption program
• Complied glycol ether test data for ACC for an NTP data collection call
• Reviewed data for ongoing mechanistic studies for a ketone to confirm cancer findings were based on alpha-2-u, and not relevant to humans
• Worked on cancer classifications to meet new GHS regulations
• More questions, inquiries from inside and outside the company than I can count
• Reviewed last container loads for food grade products
• Prepared a presentation for the Pine Chemicals Association meeting