From Physical Oceanography to Insurance Risk Management

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Outline

• Career path from Ph.D. to present

• Job in the Insurance Industry

• Transferrable and new skills (IQ vs EQ)

• Main differences between working in academia compared to my current work.

• What would I tell my younger self and what was super useful advise I got

• Practical tips on how to do the transition successfully
From Physical Oceanography to the Insurance Industry

Scripps Institution of Oceanography

Insurance Industry

Max Planck & Institut für Meereskunde

Universidad de Buenos Aires
Some of my previous research:

*The Impact of the Saharan Dust in the North Atlantic Circulation*

Surface currents from my simulations
Some of the work I’ve done in the insurance industry

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<th>Model development, analytics</th>
<th>Underwriting support</th>
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Transferrable and new skills (IQ vs EQ)

**Transferrable (PhD) skills**
- Problem solving
- Ability to explain complex problems
- Resiliency, perseverance
- Work on time pressure
- Meet deadlines
- Work with difficult people
- Manage long-term projects
- Writing skills
- Tech savvy, resourceful

**New Skills**
- Business acumen
- Time management
- Emotional intelligence
- Learn to listen
- Overcommunicate
- Get comfortable with an imperfect answer
- Creativity
- Everything can be done; set realistic expectations
Main differences between working in academia compared to my current work

It really depends on the job type and industry. Here’s my experience in the private sector:

– Time is money
– Fast paced
– High-level is exactly the opposite of what you think
– Keep complex solutions simple. Nobody cares how you got there
– Solve other people’s problems (do save some time to develop a new idea – innovate)
– Candid feedback: just take the bullet
– Dressing code
– Out of sight out of mind
– Ultimately, your job is to make money for the company
What would I tell my younger self / useful advice along the way

• It’s okay not wanting to stay in Academia – Keep things in perspective and try to detach from the Ph.D. years – That was a job, now you want a different one.
• Keep away from the downers – It’s your life
• If you have an open minded advisor, use her/him to troubleshoot about potential jobs/careers in the private sector
• Apply for jobs if you meet >50% of the qualifications

• Learn the industry language quickly (acronyms, nomenclature)
• Learn the company structure – Orgcharts
• Take the time to learn the basics well
• Get a mentor/sponsor early on
• Helping others troubleshoot is actually part of your job
• Solve problems people have – be helpful and create a reputation for yourself
• Seek candid feedback from your boss, colleagues and clients but don’t expose yourself to criticism from people you don’t like your don’t like you
How did I get my first job?

- Network, literature
- Worked on my resume
- Attended seminars
- Hired a career coach for a few sessions
- Uploaded my resume to various places
- Lots of internal work
Goal: get called for an interview

Looking for a job is a full time job

- Network: most people want to help
- Informational interviews
- LinkedIn
- Turn your cv into a resume and keep it intriguing
- Tailor cover letters to the job description

Learn to communicate in their language

- It’s about what you can do for them, not the other way around (and btw, there is so much that you can do for them that will also be fulfilling)
Goal: get an offer

Be humble but don’t sell yourself short

• Dress respectfully and be on time
• Getting hired is mostly about whether people likes you and thinks you’ll fit in the team – Be yourself and flex your style

Be curious

• Take notes, ask questions. Remember you are evaluating them as much as they are evaluating you – It also shows interest
• There are no free lunches (everything is part of the interview)
• Ask junior people (your peers) about the company culture
• Ask for the next steps

After the interview

• Send thank you notes to every person that you spoke to more than 30min
• Ask for feedback if you feel you connected with a particular person
• Connect on LinkedIn
Game changes entirely – you are calling the shots

- **Negotiate**, not matter how good the offer looks to you – This is the only time that you’ll be able to do this. It also shows that you are business savvy – Not matter how painful it is, **negotiate**
- It’s not all about the salary: negotiate what’s important to you, e.g.: vacation days, flexible work arrangements, base salary, bonus, sign-on bonus, starting date, etc.
- Verbal promises, most likely, wont’ be fulfilled – Get it in writing if you can. It’s not that people want to trick you with false promises, it’s just hard to keep them because the business changes rapidly
Questions please

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