

Staying in Science Without Staying in the Lab:

**A view (and a career) from the
other side of publishing**

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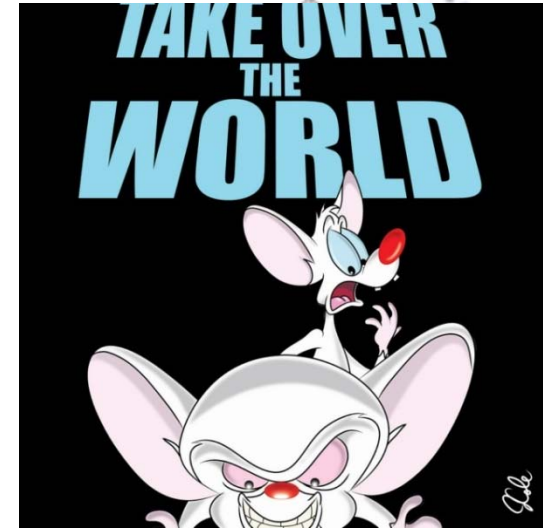
Eric M Prager, PhD

Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Neuroscience Research

Developmental Editor, Current Protocols in Neuroscience

Who I am

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18+ papers,
a PhD on
nerve agents,
TBI & Stress





Important Lessons I learned During My Journey

- ✓ Establish a network and use it
- ✓ Start early
- ✓ Take every opportunity (and learn to say “yes”)
- ✓ Learn to sell yourself (i.e., develop your own brand)
- ✓ Have faith in yourself and keep your eyes on the prize
- ✓ Know what you are looking for (listen to your heart and mind)

Where I Work

John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken NJ

- Founded in 1807, headquartered in Hoboken, NJ and employs ~5,000 employees worldwide
- Leader in society publishing with >800 collaborations with prestigious scientific societies representing 2 million members
- Wiley Online Library provides content to over 4 million articles from ~1,600 journals and 9,000+ books
- Publishes Annals of the *New York Academy of Sciences* and the *For Dummies* book series



Top Ranked Wiley Neuroscience Journals



What I Do

- Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Neuroscience Research* since January, 2016
 - Expand scope, new look and redevelop journal, solicit content, rapid peer review, work with associate editors
- Developmental Editor, *Current Protocols in Neuroscience*
 - Solicit content, peer review
- Transparent and Reproducible Science Advocate and member of the Research Integrity Team

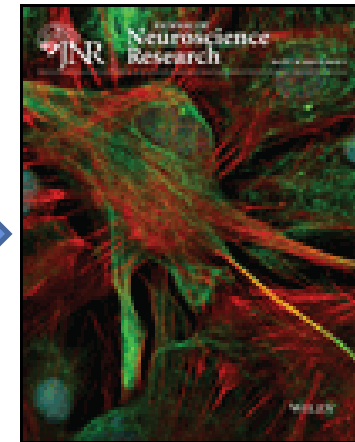
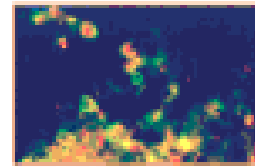


Redeveloping a Journal

A day in my life



Journal of
Neuroscience
Research



- Rethink scope, standards and strategy
- LOTS of commissioning of content
- Peer-review primarily handled by associate editors
- “Getting the word out”: Conferences, newsletters, social media, news...
- Engaging with the editorial board
- Working with production, marketing, sales



