Esra Mescioglu

Data Solutions Analyst at Rock Central

Educational Background

B.S. Environmental Science - University of Massachusetts, Boston

Ph.D. Earth Science - University of California Santa Cruz

Coursera courses focusing on Python, SQL, Machine Learning, Business Analytics

Job Search

I graduated in June 2020, in the middle of the covid-19 pandemic. I spent the first few months looking at and applying to a variety of jobs in nonprofits, academia, government, industry. In September, I realized that the jobs that excited me the most were data related. I had a little bit of R and Python experience from the work I did during my Ph.D., but I knew there was a lot more I needed to learn to get a job in tech. I started taking Cousera classes at the end of September to fill my knowledge gaps. Meanwhile, I started to network with people who were working in tech. Most importantly, I joined a group called Women in Data (WiD)! Through the organization, I was able to meet other women who were interested in transitioning and building a community. At the end of January, I applied to a job opportunity posted by someone in WiD community and was invited to interview for the position, and later received a job offer to start in March. Overall, it was a brutal 8 months, but I ended up with a really great job!

Current Position

I work as a Data Solutions Analyst for Rock Central. Rock Central is a consulting company that provides services to Quicken Loans and other companies in the Family of Rock companies. I currently work in the Digital Marketing Optimization team, a data science team that uses artificial intelligence to improve marketing. I work closely with data scientists, data engineers, software engineers, and marketing experts to build data-driven products and processes. My typical day starts with a meeting with my team to discuss ongoing projects and tasks for the day so that we can remove roadblocks. I usually spend about half of my time meeting with people. I have learned that meetings are a super important part of my job, because the work is very collaborative and there is constant information exchange (either someone is teaching me something or I'm helping someone understand something). The other half of my day is spent writing python scripts to wrangle data, analyzing data, or designing experiments.

Key Skills for My Job

Analytical mindset, breaking complex problems into small pieces, communicating technical or complex information in a digestible and understandable way, programming (any language - once you know once, you can learn the others), data visualization, statistical analysis, critical thinking, experimental design, math

Best Part of My Job

My relationship with other team members and my team leader and the very large potential for growth.

Advice for Geoscience Students

1. Do an internship. Any experience (paid, unpaid, internship, fulltime, part time) you have that is relevant to the field you want to enter is going to give you a leg up.
2. Network! Each job gets hundreds of applications and nothing will make your application stand out more than a referral. I don't mean just going on LinkedIn and adding a bunch of people, but actually building a community of people who work in the field that you are interested in entering.
3. Be positive. There are a LOT of jobs out there! If you have a bad interview, so what? At least you got some practice for your next one.
4. Be confident. Don't focus on what you can't do. Focus on what you are good at and how you can bring value to a team or a company. If there are obvious gaps in your knowledge, fill them.

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