

4 Ways to Prepare Now for an Industry Career

Don't wait to develop these new skills and habits!



Career Advice for Scientists and Engineers in Industry

Working in industry is very different than academia and being successful requires developing some new habits. Most universities are not equipped to prepare graduate students for private sector careers, because most people in academia have never worked in an industry environment.

Can you get a head start on preparing for a career in industry while you are still in graduate school? Absolutely! Here are 4 things you can do before you graduate:

1. **Run your project with a plan** - In industry, everything is a project, but unlike most projects in academia, projects in industry have firm start and finish dates, deliverables, milestones, and a schedule that you are expected to meet! If you set your thesis project up with a plan and then track your progress and spending, you will be able to make your grad school experience sound much more industry-relevant.
2. **Learn some basic finance** - Math is the language of science and engineering, and finance is the language of business. Learn some basics, and you will sound much less like an academic.
3. **Talk about your project with people who have no idea what you do** - In science and engineering, data generally speaks for itself. In industry you generally have to convince others that your ideas are the right ones to pursue. A great way to learn this is to practice telling people who don't know anything about your research why it is important for the world.
4. **Think of your research group like a company** - Academic research groups and private sector companies generally have different goals. One aims to produce new knowledge and publish papers, and the other aims to produce profit. However, if begin thinking of your research group like a company, where your job is to figure out what you can do to help that company succeed, it will naturally drive you to the best actions in any type of organization. This habit will carry over into your career, and you will be ahead of the game.

Let's Turn Science into Things People Need!