1. Please provide your name and employer:

Name: Deepak Kumar Jha

Employer: Merck and Co.

2. What is your current title and how long have you worked in your current job?

 Current title: Senior scientist; since March 2022z

3. Where did you get your PhD and what discipline was it in?

 PhD: Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics, UNC-Chapel Hill with Dr. Brian Strahl

4. Did you do a postdoc?

 Yes; with Dr. George Q. Daley at Harvard Medical School/ Boston Children’s Hospital

5. What are your main daily responsibilities?

 Designing & execution of experiments; interpretation of experimental and computational data, developing new research strategies/ideas for the group.

6. What are the keys to success in your career field?

 Breadth of scientific training & ability to integrate information/ concepts between fields; networking; being able to articulate your thoughts/ideas to a diverse group of people with varying level of experience/training

7. What were the most important factors in choosing your career path and current employer?

- impact patient health in a shorter time frame than what can be done in academic or small biotech setting; training in a large pharma allows you to learn diverse set of skills in drug discovery spanning the entire spectrum from early discovery to commercialization. Overall, it’s a more complete exposure to various aspects of the biopharma ecosystem, which can be helpful for future career advancement/ progression.

8. What activities (if any) did you participate in that helped you be successful in obtaining your job?

 Networking, networking, networking :)

Sounds cliched but this is the one piece of advice that has never failed anyone in my circle.

9. What 1 or 2 pieces of advice do you have for people who want to land a job like yours?

 - networking, work on developing a broader set of “sticky” network & not just LinkedIn connects.

- learn about the industry as well besides your scientific interests/ expertise

- be open

10. How is the work/life balance in your career field and how much of a factor was that in your career choice?

Great work-life balance; it was. Having a family changes your priority hence I did ask questions during interviews & assessed based on that.