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2016 / 2017 • CANADIAN 9TH EDITION

AG & FOOD CAREER GUIDE

**INSIDE: LEADING CANADIAN
AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS ARE HIRING**

INTERVIEW QUESTION TRANSLATIONS

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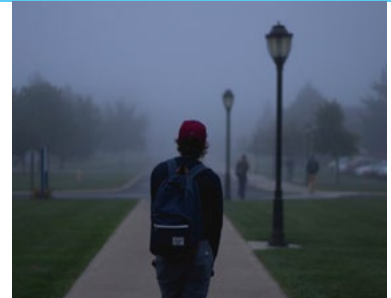
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WELCOME TO THE AG & FOOD CAREER GUIDE



Welcome to the ninth edition of the Canadian Ag & Food Career Guide from

AgCareers.com! This year's edition brings some exciting changes that will continue to enhance this invaluable resource to students and young professionals. You'll notice a fresh cover design, plus the name change from Employer to Career Guide to better reflect the purpose of the resource: career education and connecting people to the varied and numerous careers in the agriculture and food industries.

Inside this publication, you will find valuable job search and career tips, along with connections to top organizations in agriculture and food that are actively recruiting and hiring students and new graduates. We encourage you to review the employers'

profiles to find out more about their organization and career opportunities.

Useful articles featured in this guide will help as you navigate the job search process and begin your career. Articles cover topics such as interview questions, digital resumes, employability skills and networking preparation. If you are considering higher education, examine the master's and continuing education programs highlighted in the guide.

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application history and post your resume to our online database. For more tips on utilizing AgCareers.com, check out page 27.

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We are positive you will find this Career Guide and AgCareers.com to be instrumental in your search for a career in the agriculture and food sector. Please share this publication with friends. Look for an easy-to-share electronic version under "Employer Guide Articles" on www.AgCareers.com. Good luck in your career search!

Kathryn Doan, Director of Global Business Development

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the importance of preparation

BEFORE THE CAREER FAIR

by Ashley Collins, AgCareers.com Education & Marketing Manager

ATTENDING YOUR CAMPUS CAREER

FAIR is a foundational component of securing your first career or summer work experience. Unlike emailing or submitting your application online, this is your chance to meet face-to-face with representatives from a company and make a great impression.

Unfortunately, many of today's students skip this critical opportunity and find themselves playing catch up, sometimes well beyond graduation. Those who do attend are a step ahead of their absent peers, but if they've not adequately prepared, they'll find their resumes at the bottom of the recruiter's stack at the end of the day.

DRESSED FOR SUCCESS

A student who has taken the time to complete a few small tasks to prepare before hitting the career fair floor can be spotted quickly. A prepared student has dressed appropriately for the occasion. They understand that the way you're dressed says so much about you before you even mutter a word. Their clothes are professional and well-fitted. Even if not wearing a full suit, their attire doesn't look like they picked it up off their apartment or dorm floor that morning. These students have given thought to the fact that they've got a lot of ground to cover and they'll be on their feet for a while, so their shoes are professional but also comfortable.

A prepared student has made a few notes (we'll discuss the how and why of those notes momentarily), but it adds one last element to their wardrobe. The finishing touch is a discrete folder or padfolio. Inside are a few copies of their generic resume, along with any customized resumes for specific employers — just be sure you keep them organized into separate groups inside the folder. A pet peeve of recruiters is receiving a resume with a competitor's name or job title referenced in the objective statement.

Additionally, your padfolio should include notes about the companies you hope to meet with plenty of space to add a few more following each interaction. Then, if they've really gone the extra mile, a handful of their personal but professional business cards. This level of preparation is visible to employers before you even visit their booth and will tell the employer that you mean business when it comes to securing a job with their company.

NOTEWORTHY NOTES

So how do you prepare your magical notes locked away inside the padfolio? An unprepared student is a student who walks up to the company booth and asks, "What does your company do?" "Where are you located?" "What kind of jobs do you have available?" Those are questions you should know before the

career fair, but sadly, nine out of ten students with whom I've interacted with at career fairs use these as their starting questions. That tells a representative that you haven't given a lot of thought to your future and you aren't going to be a self-starter on the job if you didn't have enough initiative to do a little homework before the career fair. Your knowledge will help the conversation flow much smoother and allow time for deeper conversation regarding specifics of the company culture and career opportunities.

