

Chris Olson

Professor Rotelli

CCS 101 4501

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Career Interview

Jen Olson

Microsoft

Product Manager for Global Product Development

11/14 @ 9:15pm

Packet:

1: My original interview had to be postponed for 2 weeks so I will still interview him but instead I interviewed my aunt who works at Microsoft. I managed to get in touch with my aunt at the last minute. It was actually really nice being able to interview a relative who I could have a more laid back and honest conversation with. She spent most of her career in recruiting also so she could tell me a lot of things they needed and looked for. We talked for a while about the recruiting process and how to make myself shine outside of the questions and I learned a lot. I especially learned about networking and how I should start using community and professional resources now to get into the community and make myself known. It will open up future projects and relationships for me so I was invited to a conference at Microsoft by her to meet a couple of workmates. A very cool opportunity I would have missed out on if I had not done this assignment and if my other interview had not been canceled.

2:

1. Does a degree from a 4 year university matter in terms of pay or hiring practices versus getting a BS in CS from SPSCC?

- She would say no and even go further and say GPA doesn't really impact as well.

2. What coding languages should I know entering the field?

- Python, C+, as much as I can of other languages

3. What should I learn outside of school?

- Internships are a big deal. Volunteer work related to my major. Seeing effort in the industry and applying skills that are learned in school to the real world.
Nonprofits using coding and other skills.

4. How will a criminal background impact me? (I have 2 prior charges from my former life)

- Unsure, Microsoft requires a background check. Not perfectly aware of specifics.

5. How many hours do you work every week on average?

- 40 hours on average but currently 60 hours. Often it fluctuates. More standard for the 40 to 44.

6. How rough are the actual crunch periods that are often mentioned and how does it impact your work life balance.

- Work life balance is up to her. Microsoft offers flexibility and she works the hours she needs to get the work done. Bottom line is she needs to get the work done.
Plans her work in conjunction with her life.

7. What did your rise through the company look like?

- Positions: started as a contractor with a 3 week assignment and ended with a 9 month instead. Full Time as a recruiter for a year. Then manager for a few years and loved it but prefers management and product management. End to end process and training. Last 15 years is program management for recruiting globally.

8. Would you suggest staying at one company or company hopping as many people do nowadays?

- The most important thing is to find a company you love. Prior to Microsoft it was 2 to 3 years a company. But she loves Microsoft and is passionate about it. Would not recommend job hopping as the grass is always greener. Once you find your happy spot, stay there. As a recruiter she preferred long stays at companies as why pay for a resume builder instead of building into a teammate.

9. Any suggestions for beginners and those looking to enter the field to start doing now?

- Trying to network early on. Interactions with professors. Networking with group chats and online forums and conferences. Networking is a major in the industry. Finding different opportunities to use your skills. Volunteering to code.

10. What is your proudest achievement for the company and any tips on how to emulate similar results?

- I would have to say setting up a brand new global process and tool at the same time and training people around the world on the process. Being curious and listening, applying patience.

3: I learned how networking is a major thing I should be doing now versus once I am in the industry. Also confirmed several things about backgrounds and requirements I was unsure of before.

4: I believe I already possess the intelligence and management skills needed for the industry. These are required for any product management positions and would allow me to help run programs effectively. I believe I have these skills due to my innate understanding of technology and my ability to organize individuals in different groups I have been a part of in my life.

5: I feel I need to develop my computer science skills as well as my patience. I have all these goals and dreams yet many are decades away and I want to rush into them too fast. Progress through a company will be slow and I need to temper my dreams and wait for the right moments before trying to pursue them all. Growth is not always fast and I need to realize that it may take awhile to succeed in certain areas.

6: Yes I still plan on pursuing this career. It is a major goal of my life and I have ideas and plans already for it. This interview only made me more interested in it as a whole and helped me learn particulars. It definitely helps me prepare for the industry and I am still planning on interviewing my original interviewee when he is free for a call and doesn't cancel at the last minute.

7: Interview with Jen Olson.