A few quick tips

- Preparation is key to success
  - Do as much preparation as you can, and then release expectations and enjoy the day

- Communication is also the key to success
  - Listening, eye contact, firm handshake, taking natural pauses in conversations

- Stay in the present moment
  - There will be ups and downs, but just keep going

- Put your cell phone away!
  - You’re interviewing them as much as they’re interviewing you

Interviewing steps

- CV received, hiring manager is interested!
  - You may receive email, voicemail, or phone call from the firm to set up initial call
  - Respond promptly and gracefully

- Be professional and show enthusiasm
  - Provide availability for the next week or two
  - Ensure you know who will be on the call
  - Phone call or Zoom?
    - If it’s a phone call, provide a landline number if possible
    - If it’s Zoom, ask if it will be video or audio
Interviewing steps

- Company expresses interest
- Initial screening with human resources or hiring manager
- Full slate of Zoom interviews + presentation
- After the interviews – thank you emails
- Reference check and background check
- OFF!
- Negotiations
- Moving logistics
- First day on the job

Initial screening part I

- Conduct research on interviewer
  - Find information on LinkedIn, company website, Google Scholar
- Review company and understand their technology and competitors
  - Pipeline
  - Public/private? Series A or later?
- Review job description and understand where you are a fit and where you’re not
  - Be yourself!
  - It’s important to not change yourself or predict what they think you’re looking for
  - They may be considering you for a role that hasn’t been posted

Initial screening part II

- Prepare questions
  - What are the main functions of this role?
  - What are the immediate needs and long-term needs of the group?
  - What does it look like in the organization?
- Be prepared for questions
  - “Explain” vs “performed” vs “performed experiments” vs “I performed those experiments”
  - Be honest when describing your experience and skill levels
  - Show flexibility
  - Take notes!
- Take call in a quiet area with limited distractions
- Follow up immediately with thank you email

Questions and comments so far...............

Interviewing steps

- Company expresses interest
- Initial screening with human resources or hiring manager
- Full slate of Zoom interviews + presentation
- After the interviews – thank you emails
- Reference check and background check
- OFF!
- Negotiations
- Moving logistics
- First day on the job

Moving to the next stage with full slate

- You’ve made a great connection in the first round, and you’re moving to the panel
  - Congratulations!
- The interview will include a presentation and panel of 6-12 interviews
- Before 2020, these were all done in person
- Since March 2020, they are now all on Zoom
- Zoom – can be split up over a few days
- In person – all done in one day
### Prepping for interviews part I
- You will work with a company admin or HR to determine dates and times for the 4-8 hour interview.
- Be sure to thank them for their efforts—there are a lot of moving pieces putting together the schedule.
- They will put together a schedule with interviewee names and titles.
- This will include the hiring manager, other members in the group, directors, VP or two and research associates.
- Research each interviewer using LinkedIn, PubMed and Google Scholar.

### Prepping for interviews part II
- Prepare questions for each interviewer—what are their pain points?
- Prepare for both technical and behavioral questions.
- Be able to describe your research and answer questions on your contributions.
- Research behavioral questions—"tell us about a time when your project was failing and it was your fault!"
- Jot down some good stories you can share that ends with you being victorious in the end.
- Understand competitors, company finances and history (including IPO and stock price), status of clinical trials, mergers and acquisitions.

### Onsite interview AM part I
- Make sure everything is organized and set up the night before.
- Body, mind, and spirit are calm and ready to go.
- Ensure optimal sleep, breakfast, meditation and movement.
- Dress in comfortable and confident relevant business attire.
- Check with hiring manager on what they suggest—suit, button down shirt, etc.
- Organize your portfolio containing:
  - copy of interview schedule
  - several copies of your resume
  - any forms including NDA, application, etc.
  - references
  - Bring notebook and pen and copies of your presentation (on flash drive, laptop, hard copy).

### Onsite interview AM part II
- With all day interviews, prepare to be physically and mentally fatigued.
- Be sure to eat something in the morning as well as lunch or snacks that may be offered.
- Arrive 15 minutes early.
- Turn off cell phone and leave in bag (or car).
- Be professional and courteous with everyone you meet—security guard to VP and everyone in between.
- Smile and remember to breathe :)

### The presentation part I
- This is the most important part of the interviewing process!
- Typically 45 minutes with 15 minutes for questions.
- Demonstration of communication skills, interpersonal skills, and ability to answer questions about your research.
- Ask hiring manager about their expectations for the presentation—this is key!
- Typically, clients want you to show how your research ties in with what they're doing.

### The presentation part II
- Everyone likes to hear a good story and adventure.
- "Describe what you wanted to accomplish, detail the setbacks and detours you encountered, dive into how you solved these problems, and end with how you were victorious in the end!"
- Position several times (at least once in front of colleagues who can ask questions)
- Be prepared to answer questions:
  - If you don’t know the answer, don’t guess.
  - Great opportunity to follow up with interviewers afterward with more details.
Throughout the day ~ onsite interviews

- Smile and greet everyone with a firm and friendly handshake
- Be yourself, enjoy the opportunity to meet lots of new people, and show enthusiasm
- Give thanks for each person’s time
- Collect business cards (or get email address so you can send thankyou emails)
- You will have better connections with same – stay in the present moment and breathe
- Do a mental re-set between each new set of interviewers
- Take a few deep breaths and start fresh

Questions and comments so far...........