Every career fair publishes a list of companies in attendance prior to the event. Many of those lists also include company information, a link to their website, and often titles of the roles they are recruiting for at the career fair. Through the registration process, companies took the time to input this information so it would demonstrate resourcefulness on your part to invest the time to read that information and dig a little deeper.

Beyond the basics, additional items to research include the company's mission, their major competitors, the organization's clients or customers, and if they have been in the news lately (and what for). Having your answers, thoughts and questions based on your research jotted down to quickly review before approaching a booth will also give you an ice breaker to start the conversation. Then you won't be asking

repetitive questions like many of your peers and you won't have to rely on off-the-wall, uncomfortable jokes to help you "break the ice." Preparation will set you apart professionally versus being remembered for being awkward.

ASKING THE QUESTIONS

Keep your strong first impression going by asking your questions strategically. Preparing and practicing questions in advance will make this easier. Ease your way into the conversation. Start with a firm handshake, eye contact, and a professional greeting.

Have an elevator pitch prepared about yourself. Include your name, major, graduation date and career objective. Practice this in the mirror, with your roommate, and in your head; basic information about yourself can just disappear when you're nervous. Then begin by referencing the open roles they are recruiting for, ask about the specific requirements, and how the position fits into the overall goals of the company. Follow that with any questions you have about recent news regarding the company; try to focus on positive, reputable media. Ask about the future of the company: where do they see the company in the next several

years? If you've found news regarding recent awards or recognition the company has received, ask about those. If you have an interest in community service work, ask if the company provides opportunities for employees. Remember to be conscious of your time and the representative's.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Before you walk away, ask what the next steps are in the process. If your conversation has gone well and you think you'd like to further explore employment, then this is a critical step that you've been preparing for, so don't let it slip away.

Offer a copy of your resume but understand that the representative may not be able to accept it and may direct you to their website to submit a copy. This is where those personal business cards come into action. Tuck your resume back in your padfolio and ask, "Can I offer you my card instead?" which also gives you a chance to ask for their card. Their card will be nice when it comes to following up after you've completed the online application or other instructions they've given you. There could also be a possibility that the representatives are staying on campus

to conduct interviews the next day and you can sign up for an interview slot right there on the spot.

This is the point where you may accept any material or swag item the company is handing out. Then find an area of the fair where you can tuck away for a moment to jot a few notes about the conversation and review your notes for the next booth you plan to visit. Note the sentence reads, "accept any material or swag item the company is handing out," but don't come to a career fair thinking it's a free shopping spree to grab giveaways at each booth. Coming to a career fair equipped with an empty bag to fill is not appropriate preparation!

For many companies and students, career fairs are the number one way to network with employers. The simple act of attending and visiting with a few companies will allow you to make significant progress in landing a student work experience or career you want. Going a step further by preparing will decrease your perspiration and increase your success, and the rate at which you achieve that success. Lastly, be prepared to have an open mind about the information you learn and the opportunities you discover. Sometimes the best decisions in life are those you never thought you'd have to make!



Comic by Becca Schwartz

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DON'T LET YOUR RESUME HIT A

DIGITAL DEAD END

by Bonnie Johnson, AgCareers.com Marketing Associate & Ashley Collins, AgCareers.com Education & Marketing Manager

MOST RESUMES are first submitted and viewed electronically today; is yours optimized for that process? Save your artistic flair for the printed copy you present to the hiring manager, because first, you must ensure your resume gets through a system known as an ATS.

Many mid to large employers utilize applicant tracking systems (ATS). In fact, 90% of jobs on AgCareers.com are redirected to apply through an ATS. These systems utilize technology to manage the influx of applications and electronically screen candidates to match the job for which they are hiring. The ATS assigns points to the different components of your resume based on an algorithm created by the hiring company. Resumes with the highest scores will get passed through to the hiring manager. The ATS “parses” resumes, which strips formatting out and pulls important words to sort into categories such as education, skills, work experience, and contact information. So how do you increase the chances your resume will score high?

THE “KEY” TO A HIGH SCORE

KEYWORDS. Customize your resume for each job. Just like when you search the Internet and type in your relevant terms, employers’ systems are designed to do the same: search your resume for keywords that match the job they are trying to fill. Success will be based on your resume having relevant keywords.

So how do you choose the right keywords? Examine the posting and

description for unique keywords and phrases specific to that job. Try copying and pasting the job description into an online word cloud creation service (like Wordle.net). The larger the word appears in the cloud, the more times it appears in the job description. These words are certainly significant to the employer and are more important for you to build into your resume. You can also look at professional networking sites or professional summaries from company employees. Pull out phrases and keywords these other professionals are using that are applicable to you.

