

# TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SITE VISIT

## Industry Exploration (IndEx) Program at University of Massachusetts Medical School

- IndEx is a student and postdoc group.
- Provides trainees (both graduate students and postdocs) with opportunities to explore PhD level careers in biotech and pharmaceutical industries, and enhance their knowledge of careers in industry.
- Organizes site visits to observe company cultures and network with industry professionals.
- Provides an opportunity to interact directly with industry scientists and obtain valuable career guidance.

## Visit Goals

- Learn about the transition from academia to industry
- Learn about the difference between research in academia and research in industry
- Learn about alternative (non-bench) science careers in industry
- See a company's research and manufacturing facilities
- Meet scientists in industry and learn about their experiences with:
  - Working in industry
  - Specifically working for the company of the site visit
  - The transition from academia into industry
- Network with individuals currently working in industry in the New England area

## Tips for IndEx Visits

- **Pre-Visit**
  - **The significance of your Personal Bio – The story of YOU**
    - **These bios are shared with the host company prior to our visit and are a direct reflection of UMass, so please ensure your bio:**
      - Is free of errors (have a friend/colleague proofread)
      - Concisely sums up your professional career – usually in reverse chronological order, written in paragraph form (~250 max)
      - Highlights any achievements you think are important
      - DOES NOT contain proprietary information about your research
      - DOES NOT read as a document expressing interest in working at the host company – these visits are not intended to get you a job, so it is not appropriate to express your interest in working at the company in your bio
    - **There are plenty of resources available to help you construct an effective personal bio, and these are just a few:**
      - Website with examples of relevant bios: [westorg.org/2015-02-03-effective-transition-from-academia-to-industry](http://westorg.org/2015-02-03-effective-transition-from-academia-to-industry)
      - Websites with tips for writing a Personal Bio: [linkedin.com/pulse/20130613100256-32175171-5-tips-for-the-perfect-bio](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20130613100256-32175171-5-tips-for-the-perfect-bio) and [smallbusiness.chron.com/write-short-bio-yourself-57289.html](http://smallbusiness.chron.com/write-short-bio-yourself-57289.html)
  - **How to prepare for a site visit**
    - Business casual attire (no jeans; suggestions for men <https://www.pinterest.com/ucsfocpd/men-conference-wearbusiness-casual/> and women <https://www.pinterest.com/ucsfocpd/women-conference-wearbusiness-casual/> )
    - Bring business cards
    - Check online presence – Update LinkedIn profile, maintain privacy settings for personal social sites, such as Facebook
    - Research company website prior to visit

- **Visit Day**
  - **What to expect during a site visit (each visit is unique and may contain one or more of the events below)?**
    - An introductory session to describe the structure, function and goals of the company
    - A brief tour of the relevant facilities within the company (manufacturing, research, meeting areas, etc.)
    - Panel discussions with scientists and science-trained individuals in both traditional research and non-research positions in the company
    - One-on-one or small group meetings with employees
    - Interaction with human resources staff to learn about hiring process
    - Opportunity to network with company employees during tours, small group meetings and if food is provided
  - **Types of questions to ask – think about what you want to learn**
    - What is it like to work in industry versus academia?
    - What is the specific environment like at the company?
    - How did specific individuals decide to work in industry over academia?
    - What was your experience making the transition from academia to industry?
    - How is research in industry different from research in academia?
    - What skills and qualities will help me stand out from others applying for similar positions within the company?
    - What are the hiring practices of the company?
    - What is work/life balance like?
    - What opportunities are available for career development/advancement?
    - More suggestions for questions to ask when networking and informational interviewing can be found in the Career Exploration resources under the “Talk to People” section in [myIDP](#)
- **Post Visit**
  - **Providing feedback – thoughts about your experience are important to us and the company we visited!**
    - After each visit, IndEx provides the attendees with an anonymous survey, usually via e-mail. This allows IndEx to improve site visits for both attendees and the company that spent valuable time with us.
    - IndEx compiles the information from the survey and shares this with the company, so high response rates reflect favorably on IndEx and UMass and increase our chances of attaining future visits.

## **Additional Tips**

- **Tips on how to network effectively**
  - Know your goals and what you want to achieve when you attend a networking event. If possible know who will be there and identify in advance individuals you want to try to speak with.
  - Devise a short, simple way to describe yourself – your “elevator pitch”.
  - Be yourself! Networking is simply having a conversation and making a new connection.
  - Be professional and polite – you want to make a good first impression.
  - LISTEN! Networking involves both people in the conversation. Try to remember 1 detail or topic about each person you meet. You can even write this down on their business card.
  - Follow up with people you meet promptly. Send them an e-mail and/or a LinkedIn invitation and remind them of a detail from your conversation.
- **Additional information regarding how and where to network can be found at:**
  - UMass at: <http://www.umassmed.edu/qsbs/career/pathways/industryresearch>
  - Career Exploration tab on my IDP <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>
  - [Numerous books](#) exist, such as “The Networking Survival Guide” by Diane Darling