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CAREER ADVICE FOR TRANSITIONING OUT OF ACADEMIA

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The CV to apply outside the academic sector

The CV is a professional communication tool that should reflect your professional identity. Its purpose is to get you to meet the recruiter.

When applying for positions outside the academic sector, there are a few rules to follow:

- Select only the elements of your career path related to the position. Don't bother minimizing spaces and font size to try and fit it all in! A CV that is too dense does not make you want to read it.
- Your CV must be understandable to everyone, including non-experts. Be careful to avoid overly scientific or technical jargon.
- Your doctorate is both a degree and professional experience. Make sure you value it differently in the "Education" (as degree delivered by a university) and "Work Experience" (as experience in scientific project management) sections of your CV.
- Never send a generic resume. Each application must be adapted to the offer for which you are applying. Personalize your CV by, for example, using the key words from the advertisement, emphasizing the key elements of your career path that are directly linked to the position and/or the company.
- Your CV must be consistent. We must be able to understand your evolution and see how the position you are targeting is the logical continuation of your career path.

Marketing research experience and skills outside academia

PhDs very often tend to spontaneously value their scientific and technical skills. But recruiters are looking for much more than that, judging by the profiles sought on job ads.

This is why it is important to value your research experience and skills to demonstrate how you are more than just a researcher:

- Do not present your research project in front of a recruiter as you do at scientific conferences. Rather, it's about showing your ability to manage a project, or even several projects at the same time. Take a step back from this experience and identify the main steps of your project ("milestones"), the main results obtained ("deliverables"), the strategy and actions implemented, all the partners directly and indirectly involved in your project, the resources allocated (time, finance, material, human), etc.
- Knowing how to present your research project from the point of view of the objectives and issues at stake allows you to contextualize your project in a broader way. This is also what will arouse the interest or support of your interlocutor in relation to what you present.
- There are two types of competences: scientific and technical competences, those related to your scientific field; transversal competences, those you can use whatever the environment in which you find yourself (e.g. communication, project management, etc.). In addition, there are personal qualities, those that are linked to your personality (e.g. team spirit, commitment, empathy...) and that allow you to approach a situation in a way that is specific to you.

To help you identify your skills, go to www.mydocpro.org. It is a skills reference system specially developed for PhDs. You'll find 24 skills and their definitions to help you put a word on what you can do.

Preparing for job interviews outside the academic sector

You have successfully passed the first step of the procedure and are now invited to meet the recruiter for an interview.

To help you prepare for this meeting, here are a few tips:

- First of all, remember to keep the full description of the offer. After a while, jobs posted on a job site may be archived and are therefore no longer accessible. You will have all the elements related to the position and the company well in mind.
- If not already indicated in the recruiter's message, ask who will be present at the interview and how the interview will be conducted. You may have to meet several people at the same time (e.g. the HR manager, your direct manager, etc.). The more you know, the better prepared you'll be.
- If the offer requires language skills, be sure that part of the interview will be used to test your language level. For example, practice presenting yourself in this language.
- Find out as much as possible about the company. It is not only a question of reading the website carefully, but also of exploring other sources of information (such as the business press for example) to keep abreast of its latest news, those of the sector and its competitors. A useful

document to consult is the activity report: often indigestible to read but very interesting to learn more about past and future activities.

- Prepare a few questions to ask the recruiter. Remember that the interview is not an interrogation but a discussion to get to know each other. Not asking questions would be interpreted as a lack of interest and therefore motivation. Be careful, however, about the type of questions you ask: avoid the one about the number of paid holidays!

The recruitment process can be a long one and you will most likely have to go through several interviews. Some recruiters also include case studies or role-playing to better assess your ability to handle certain situations. In the case of international organizations, it is not uncommon to go through an assessment center, which allows recruiters to evaluate your behavioral skills in the middle of a small group of candidates.

Testimonials of PhDs holders having left academia and recruiters

Articles with career advice

- Job interviews by videoconference: <https://bit.ly/2YKskL8>
- Your professional background: the story of which you are the hero <https://bit.ly/30QM16E>

Interviews

- Interview of Vibratec CEO: <https://bit.ly/30KNo70>
- Interview of PhD in anthropology: <https://bit.ly/3fxJyCq>
- Interview of EPO Director of Operations: <https://bit.ly/3d9oDUz>
- From academic research to consultancy: <https://bit.ly/2N1zwNE>
- How I defined my career plan: <https://bit.ly/2zCgD0u>

Videos

- The PhD skills needed in a professional environment (in French with English subtitles): <https://bit.ly/3d9negL>

Podcast

- Interview of Medincell Head of Pharmaceutical Operations: <https://bit.ly/311YpB9>

More resources on www.abg.asso.fr/en/vue/regard-abg and <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2KwFEvrToeEFDLCK7956CQ>