Include both the spelled-out version and acronyms for your education and professional organizations, as you can’t be sure which usage the ATS will look for. Examine the organization’s website for more information about their culture and values as this information can also be valuable to your resume.

But note that there can be too much of a good thing, so don’t overstuff your resume. It’s about using the right keywords and their uniqueness to the roles you’re applying for, not the number of times the word appears on your resume. Many systems put a value on related keywords and/or apply greater value to some keywords versus others as they relate to the specific job. So utilizing resources such as individuals who understand the company or role to help you identify those keywords is vital.

Above all, be honest: make sure you are only using keywords and phrases that represent the real you!

10 ELECTRONIC RESUME MUST-DO'S

- Use a sans serif font like Arial in size 11 point or larger.

WORK EXPERIENCE



- Preferably save as a Word document (don’t use the header function).

- Use bullets as they are easier to read for ATS and for humans.



- Delete any graphics, logos or tables.

- Name clearly defined sections, such as “Work Experience” and “Education” that ATS can easily recognize.

- Do not begin a section with a date. Rather, for example, style as so:

Greene Farms, Farmhand,
2010-12

- Avoid lines to separate sections.

- Include your full contact information (full address and postal code, as they may filter by geographic area).

- Remember proper grammar, spelling and punctuation!

- Save your resume as a unique file name, not just “resume”:

AllysonParkerResume.doc

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5

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AND HOW TO DEMONSTRATE YOU HAVE THEM

by Ashley Collins, AgCareers.com Education & Marketing Manager
& Erika Osmundson, AgCareers.com Director of Marketing & Communications

TO TRULY COMPETE in today's job market you need more than a diploma. Employers are looking for the total package; candidates who have the education needed to understand the job, the experience to carry out the technical duties, and the employability skills to be successful.

Let's begin with a quick overview of what employability (or soft) skills are. The term refers to attributes that a person encompasses that allow them to interact effectively with other people, particularly in the workplace. These traits have often been attributed to success on the job, but as the competition for talent increases, specifically in the agriculture industry, demonstrating and highlighting these types of skills throughout the job search and interview process can be a way to set yourself apart from the competition.

A full list of these soft skill traits could easily be in the hundreds, so for now, we will focus on five critical skills employers seek in new graduate hires.

1. COMMUNICATION

Hands down, this is a foundational skill that most employers would rank as the number one necessary soft skill in new hires. Your ability to listen effectively and communicate appropriately and accurately with your manager and coworkers will have a tremendous impact on your career success.

You have several opportunities to demonstrate your communication skills to a potential employer. The first may be at a career fair or other networking event. Being prepared by researching the company before the event will start your verbal communication off on the right foot. Having some familiarity with what the company does and general knowledge regarding the types of openings they have will allow you to ask more informed questions and be more relaxed in conversation.

Additionally, if you have mentally prepared and rehearsed, you won't sell

“EMPLOYEES WHO UNDERSTAND THAT THE WORK THEY DO IS ONLY A SMALL PART OF A BIGGER PICTURE BUT OF IMPORTANCE IS SOMETHING VALUED BY EMPLOYERS.”

yourself short nor be too long-winded. This will demonstrate that you are capable of filtering information and communicating important components in a concise and effective manner.

2. SENSE OF URGENCY

Do you wait to be given a task or do you realize there is a problem and resolve to be a part of the solution? As one would imagine, employers are looking for go-getters, those who are willing

to come in early, stay late, go the extra mile, ask how they can help, etc.

Employees who understand that the work they do is only a small part of a bigger picture but of importance is something valued by employers.

Early in the process, demonstrate that you encompass a sense of urgency by how quick you follow up with an employer. Especially in today's technological world, there are very few excuses for not returning an email or phone call in a timely manner.

When you reach the interview stage make sure you research the company and come prepared with a list of great questions. Establish next steps in the process before wrapping up your interview. Taking the initiative to drive the process shows that the company and opportunity are important to you.

3. PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is a pretty broad skill that includes everything from the way you dress, your vocabulary, your reaction to workplace situations, and more. Professionalism can mean hitting your internal mute button when tempted to share your opinions in situations where you don't have all of the information or when things are changing quickly in the workplace.

Additionally, professionalism is about how you develop relationships in the business setting such as understanding the line between personal and professional interactions with peers and your manager. Also be conscientious of sensitive information that you've been

entrusted with and don't divulge that information in inappropriate settings.