Models of Editorial Office

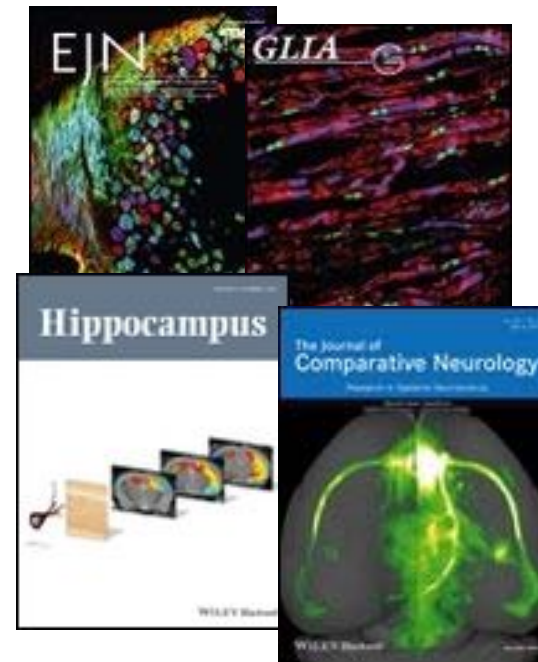
In-House vs. External Editors

In-House Editors



...Nature journals, many physical science journals, CellPress

External Editors



...all Elsevier titles, most Wiley and some Springer journals



Models of Editorial Office

In-House vs. External Editors

In-House Editors

- Work full time on journal – can dedicate more time and resources on new developments
- General view

External Editors

- Have own research group
- Expert in specific field

BOTH: peer-review, decision making, dealing with appeals, commissioning, conference participation and lab visits, writing news stories, contributing to “input” marketing...



Models of Editorial Office

In-House vs. External Editors

In-House Editors

- Former researchers (all have PhD/MD or postdoc experience)
- Work in small editorial teams supported by editorial board
- Have different titles (EiC, Deputy Editor, Senior Editor, Associate editor, etc.) depending on experience and responsibility
- Responsible for peer-review process and editorial decisions
- Model adopted by JNR, Science, Nature, Cell Press, PLoS, The Lancet
- Vacancies posted on Publisher's website

