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Key Strategies for a Successful Analytics Job Search

If you're getting started in the popular fields of analytics or data science, odds are you're well aware of the attention the quantitative fields have been getting lately. While there are many opportunities for early-career analytics professionals, being well prepared for your job search will save you time and yield the best opportunities.

One of the trickiest parts of being early in your career or a new professional to the field is that many employers are often looking for someone with prior work experience, so anything you can do to give yourself real-world data experience or to make the hiring process smoother will be to your advantage. I put together a previous list of tips (see <http://stat-trak.amstat.org/2015/06/01/10-tips-for-entry-level-analytics-professionals>) for analytics professionals, but here are more job search strategies to help:

1. Write a Concise and Relevant Résumé—Résumés should never be longer than 1–2 pages. Keep irrelevant experience brief (or just eliminate it altogether), and focus on any experience you have that is relevant to the role you're applying for. Describe the effect you've had or projects with real-world data you've worked on, rather than just listing tasks you were responsible for.

2. Have a Professional Social Media Presence—Companies will check your social media profiles before hiring you. Either make sure your presence on those networks is professional, or set all your profiles to private. LinkedIn is a great network to keep track of your professional achievements and make a good first impression to employers, so make sure your profile is complete and up-to-date.

3. Research Potential Employers Before the Interview—I've included this on my lists before, but it bears repeating because it's so incredibly important! Employers want to know you are interested in their company, that you know at least a little bit about what's going on with the company, and hopefully that you've even researched your interviewers on LinkedIn. Being knowledgeable about the company and your interviewers is a great way to stand out and show them you're interested in their job, not just any job.

4. Avoid Being Overly Casual or Presumptuous in Interviews—Save any discussion of benefits, salary, or vacation time for after the first interview. Bringing it up too soon can leave a really bad impression because it makes it seem like you're not even interested in the job or company. Your first goal should be to prove you're the right professional for the role. Interviews are also not the place to experiment and see whether the company culture is open to swearing, offensive jokes, or sweat pants.

5. Follow up After Interviews—This is crucial. It is customary to send each of your interviewers a personalized thank-you note after an interview. Emails are fine, but make sure the notes are pleasant and unique to each recipient.

6. Keep Your List of Target Companies/Areas Open—The more you can keep your list of target companies or geographic areas open, the more opportunities you're going to have. Limiting yourself to only name-brand companies or one city might mean you miss out on a higher salary or more opportunity for advancement.

7. Have Realistic Salary Expectations—Salaries vary widely based on industry, experience, location, and many other factors. To get a better idea of what to expect, I'd recommend checking out Burtch Works' salary studies for Predictive Analytics, Data Science, and Marketing Research professionals at www.burtchworks.com/big-data-analyst-salary/big-data-career-tips/the-burtch-works-study, which are all available for free.

8. Evaluate Growth Opportunities, Not Just Salary—Although salary may be an important factor in your decision, it should not be the only factor. Make sure to take other things into account, such as whether there are growth and learning opportunities and cultural fit. Choosing a job that doesn't have any growth opportunities for a higher salary in the short-term might mean that you will actually earn less in the long-term, so carefully evaluate all aspects of the potential company.

For more information about job searching and the analytics hiring market, be sure to check out the Burtch Works blog at www.burtchworks.com/blog. Best of luck with your search, and make sure to connect with me on LinkedIn! ■



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