

SIGMOD'13 New Researcher Symposium: Do's and Don'ts for a *successful* job search

Anastasios (Tasos) Kementsietsidis
IBM T.J. Watson Research Center

“Try not. Do or do not, there is no try”

-Yoda



Disclaimer: The views expressed in this presentation are those of the presenter and not of IBM

Getting the perfect job requires three things to happen:
(i) The position should be the right one for you; (ii) You should be the right person for the job; (iii) The planets must *properly* align

- The first thing is in your hands. So, we'll talk about how to
 - Find yourself (Personally/Professionally)
 - Prepare yourself, hmmm?
 - Present yourself. Ready are you?



Courtesy of Lucasfilm©

- The second thing is in *their* hands
 - What are *they* thinking



Courtesy of VW©

- Planet alignment is (often) in nobody hands. It involves things like:
 - “Hiring freezes”
 - “Budget cuts”/“Limited funding”
 - “Market changes”
 - “Competing research groups/agendas”



Courtesy of Lucasfilm©

Your personal and professional life is inseparable. Don't sacrifice one for the other. Find a place that you would enjoy living, and a job there that you would enjoy doing. Speaking of which...

The job-hunting equivalent of “*To be or not to be?*”:
“*To startups, to industry, to research labs, or to academia?*”

A false dilemma, also called a fallacy of the excluded middle



Source: Wikipedia

Recent *trends* show that you should consider *everything* (throughout your career):

- Professors often switch to research labs or start their own... startups (then switch back)
- Researchers often become adjunct professors, or jump to... startups (and back)

You should be able to teach, program, develop systems, write papers and seamlessly move from one to the other. Then, your choices will be limitless.

“*But it's hard*”, you say...
...and what do you think you have been doing as a student?

All I am asking is for you to continue to do what you do...
...for more money presumably!

The criteria in finding the perfect place (to apply) are highly personal. Still, talking to other people might help you figure out that some of the things that are good for them, might also be good for you!

An incomplete list of criteria:

Permanent vs. Temp position Fame/Rankings Salary
Research vs. Engineering Research Area Relevance

A complementary search methodology:

Where am I going to...

...learn the most? ...learn new things? ...work with the best?

Use your principles. What's your motto?

A motto I like: If you are the smartest person in the room, you are in the wrong room

Everything you do from the day you enter (graduate) school (e.g., papers, internships, presentations) is part of the preparation for getting the perfect job. The objective is to get people to know you!

- Conference papers and presentations
This is your training ground to become
(a) known;
(b) an effective speaker; and
(c) a slide-preparation machine



Unified Data Analytics IBM

SIGMOD'13 New Researcher Symposium:
Do's and Don'ts for a successful job search

Disclaimer: Feel free to break the n

Getting the perfect job requires three things to happen:
(i) The position should be the right one for you. (ii) You should be the right person for the job. (iii) The planets must properly align.

- The first thing is in your hands. So, we'll talk about how to
 - Find yourself (Personality/Professionally)
 - Prepare yourself. ,hmm?
 - Present yourself. Ready are you?
- The second thing is in their hands
 - What are they thinking
- Planet alignment is (often) in nobody hands. It involves things like:
 - "Hiring freezes"
 - "Budget cuts"/"Limited funding"
 - "Market changes"
 - "Competing research groups/agendas"

Slidemaster 3000

- Internships

There are trade-offs between having multiple internships in the same place vs. having one internship in multiple place: Breadth vs Depth in terms of (a) Personal relationships; (b) Research topics; (c) Exposure to different environments



My Buy-One-Get-One free (BOGO) internship rule:
If you do an internship at place X at year n, do a second internship at the same place at year n+1. Then, try place Y at year n+2 (and n+3).

- Social media



Preparing for a successful interview requires a lot of work (note: an interview can be successful irrespectively of the outcome).
As in any *duel*, to prepare you have to first study your opponent.

- Study the institution
 - What is its reputation?
 - Are papers important?
 - Do they value coding?
 - What are they working on?
- Study the people
 - Who works there?
 - What is their background?
 - What are they working on?
 - What do they like? (insider info)

I want to work for you,
please hire me!

I am only going to
work in area X

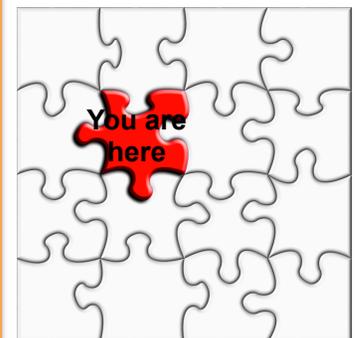


Courtesy of Lucasfilm©

Don't be this guy

- Prepare for the phone interview
 - Stand up!!
- Prepare the talk (optional)
 - What's my story?
 - Which part(s) of my work support the story
 - Do practice your talk!
 - Don't practice your talk!
- Prepare yourself
 - Read FAQs
 - Be yourself!
 - Be open!
 - Be sincere!
 - These are your friends!
 - Be calm!

No contradiction



Be this guy

There is very little going on in the minds of the people that are trying to hire you... (this is not a general statement). Basically, there is a very simple mental model

Read Blink (by Malcolm Gladwell)
or think “Love at first sight”

Based on your
presentation,
1-on-1 discussions

This person
looks good on
paper

This person is
really good!
(or not!)

Hire this
person!
(or not!)

Based on your CV,
reference letters, papers

Based on the planets

Congratulations! You are hired! Here are a few things that you want to keep in mind while you are negotiating your new life



- Basic things you can negotiate**
- Your salary (+ ϵ)
 - Your sign-in bonus
 - Your (moving) expenses
 - Your startup-fund
 - Special requests (e.g. for your partner)
 - Housing/Realtor
 - Healthcare

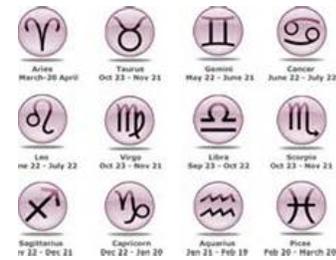
- Factors that influence negotiations**
- Your new master
 - Your other masters
 - Your seniority
 - What you bring into the table

Years go by... You are now old... a veteran... and you are sitting in your rocking chair... or corner office with a window... and thinking... “What would I have done differently..“

Thank you for listening!

- For one thing, I would attend the New Researcher Symposium to learn about *the fallacy of the excluded middle*.

- I would schedule my interviews only after consulting my horoscope



- I would save money to buy the Slidemaster 3000

- I would follow Yoda’s advice and would not try. Only Do or Don’t



Courtesy of Lucasfilm©
© 2009 IBM Corporation