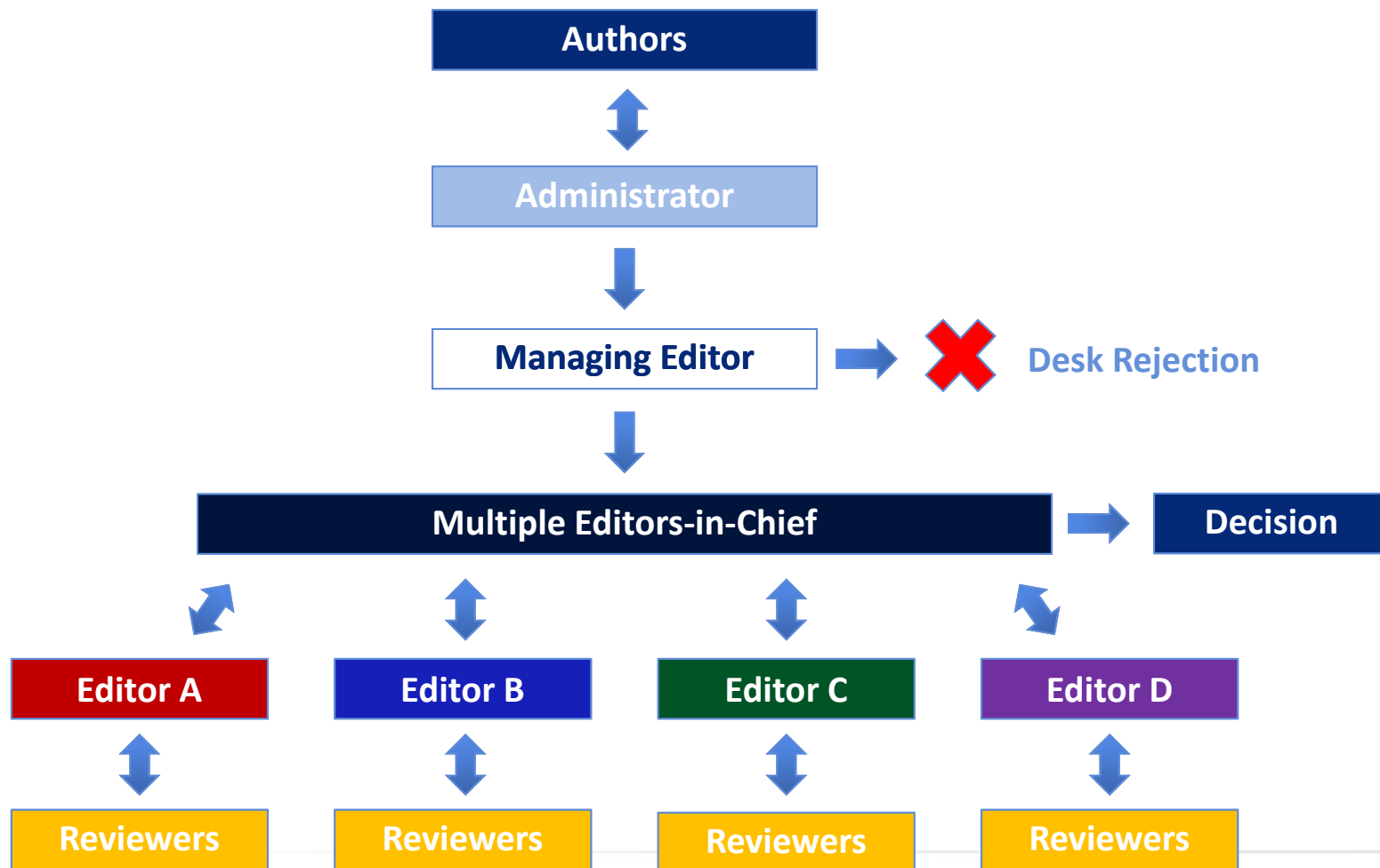
External Editors

- Professors at universities all over the world (all have PhD/MD or postdoc experience)
- Only work part time on journal and have other duties (research and teaching)
- Contracted and paid by the Publisher
- Have similar titles and responsibilities than the Professional Editors
- Model adopted by most journals published by Elsevier, Springer, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, Wolters Kluwer, Oxford University Press
- Vacancies are not posted and not available to recent PhD graduates/postdocs

Editorial Workflow at a Journal with “Internal” Scientific Editors



Editorial Workflow at a Journal with Appointed Academic Editor





What Editors Look For...

Inside Pre-Screening

ALL JOURNALS

- Scope
- Format (commentary, full paper, review, etc.)
- Understandability

MOST JOURNALS

- Novelty
- Importance (in specific field/in related discipline)
- Interest

FEW JOURNALS

- Transparency/reproducibility
- Experimental design
- Correct statistical analyses

** Editors are not always qualified to evaluate the technical merits of manuscripts. This is the job of the referees



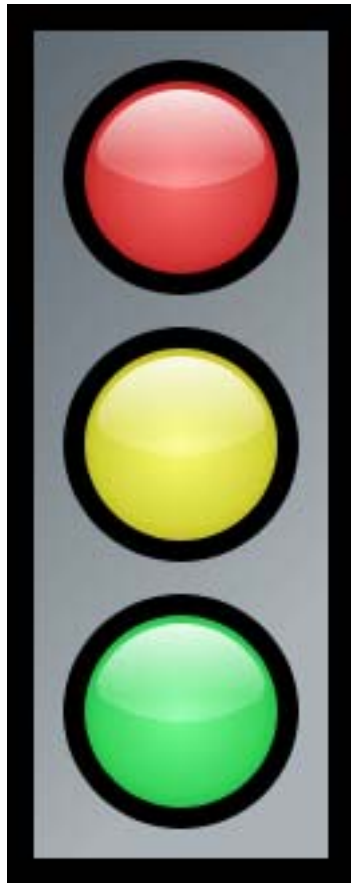
How Referees are Chosen

Part Science & Part Art

- Editors' knowledge and experience
- From related papers:
 - Cited manuscripts
 - Literature Search
- Additional Research:
 - Conference/lab visits
 - Web search (good 'ol Google)
- Reviewer Database:
 - Keywords, interest, history...
- Referee suggestions are recommended (preferred and not-preferred)
 - Not just the big names, please
 - No collaborators, previous advisors, grant co-applicants
 - Tell us about circumstances that may prevent impartial review:
 - Close competitor who may "scoop" you
 - Other conflicts



