



Women in Science – 3<sup>rd</sup> Erlangen Symposium

## Seizing the Horizon: Empowering Women to Navigate and Triumph in Their Career Voyage

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As I approached the end of my postdoctoral program, the quest for an industry position unfolded like an intensive self-improvement workshop. The first step was to distill my academic achievements and accomplishments into an industry-standard CV—a document that would speak to the needs and language of the corporate world. This task alone was akin to enrolling in an advanced class of self-discovery and skill articulation.

The learning curve steepened as I attempted to decode the labyrinth of job titles. Each title carried with it a unique set of tasks and expectations, often obscured by industry jargon. To unravel these mysteries, I reached out to professionals on LinkedIn for informational interviews. These conversations were invaluable, granting me insights into the day-to-day realities of the roles I aspired to and teaching me how to communicate my capabilities in terms that resonated with industry recruiters.

But the journey didn't stop at linguistic mastery. The art of networking became my lifeline. It was through a relentless cycle of job applications, digital networking, attendance at industry events, and the cultivation of relationships with seasoned industry mentors that I began to see progress. These connections not only provided guidance but also served as conduits to potential opportunities.

In retrospect, I recognize that this phase was a comprehensive lesson in self-awareness and professional development. It exposed gaps in my PhD and postdoctoral training—areas where the development of practical soft skills, and industry-relevant skills was overlooked. It was a strong reminder that the academic community, while nurturing intellectual growth, often does not prepare one for the pragmatic aspects of career starting and advancement in the industry.

This reflection on the insights gained, which I am keen to share with you, extends beyond a mere personal account. It serves as a rallying cry for academic institutions. It underscores the importance of tailored programs that equip scientists, particularly female scientists, to navigate the predominantly male-dominated industrial sphere. These programs ensure that the transition from academia to industry is not a mere leap, but rather a well-supported stride toward a fulfilling and rewarding career. Recognizing that the strategies and methods that have brought us to our current juncture may no longer be effective for the challenges ahead, I am poised to propose a comprehensive pragmatic success model. This model is not only theoretically sound but also pragmatically viable, tailored to meet the demands and nuances of both the academic and industrial landscapes.