TIBBS Career Blitz Career Profile Questionnaire

**Career Profile:** – Marla Vacek Broadfoot, PhD

**What is your current title and how long have you worked in your current job?**
I am a freelance science writer and editor, which I have been doing for over six years.

**Where did you get your PhD and what discipline was it in?**
I received my PhD in genetics and molecular biology from UNC in 2003 (I also went there for undergrad).

**Did you do a postdoc?**
I was a postdoctoral fellow at the National Human Genome Research Institute from 2003-2005 and was awarded board certification in clinical molecular genetics by the American College of Medical Genetics in 2005.

**What are your main daily responsibilities?**
Researching articles, interviewing, writing. Pretty much chaining myself to my desk until the words start flowing.

**What are the keys to success in your career field?**
Writing clear and coherent prose, being able to “dumb down” the science without getting it wrong, meeting deadlines.

**What were the most important factors in choosing your career path?**
Having a job that I was excited about doing when I got up every morning, one that fit my personality and let me celebrate the successes in science and not focus on the difficulties.

**What activities (if any) did you participate in that helped you be successful in obtaining your job?**
Freelancing, writing feature stories and press releases for university publications and national magazines, serving as an editor of academic submissions for the NCI Editorial Board.

**What 1 or 2 pieces of advice do you have for people who want to land a job like yours?**
Write as often as you can, for as many different outlets as you can. Offer to review submissions for your boss or colleagues, try your hand at blogging or writing press releases to learn how to translate your science to a wider audience. And network, network, network.