

Industry Field Position
(How to get there)
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***The following is my story of how I
matched my Interests and
Experiences to become a modern day
“hands on” Plant Pathologist.***

Experiences and Education

MY STORY

- Worked on apple orchard ... love the outdoors
- Broad interests, though of becoming an Extension agent.
- Masters in Plant Pathology
- Managed the disease portion of Apple IPM program
- Worked as Summer intern for AgChem company
- Conducted applied agriculture research with Contract Research Co.
- PhD in Plant Pathology
- Postdoc with grape diseases
- Industry position conducting field research until being downsized
- Private practice was dropped at my feet as OPPORTUNITY to follow employment with what I enjoy

***For personal satisfaction and success
each individual must identify
competencies important for future***

- **Guidelines for Success in Industry**
 - **Academic preparation**
 - **Years and type of experience**
 - **General skills**
 - **Personal qualities**

For success in Industry: Guidelines for Academic Preparation

- University degree essential, but increased experience generates increased exposure. PhD more valuable (\$\$) than Masters Degree, but experience always improves opportunities for individuals with a Masters Degree.
- MOST IMPORTANT question in final exam.... How does your project relate to “X?” (Be ready to think how your research and methods could be used with another crop / pathogen / or in other systems or fields)

For success in Industry: Guidelines for Experience

- Increased experiences afford increased opportunity. (While you may not remember everything... remember the people and the places to find information (Google less important than personal contacts.)
- While contacts are more important than knowledge, if you can start on shoestring & show that you excel in what you; then eventually your services will become noticed.
- While experience is essential, becoming recognized is paramount in Industry... (especially in any area that you want to specialize; find your niche market)
- Business experience helpful (budgets, federal and state taxes)

For success in Industry: Guidelines for General Skills

- BIOLOGY RULES in Science Based Employment, but one must first understand Crop; Pests; Pesticides, & Equipment
- One must understand enough technology to keep you out of spending too much time troubleshooting. (there is a lot of technology out there...“Economics” of your business will let you know what you need or can afford. Computer and truck are always essential.
- Generally your own boss. Time management skills essential... Understand and practice “Closure”.
- “I can do attitude” essential; must understand enough Horticulture, Meteorology and yes... Phytopathology.
- People contacts are extremely important... you must become Visible, Known and Respected.

For success in Industry: Guidelines for General Skills (cont.)

- Business sense important for managing ALL aspects of any private practice
- Understand and use technology.. Computer hardware and software, especially WORD & EXCEL. ARM software (\$1500); GPS (\$1000).
- Financial. You need money to make money. Example, scouting requires limited inputs, but offers limited financial reward... whereas contract research is can be capital intensive, but can offer financial rewards.

For Success in Industry: Guidelines for Personal Qualities

- Most important of all qualities = Self starter. Secondary personal traits involve being efficient, ability to adapt to change, and ability to multitask and juggle many tasks, while accepting long hours.
- Must be willing to interact w/ audience at their level....
Grower, Extension, University Faculty, Industry experts.
- Generalist mindset and attitude are required, while being a specialist on each individual project.
- Fiercely independent
- Like what you do. But must tolerate writing & paperwork.
- Must thrive in doing something different every week and year. Change is constant

For Success in Industry: Pointers for recognizing and taking advantage of opportunity

- Pursue what YOU like to do. Realize what you are “hard wired” to do
- First need an IDEA or Opportunity w/ Financial arrangements
- A reputation is more valuable than advertising
- Business sense required to understand all aspects of job
- An open mind allows individual to think outside the box
- Marketing essential to get started. Then must continued marketing necessary to maintain business income.
- Must be efficient with time and resources
- Use contacts to get business, but closure for each project is essential for return business.
- Analytical mentality and Independent nature.
- Remain unbiased--- don't align with anyone or company.

Landing a Position in Industry

- For position in INDUSTRY:

NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK.

Interact with a lot of people. Everyone in Industry knows someone or something similar to your research (be prepared to explain how your project relates to something else.) Remember who you talk to. Examine a lot of opportunities.

Ask questions.. Have an open mind... Also... once in a private practice position... networking becomes a “life long skill” needed to gain information about “science, horticulture, and applied plant pathology”.