Interviewing steps

- Company expresses interest
- First round with human resource or hiring manager
- Full slate of Zoom interviews + presentation
- After the interview – think positively
- Reference check and background check
- Offer
- Negotiations
- Moving logistics
- First day on the job

After the presentation and interviews

- Debrief with the recruiter
- Send thank you emails to each person you meet
- If you haven’t sent references yet, make sure to have these prepared
- Follow up with company/recruiter and make sure they’re aware of other interviews and offers
- Practice patience :) – it can take a while for company to debrief on interviews and make a decision
- They may be interviewing other candidates as well – follow up after a week to get an update

Reference check

- Ask potential references if they’d be willing to speak on your behalf
- This is important – ask what they’ll say about you and make sure there are no issues
- Provide 3 professional references
- Include at least 2 supervisors
- Include the following information for each reference
- Name
- Ensure we accuracy email and cell phone
- Their current company/institute and title
- Relationship – including how long you worked together
Background Check
- Most firms will conduct a background check
- Typically includes:
  - Education
  - Criminal
  - Employment history
  - Drug testing

Interviewing steps
- Company expresses interest
- Initial screening with human resources or hiring manager
- Full slate of interviews + presentation
- After the interviews — thank you emails
- Reference check and background check
- Offer
- Negotiations
- Moving logistics
- First day on the job

Offer
- Congratulations!
- HR may ask what salary you’re looking for
- Do your research on geographic area and level
- Offer a range based on research and working with recruiter
- Compensation package: base + bonus + stock + relocation/sign-on bonus

Interviewing steps
- Company expresses interest
- Initial screening with human resources or hiring manager
- Full slate of interviews + presentation
- After the interviews — thank you emails
- Reference check and background check
- Offer
- Negotiations
- Moving logistics
- First day on the job

Negotiations
- It’s human nature to want to negotiate and most people do
- Choose one thing to negotiate — typically salary or relocation
- Be reasonable in your requests
  - Remember that you’ll be working with them and you want to maintain a great relationship
  - Bonus, stocks and benefits are typically standard
- If you want to negotiate and you receive the offer you request, it’s expected you’ll accept

Interviewing steps
- Company expresses interest
- Initial screening with human resources or hiring manager
- Full slate of interviews + presentation
- After the interviews — thank you emails
- Reference check and background check
- Offer
- Negotiations
- Moving logistics
- First day on the job
Moving logistics

- Larger firms will have relocation service available
- Typically smaller firms will give a lump sum and you’ll need to figure it out

Things to consider
- One partner moving first
- Working remotely until everyone’s back in office after pandemic
- Waiting until end of school year

Interviewing steps

- Company expresses interest
- Initial screening with human resources or hiring manager
- Full slate of interviews + presentation
- After the interviews – thank you emails
- Reference check and background check
- Offer
- Negotiations
- Moving logistics
- First day on the job

First day on the job

- From accepting to first day on the job, keep in close contact with hiring manager
- Request papers to read to get up to date on research and expectations
- Communicate with company any issues you may encounter with regard to the move
- Celebrate your success and hard work. You did it!

Questions and comments so far...........

Zoom Tips

- Lighting – make sure you’re facing a window if possible
- Background – ensure your background is neat and tidy
- Technical – confirm camera is on and speakers are functioning
- Wardrobe – wear a professional shirt that doesn’t clash with background

Interview disaster stories part 1

- Your reference gives you a bad review
- Make sure you ask your references what they’ll say about you

- Technical issues with presentation
- When interviews are back on site, make sure you bring several copies including laptop and email it to yourself
Interview disaster stories part 2

- Lack of self-awareness
  - Non-stop talking without pausing

- Interview attire
  - Professional attire and ask hiring manager or HR for advice on what they expect

Interview disaster stories part 3

- Treat everyone you meet with the most respect
  - From security guard to receptionist to Research Associates and VPs

- Keep the language super clean

- Don’t let your guard down
  - When out to lunch or dinner, remember you’re still being interviewed!

Interview disaster stories part 4

- Deciding halfway through interview that you actually are interested in the job
  - Go in with full enthusiasm

- Employers can tell if you’re cocky or going through the motions

- Zoom issues
  - Bad lighting
  - Video camera off

A few resources

- Adam Grant – organizational psychologist – books, podcast, adamgrant.net

- Brian Buffini – motivational coach and real estate trainer – books, podcast, thebrianbuffinishow.com

- Brené Brown – PhD Researcher on courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy – books, podcast, brenebrown.com

- Liz and Mollie – “emotion at work” – newsletter, lizandmollie.com

- Brian Johnson – Optimizer – optimize.me

Wrap Up

- Be yourself
  - Show up prepared, well rested, and confident that all of your PhD and Postdoc work has prepared you for this opportunity

- Have fun
  - When we’re enjoying making connections and learning more about clients, we’ll be less anxious and more in the flow

- Enjoy the adventure
  - Nothing is perfect – but how you respond is everything

  - No matter how things go, you’ve learned a lot and this is a springboard for future opportunities

Kerry Boehner
KOB Solutions, Inc.
kerry@kobsolutions.com
cell: 412-334-2018
www.kobsolutions.com