Your physical and verbal reaction to constructive criticism and how you apply that feedback impacts professionalism. Demonstrate these traits once you have a job, but you can practice those while in college and use examples in your job search.

Consider the clubs or organizations you are affiliated with. Involvement shows that you are well-rounded but equally demonstrates your ability to build connections, perhaps even with the professional arm of the organization and/or alumni. Leadership roles within organizations also allow you to encounter similar situations to the workplace, such as receiving/giving constructive feedback, to utilize as examples during an interview.

Professionalism can also be demonstrated during the interview itself. Beyond the importance of the basics, how you treat each person you encounter will say a lot about your character and professional competence. It isn't uncommon for the receptionist to be asked their opinion of a potential candidate. As the saying goes, "treat the janitor with the same respect as the CEO!"

Lastly, consider how you react when you aren't offered the position. Thanking the company for the time invested throughout the process and maintaining the connections you made will certainly boost your professionalism and may even open a future door!

4. LIFE-LONG LEARNING

For a company to progress, their employees need to continue to grow as well. Those who are committed to continual learning are typically the first to receive projects, career growth opportunities, salary increases, promotions, or additional job offers.

You may be thinking that you're learning all you can handle at the moment but you can begin to develop the desire for life-long learning while still in school. Take classes outside of your major like conversational Spanish, personal finance, or leadership. While you may think these electives may not advance your technical job training, they will help you learn things that will make you more competitive in the professional world. Talking about these class experiences while networking or at an interview will demonstrate for the employer that you have a desire to learn.

Life-long learning can easily be achieved just by reading. There are thousands of professional development books available to help you grow as a young professional. Mixing a few of these into your summer reading list will provide you with insights and theories you can practice in the workplace or discuss during networking opportunities.

5. PROBLEM SOLVING/DECISION MAKING/NEGOTIATION

Problems arise daily in the work environment, both large and small, and each one has some impact on the

successfulness of the business. As an employee, you must be able to identify the problem, take the appropriate action, negotiate the outcome and realize the consequences of those decisions.

Your interview should give you ample opportunities to validate your problem-solving abilities. Almost every employer will ask you some type of behavioural-based interview question(s). These are designed to highlight how you behaved in a situation (problem) to predict how you'll perform when faced with similar situations on the job. "Tell me about a time..." or "Give me an example of..." are typical ways these questions start. This is your chance to quickly explain the problem you were faced with and how you took initiative, utilized your resources and got results.

Demonstrate this skill to your employer by not only coming to your manager with a problem but also your proposed solution. This shows respect for your manager's time but also your desire to make the right decision by working through a problem and asking for input.

Employability skills are certainly a determining factor for success in the workplace and as young professionals, it can be hard to understand the importance these skills play for employers. Demonstrating that you have these skills and focusing on them during the interview process, along with your technical expertise, will help set you apart from the competition!



LIFE-LONG LEARNER
Bob Turner, Wilbur-Ellis Feed LLC



PROBLEM SOLVING
Tina Dorner, CHS, Inc.



COMMUNICATION
Alex Andrews, Rocky Mountain Equipment

"This individual is someone who adapts well to change, is always looking for new challenges and is the go-to person when something new comes along."

"When you understand how to identify a problem and can sort out the option to select the best solution, both you and the organization are successful."

"Effective communication is an exchange of understanding which nurtures relationships, builds teamwork and engenders trust."

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SHINING A LIGHT ON

women

IN CANADIAN AGRICULTURE

by Kristine Penning, AgCareers.com Creative Marketing Specialist

FOR IRIS MECK, owner of Iris Meck Communications Inc. and creator of the Advancing Women Conference held in Canada, it's clear that women have not always been accepted or treated equally in the agricultural industry.

"When I started my career, it was a different time," Meck said. "Women were being passed over for promotions in favour of male colleagues. Women not being taken seriously was a bigger issue, with the assumption being that they were only going to be working for a few years until they got married, had children, etc. This sort of attitude really prevented women from rising in companies."

Shelby LaRose, Crop Production Advisor with CPS Canada and former AgCareers.com Campus Ambassador at the University of Saskatchewan (pictured above), has also learned these struggles just beginning her career in agriculture.

"The majority of customers that I deal with on a daily basis are male," LaRose said. "Some of them are great to work with because they know I have four years of schooling to back up any decisions I make. Others sometimes

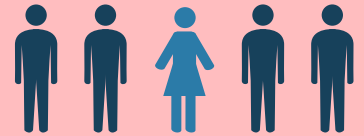
have an issue taking my opinion seriously because I am female and these customers would prefer to deal with someone else (preferably male)."