Accept, Reject or Revise



REJECTION

- Without external referee reports (Editor)
- Based on reports

REVISION

- Reconsideration or resubmission possible after major revisions

ACCEPTANCE

- Without changes (rare)
- With minor changes

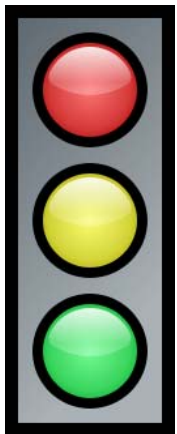


The Revision Decision

Accept, Reject or Revise

Carefully consider referee comments

- Not all changes have to be made...
- ...but need convincing arguments for changes not made



-**REVISION**

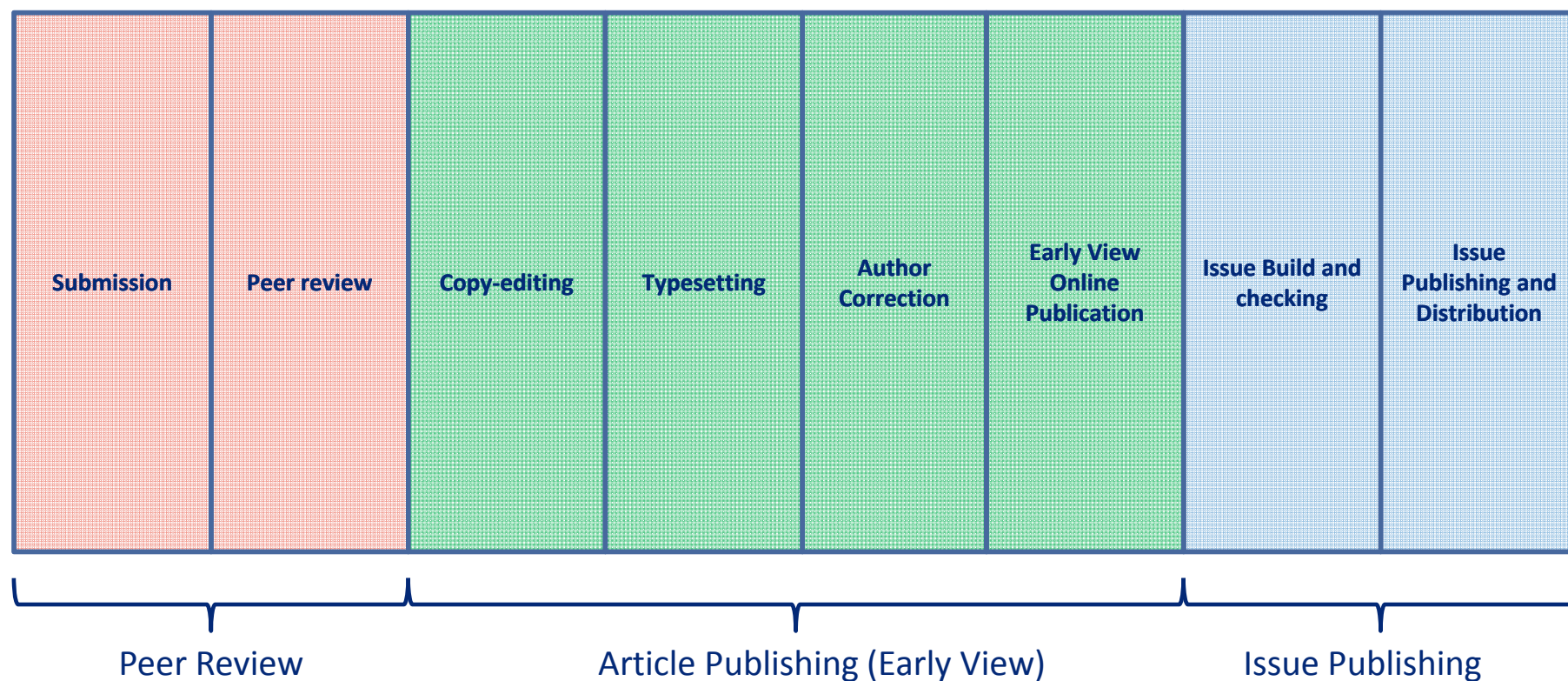
- Revised manuscript:
 - Highlight changes in manuscript
 - Point-by-point response to all referee criticisms
 - Changes made
 - Why changes not made
- Response may (and often do) go back to referees!
 - Need to convince editor **and** referees

The peer-review process is not a private conversation between authors and referees. Authors should try to work answers to the reviewers in the revised manuscript!



