

Background Information

Interviewee:

I am interviewing Mat Jones, a biomedical engineer that works at Intermountain Medical Center. I chose to Interview Mat because he is in the medical field and I am very interested in medicine and I'm trying to learn more about other possible career options. I called him and asked him if he would be willing to do an interview and we decided to do it in the lobby of the hospital because it was the most convenient for both of us.

Career Research:

Almost any career in the medical field is a place to go if you want to go into something that the job market is still growing. Biomedical engineering is a fairly new career so there isn't really a specific degree needed for this career. A bachelor's degree preferably some type of engineering is the entry level of education according to the Occupational Outlook Handbook. Biomedical engineer analyze and design solutions to problems that arise in biology and medicine. Improving patient care is their main goal. On average, a biomedical engineer makes about \$65,000 a year.

Interview Plan

Opening:

Hi Mat, it's nice to finally meet you. Like I told you before, this interview is for my Communications class and shouldn't take more than a half hour. I'm trying to get more acquainted with what the biomedical engineering field is like so I can see if this career is something that I would want to go into. I'll just be asking you a few questions on how you got started in this career, a typical day at work, and what some projects that you've worked on were like. If I need to take a few notes during the interview, feel free to continue answering. The notes will be brief- just enough for me to remember your answer and I'll focus on what you're saying.

Body:

Topic 1: Getting Started

1. Why did you choose to go into the medical field? (open, primary)
 - a. Was it hard for you to narrow it down to biomedical engineering? (secondary, closed)
 - b. Why did you pick this career? (secondary, open)
 - c. How would *you* define a biomedical engineer? (closed, secondary)
2. What degree do you have? (primary, closed)
 - a. How long did it take you to finish? (secondary, closed)
 - b. What are some things I should do if I was to go into this career? (secondary, open)
 - c. What classes would you recommend beyond those required? (secondary, open)
3. Is there continuous training needed? (closed, primary)
 - a. If so, how do you stay up to date? (secondary, open)
4. How do you make sure that you aren't doing things unethically? (primary, open)
5. Do you know where I could see a copy of your mission statement? (primary, open)

Topic 2: A Typical Day at Work

1. What is an average day at work like? (primary, open)
 - a. What are some likes and dislikes about your job? (secondary, open)
 - b. What is one thing you would change about your job? (secondary, open)
 - c. What are some tasks that you feel are the most difficult? (secondary, closed)
2. What is a typical schedule like for a biomedical engineer? (primary, open)

- a. How flexible is the schedule? (secondary, open)
3. Does this job get very stressful? (primary, closed)

Topic 3: Past and Future projects

1. What is your favorite machine? (primary, closed)
 - a. Why is it your favorite? (secondary, open)
2. Have you invented anything? (i.e. machine or instrument?) (primary, closed)
3. Do you have a favorite project that you've worked on? (primary, closed)
 - a. Why was it your favorite? (secondary, open)
4. What are you working on now? (primary, open)

Clearinghouse Questions:

Is there anything you'd like to add? Anything you think I should know about your profession that I didn't ask?

Closing:

Well, those are all the questions I have and if there isn't anything else you'd like to add, I'd just like to thank you for taking the time to help me out with this assignment. I really learned a lot more about biomedical engineers, I had no idea that you fix so many instruments and machines for patients and doctors on a daily basis. It is almost like biomedical engineers make the hospital run smoothly. As I mentioned on the phone, here is the questionnaire that my professor would like to have you fill out. I won't be graded on the content of it, so I'd like you to be as honest and sincere as you can while filling it out. Thanks again for your time.

Letter of Thanks

Dear Mat,

Thank you for letting me interview you for my class. You really helped me learn a lot about your profession and I got a new perspective on biomedical engineers.

I was not aware that there isn't really a specific degree for biomedical engineers right now so that information was very useful to me. Knowing that there are a variety of degrees that can still get me into this profession makes me more interested in possibly pursuing a career in this field. The fact that there is a high demand for biomedical engineers gives me hope that I could find a job if I was to decide to follow this path.

I also did not know how flexible your schedules are. Working at a hospital seems like it would be a very demanding job and a very set schedule. This new insight on how your schedules are, makes this career very appealing to me.

I really appreciate your time for teaching me a little more about your profession and for showing me around your workplace. You've really helped me out both in my class to practice interviewing and also to explore a new career option for my future.

Sincerely,
Margrethe Montanares

Interview Analysis Memo

DATE: April 4, 2012
TO: Professor Wayne Hackett
FROM: Margrethe Montanares
SUBJECT: Interview Analysis Memo, COMM 1010

I took the opportunity to interview a biomedical engineer at Intermountain Medical Center in Murray. This gave me the chance to ask questions about the career and learn firsthand what it is like to be a biomedical engineer at a hospital

This memo summarizes what I learned from interviewing Mat Jones.

Summary: Getting Started

I learned that a bachelor's degree is the minimum schooling needed to become a biomedical engineer, but because technology and knowledge in medicine is always changing it is a good idea to continue going to school while working in this career. It is a fairly new career and demand is extremely high right now and will continue to grow.

My fear of having to deal with code of ethics was proven to be a legitimate fear while interviewing Mat. According to him, they have to go to lots of continuous training to make sure that what they are doing is ethical. The hospital also has many reminders posted everywhere to make sure that the workers keep the code of ethics in mind at all times. This made me a little unsure if I would want to deal with so many ethical codes all the time, and I might have to think of going into a different field.

A Typical Day at Work

I was not aware at how stressful this career was. Working at the hospital ensures that you will never have a "typical" day while at work. Mat told me that he will come into working with a plan of what he thinks he'll do that day, but it will usually turn out to be completely different. He also told me that because it is such a stressful workplace, their schedules are extremely flexible and he can pretty much choose when he wants to work. As a future mother, this really appealed to me.

Past and Future projects

Mat has worked on a lot of projects since starting his job as a biomedical engineer. He has worked on catheters, blood pressure machines, and his favorite was working on defibrillators. Right now he's working on programming the machines that nurses use to give patients their medications.

Analysis of My Interview Process

I learned a lot about conducting an interview. Being a shy person is one of my weaknesses so I had to try really hard to step out of my comfort zone to interview a stranger. I think I did a great job of hiding my nervousness and uneasiness while interviewing Mat.

To me, my biggest weakness was I didn't know how to finish the interview. Mat was very talkative and made it so that we went a little over the time limit. I did not want to be rude so I let him talk until he was done, but I don't think I handled it well enough. Next time I conduct an interview I will try to remind the interviewee how much time we have and try to wrap things up a little sooner in case the interviewee turns out to talk more than expected.

This was my first time interviewing a stranger and I think I learned a lot. This interview helped me get a new perspective on a possible future career and helped me feel a little more comfortable interviewing others. I learned a lot about what it is to be a biomedical engineer and also on a few things I should try to do differently if interviewing someone else in the future.