While both men and women today would tell you that the perception of women in agriculture today has changed for the better, a study done by AgCareers.com in 2015 sheds light on the issues still faced by women in agriculture. There were a significantly higher percentage of men in a President/CEO role, Director and management positions while there were more women in hourly and salaried staff roles.

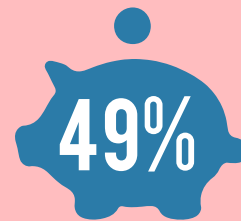
The more than 2,000 respondents were also asked for their current base salary in this survey done by AgCareers.com. Responses indicate a disparity in pay between genders with men typically earning more than women in agribusiness.

Despite these results that demonstrate a wage and hierarchy gap in agribusiness, this AgCareers.com study also revealed that more than ninety percent of both men and women believe that women are an integral part of agriculture.

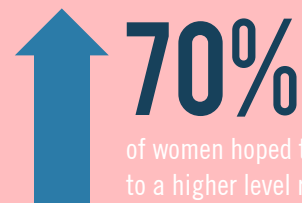
79% of women felt there was gender inequality in agribusiness. Just 47% of men felt the same.



1/2 of women surveyed said they had experienced blunt sexism at work.



49% of women felt they would be better compensated if they were male.



70% of women hoped to advance to a higher level role one day.



80% of both men & women felt the attitude toward women in ag has changed for the better in the past decade.



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Continued from page 18:

"I find women tend to be more open-minded and patient when it comes to tough situations," LaRose said. "We have the ability to make the best of the situation in order to benefit both our best interests and our customer's best interests."

"Companies now view the diversity in perspectives and opinions that women bring to an organization as crucial for business success," Meck said.

"Organizations now actively look for ways to make their company more attractive to potential female hires. Women are capable, resilient and

resourceful. Everyone wins when hiring and promoting is done on the basis of talent and ability; not gender."

Meck noted that she has had to take risks during her career as a woman in agriculture but credits her

"determination, commitment, long hours, and a broad network" with contributing to her successful journey. When asked about her advice for young women pursuing agricultural careers, Meck

"Everyone wins when hiring and promoting is done on the basis of talent and ability; not gender."

stressed the importance of confidence.

"Women often feel that they have to be completely ready before making the next step in their career, but I would encourage women to push ahead," Meck said. "Risk can be a great learning

experience. Oftentimes the best things in life come from when you push yourself out of your comfort zone and work through a challenge."

"Don't be afraid to dig in, get dirty and ask lots of questions," LaRose answered when asked about her advice for young women in agriculture. "You need to be able to jump in and lend a hand in all situations. Trust me when I say the help will be appreciated no matter your gender. Agriculture isn't something that one person can do on their own, we all need to join forces and work together as a team!"

You can view the full "Gender Roles & Equality in Agribusiness" survey report, which includes more information about working parents in agriculture and gender equality in agribusiness compared to business overall, on agcareers.com/reports.cfm.



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Interview Question TRANSLATIONS

by Bonnie Johnson, AgCareers.com Marketing Associate

WHAT KIND OF RESPONSES are employers REALLY looking for when they ask interview questions?! Some questions may stump you, or leave you scratching your head, wondering, “What does this have to do with the job?”

We hope to provide some translations and suggestions so you can eloquently answer these common and tricky questions.

TELL ME A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

Many employers start with this question and your answer can dictate how the rest of the interview will go. Debbie Tabor, Manager of Recruitment & Retention, MacDon Industries, encourages interviewees to “Focus on your skills, experience and training and how they relate to the job you are interviewing for.” Be wary of turning this into a 20-minute speech on your full history; keep it to a quick two-minute overview as it relates to the job. “Take anything too personal out of the answer – it can make everyone at the interview very uncomfortable,” shared Laurie Lemanski, Human Resources Generalist, Univar. “I don’t need to know that you have a sick dog, or you love dirt biking; win this job because of the skills and abilities you bring to the table, not

your circumstances or hobbies,” added Lemanski.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST WEAKNESS?

Interviews are a time to shine and highlight your strengths, so should you really admit your weaknesses? Yes, as it is important to be honest and show a little humility. Of course you don’t want to bring up weaknesses on your own,

“Your answers can show that you are self-aware; you know what you are good at and what you need to work on.”

but if you are asked, be ready with an example. “Your answers can show that you are self-aware; you know what you are good at and what you need to work on,” added Tabor.