Beyond Peer-Review

From Papers to Journals





Types of Jobs Available in the Scientific Publishing Industry

- Publisher
- Editor
- Managing Editor
- Acquisition/Development Editor
- Copy Editor



The Tasks of a Publisher

- ✓ Responsible for the strategic management and development of a portfolio
 - Identifies and appoints new Editors
 - Rolls out new publishing initiatives and processes
 - Updates our systems and websites, etc.
 - Marketing and promotion
 - Planning, budgeting and reporting
 - Organizes and holds editorial board meetings
 - Regular communication with Editors, Journal Manager, colleagues & Customers

- ✓ Responsible for the launch/acquisition of new productions
 - New Journals & Conferences

- ✓ Performs outreach activities
 - Workshops & Editors/institutional visits
 - Attends International conferences





The Tasks of an Editor

- ✓ Responsible for the day to day management of a journal
 - Reads manuscripts submitted to the journal
 - Assigns manuscripts to sub-Editor (if relevant)
 - Identifies and invites reviewers
 - Makes editorial decisions and provides own suggestions
 - Solicits manuscripts and Special Issues
 - Stays aware of the Publisher's latest publishing initiatives and processes
 - Collaborates with the publisher on the marketing of the journal
 - Regular communication with editorial team, Journal Manager, Publisher & authors

- ✓ Performs outreach activities
 - Workshops & Editors/institutional visits
 - Attends International conferences

- ✓ Stays aware of the recent literature





Other Types of Editors

✓ **Managing Editor**

- Supports the Editor-in-Chief
- Can be involved in making desk rejections
- Can help with reviewers identification and invitation
- Can help with commissioning review articles and special issues
- Can be responsible for keeping the publication schedule on track
- Often has a PhD, but not always

✓ **Acquisition/Development Editor**

- Responsible for the acquisition/launch/improvement of scholarly products
- Often seen in books publishing
- Sometimes has a PhD, but rarely

✓ **Copy Editor**

- Responsible for proof reading the manuscripts
- Only present at major branded journals
- Sometimes has a PhD, but rarely



Other Publishing-Related Roles for Doctorate-Holding Professionals

- ✓ Scientific Writers/Journalists
- ✓ Content Innovation Specialist
- ✓ Academic Engagement Manager
- ✓ Expert in Publishing Ethics
- ✓ Marketing Manager
- ✓ Sales Manager
- ✓ Book Commissioning Editor
- ✓ Web Portal Editor `

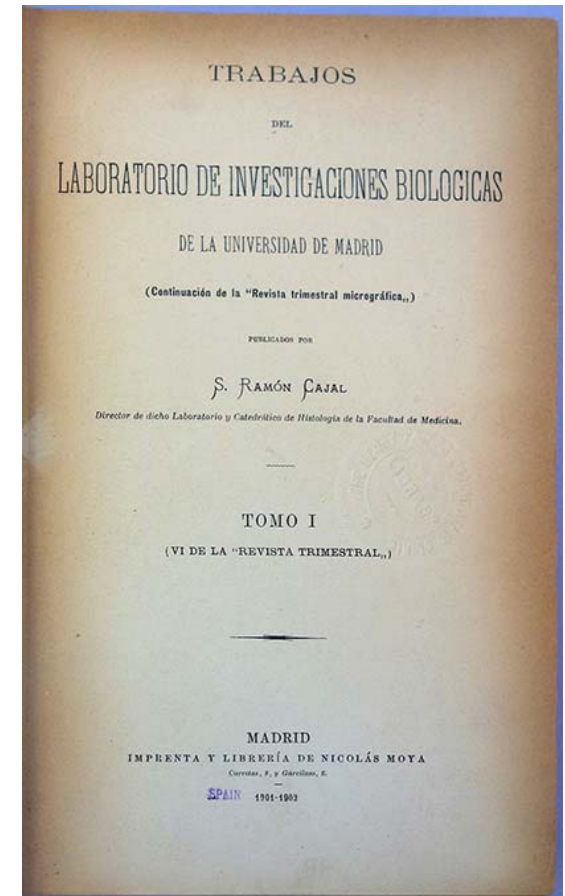




Publishing is Changing, Right now

Online and Mobile Rules and New Ways to Find Papers

- Print is on the way out → Early Views, ASAP instead of issues
- DOI is more important than page numbers
- Read papers anytime, anywhere...online
- Get real data, enriched content, supplementary information, video
- Central stores, personalized journals
- Papers discovered through alerts and searches of keywords, structures, not issues
- News Sites (Neuroscience News...)
- Discussion sites, forum, Nature Network, Twitter & social media
- Paper commenting; e.g., PloS One
- Conferences, meetings...
- New ways to discuss and evaluate work. Impact factor on the way out?





Editor's Career Pros & Cons

What's hot and what's not

What I love....

- It's a career at the "center of science"
- Entrusted the knowledge of entire disciplines
- Bird-eye view over science
- Contact with the scientific community
- Add & participate at the scientific debate and progress
- Plenty of (international) travel
- Real possibility of professional growth

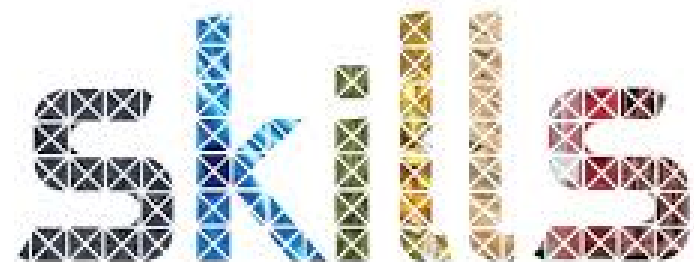
What I could do without....

- Journal/process development can be slow and frustrating
- Angry authors and editors are difficult to deal with
- Fraud/ethical violations are not uncommon and very exasperating
- Sometimes I miss being at the bench
- Career progression after Editor-in-Chief is not easy



Some Skills to Have or Develop

- ✓ Good communication skills (verbal/written)
- ✓ Good networking and negotiation skills
- ✓ Strategic and commercial awareness (budget)
- ✓ Scientific knowledge
- ✓ Technology savvy
- ✓ Practical sense
- ✓ Ability to work in a complex international environment
- ✓ Creative, entrepreneurial and results-driven
- ✓ Flexibility and willingness to travel
- ✓ Good attention to details
- ✓ Customer service
- ✓ Team player





What Makes a Good Editor?

It may be the job for you if you...

- Are passionate for science communication
- Recognize the importance of publishing in the scientific process
- Are curious about a broad range of topics & disciplines
- Know the art of diplomacy and have people skills
- Have analytical and decision-making skills
- Are creative, with an eye for detail (and the “next big thing”)

...But you won't love it if you...

- Love being in the lab and do research
- Enjoy being the world expert in a specific subject
- Don't like changing topics several times a day
- Hated writing your thesis

English is the language of Science

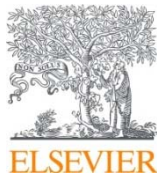
- Publishing is not restricted to native speakers anymore
- BUT, you need to be fluent in communicating science with it



Where to Find the Vacancies?