TELL ME ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOU MADE A MISTAKE.

Let’s face it, we’ve all made mistakes. “Prepare an answer with details on what

led up to the mistake, how you discovered it, who was involved, how you fixed it and what the result was,” shared Lemanski. Use a specific example that demonstrates to the interviewer that you can apply what you’ve learned from past mistakes to be a better employee. “Answers to this question can tell me about your character and what you’ve learned,” added Tabor. Admitting your mistakes in an interview also illustrates that you’ll be willing to admit your mistakes on the job.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS?

This can be a loaded question. Are you aiming for the interviewer’s job? It is probably not a good time to say, “I want your job!” Likewise a standard bad example is “in management” – can you follow that up with the reasons why?

“I ask this question to see if you’ve spent time preparing an answer and if there is ambition to move forward,” said Lemanski. Be honest with your ambitions, even if you don’t want to become a VP or manager, as “stable, reliable employees are the bases that weather the storms,” added Lemanski.

You will be tempted to say what you think the employer wants to hear, but all types of employees are needed to make



Comic by Becca Schwartz

the organization run. “Be straight-forward about your ambitions, because if our goals don’t match, neither of us will be happy,” said Tabor.

Do research on the company and know the career path. “Understand that you need to have time to learn your new job well and learn the business, before moving up,” added Lemanski.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Okay, now it is your time to gloat a bit! Your answer to this question gives you an opportunity to show a sense of accomplishment. For students, accomplishments can involve class projects or volunteer activities that can be meaningful in a work situation.

When answering this question make sure to put it into context, “Talk about how many people were involved, your role, why it was important to you, factors like how much money or time saved, donations received, process you created and if that process is still in use today,” shared Lemanski.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO WORK FOR OUR COMPANY?

This question takes some research on the company to answer effectively

as well. “Research the organization’s culture, values, products, structure. Take the details you find compelling and relate this to why you want to work for the organization,” said Lemanski. “Show how your goals line up with the organization’s mission statement,” added Tabor. You want this to be a memorable answer, so be sure to show your passion!

“Our goal is to make people as comfortable as possible in the interview by asking straight-forward questions.”

BRAINTEASERS

What is your favorite Taylor Swift song, and why?

“We’ll ask students this question to break the ice,” said Tabor.

Brainteasers, like “Would you rather be a zebra or a lion, and why?” really test your ability to think outside the box. If one of these questions is posed to you, show your sense of humor, note

the novelty of the question, add a smile and do your best to relate it to the position. Keep in mind your answer to a brainteaser is probably not a make or break component of your interview!

“Overall though, our goal is to make people as comfortable as possible in the interview by asking straight-forward questions so we can assess the fit, for both the individual and the organization,” shared Tabor.

IT’S IN THE DETAILS

To be prepared, both Lemanski and Tabor stress the importance of researching the company thoroughly before the interview. Walk through your answers to some of these common questions.

No matter what the question, you should take the interviewer through specific, detailed examples if you want to be a successful candidate. As a college student or recent grad, you may think you don’t have experience. However, your examples can be from school, part-time jobs, internships/summer work experiences, hobbies or volunteer experiences. Remember you are selling your “story” in the interview, and you are the author and expert!



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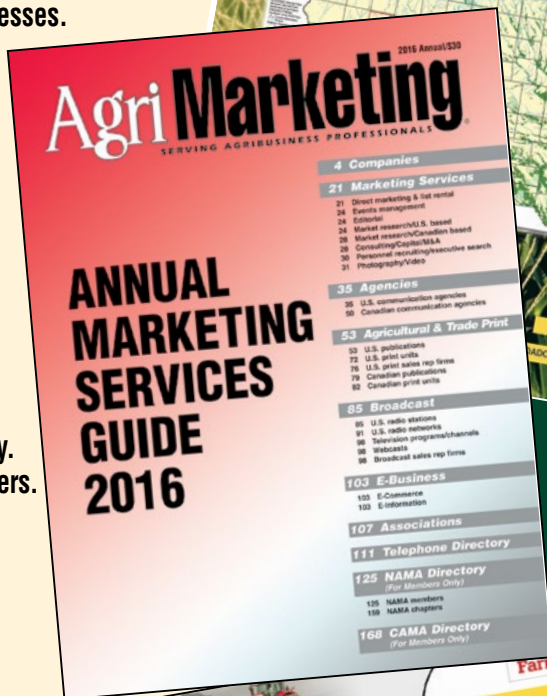
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