Regularly look at the career section on the website of these organizations

- ✓ Elsevier (Amsterdam, London, Oxford, **New York**, Philadelphia, Cambridge (US)...)
- ✓ Springer/BioMed Central (Berlin, Heidelberg, **New York**, Dordrecht, London...)
- ✓ Nature Publishing Group (London, **New York**)
- ✓ Wiley (West Sussex, **Hoboken**)
- ✓ Taylor & Francis (Oxford, **New York**)
- ✓ PLOS (San Francisco, Cambridge (UK))
- ✓ Wolters Kluwer (Alphen aan den Rijn, **New York**, London, ...)
- ✓ Mary Ann Liebert (**New Rochelle**)
- ✓ Oxford University Press (Oxford, **New York**, etc.)
- ✓ Rockefeller University Press (**New York**)
- ✓ Academic Publishers (Universities)
- ✓ Societies
- ✓ Etc.



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Other Ways to Find Existing Vacancies

✓ Online

- On LinkedIn (Follow the organizations you are interested in)
- On the websites of specialized headhunters (Jack Farrell, Lynne Palmer, Bert Davies)
- On Scientific jobs websites (Nature jobs, etc.)

✓ In the Real World

- At career fairs/events
- At scientific conferences (visit the exhibits, look at the billboards)
- Via your network



The Application Process

Your Application Package – Cover Letter

- **First Paragraph:**
 - Mention where you heard about the vacancy and refer to the right job ID
- **Second Paragraph:**
 - Tell something about your scientific background and accomplishments
 - Mention skills you acquired and activities you did that are of relevance to the job
- **Third Paragraph:**
 - Explain why you are interested in the job
 - Mention something about the company
- **Fourth Paragraph:**
 - Thanks and greetings, etc.
- **Tips:**
 - Do not be too modest
 - Should ideally fit on one page
 - Should be in perfect English language and error free!





The Application Process

Your Application Package – Resume/Curriculum Vitae

- ✓ Start with your contact information
- ✓ Provide a profile describing your professional expertise and ambition
- ✓ List your academic diplomas (and where they were obtained)
- ✓ List your professional experience (with a short description of what you did and the main achievements)
- ✓ List extracurricular activities (especially if of some relevance to the job)
- ✓ List your skills (Languages, Computer Programs, etc.)
- ✓ List your publications (particularly important if you are applying for Editor positions)
- ✓ List your awards/grants
- ✓ If you provide references, make sure you have their approval and they are aware of the positions you are applying for
- ✓ Should ideally fit on 2-4 pages, clear and concise!



The Application Process

How to Stand Out of the Crowd

Emphasize in your application package on any relevant experience:

- ✓ Articles published
- ✓ Poster/presentation awards
- ✓ Experience as reviewer
- ✓ Participation in journal club
- ✓ Responsible for a blog or newsletter
- ✓ Organization of events/symposia
- ✓ Management experience/leadership position (clubs, etc.)

Make sure you do your homework:

- ✓ Get insight information via your contacts
- ✓ Study the company
- ✓ Have a good understanding of the industry

Show that you want the job:

- ✓ Bring/send extra material (SWOT analysis, etc.)
- ✓ Send recommendation letters





The Application Process

Some Tests You May Be Asked to Do

Depending on the job you are applying for (and the organization), you may be asked to perform one of the following tests:

- ✓ Writing Test
- ✓ Commissioning Exercise
- ✓ Editing/Reviewing
- ✓ Analysis of a website or journal
- ✓ Presentation for an editorial board meeting





The Interview

- ✓ Look confident and professional
- ✓ Make sure you thoroughly studied the company beforehand
- ✓ Let your interviewer know that you have done your homework (bring some documents with you if needed)
- ✓ Be prepared to come up with examples from your current work that would illustrate how you would react when faced different situations
- ✓ Demonstrate your “plus value” for the company
- ✓ Ask questions (see whether this is something for you)
- ✓ Try to connect at a personal level with your interviewer
- ✓ Do not mention anything that might complicate your hiring (visa requirement, etc.)
- ✓ Thank your interviewer after the interview (by email)
- ✓ Consider sending recommendation letters afterwards



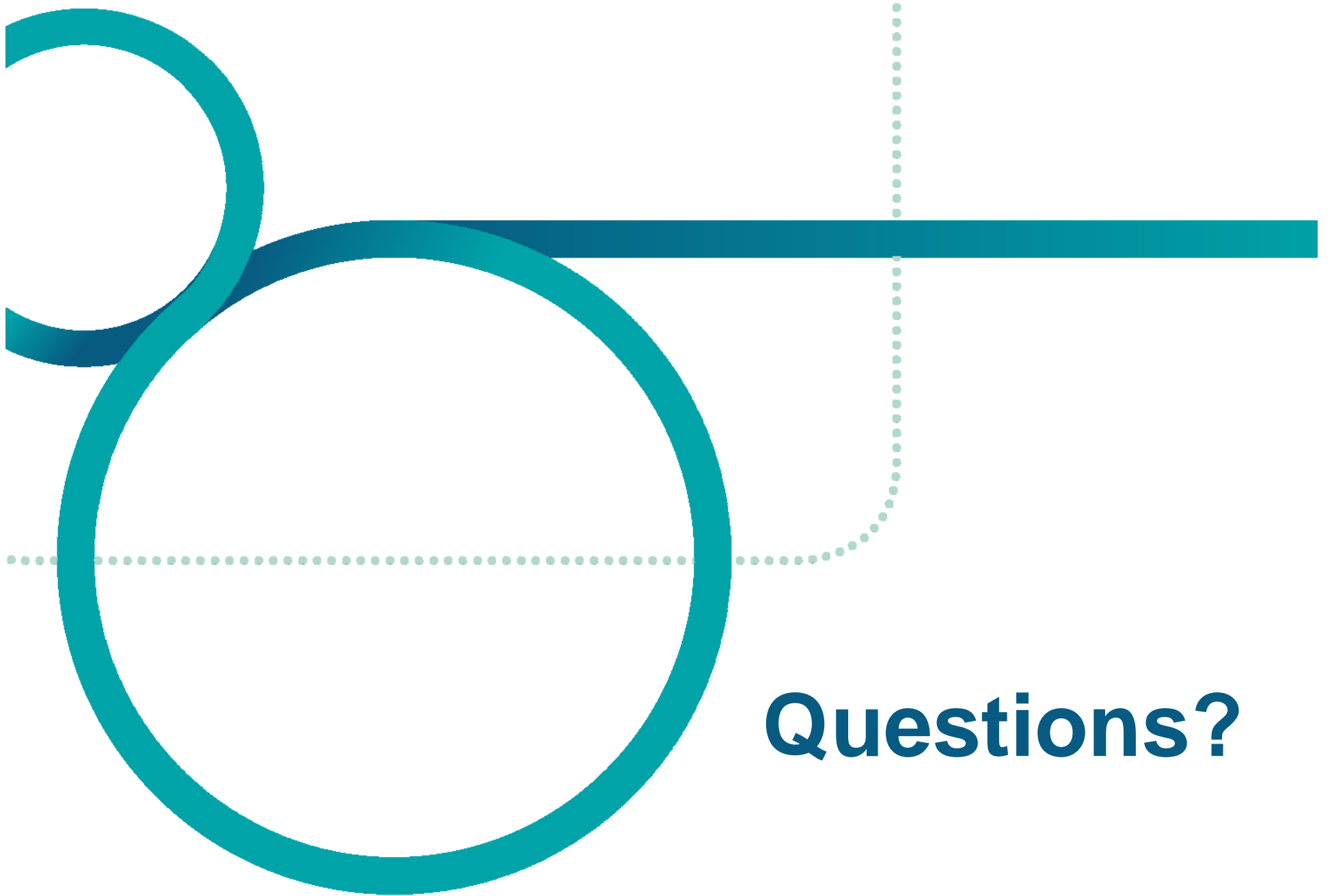


Closing the Deal

Negotiate and Celebrate

- ✓ Do NOT immediately accept the first offer (there is room for negotiation)
- ✓ Make sure you are happy with the benefit package (sick days, holidays, other incentives, etc.)
- ✓ Celebrate and pay it forward!





Questions?

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