Prosper.

Unlocking postdoc
career potential

Priyanka Raina

When Priyanka first joined the Prosper pilot she had been a Research Associate at The University of Liverpool for just under three years. Working within the Musculoskeletal Biology team at The Institute of Life Course and Medical Sciences, she specialised in Computational Biology. Much of her work was centered on the GeneFriends project – employing next-generation sequencing data for the purpose of developing new functional genomics tools to gather insights about gene function, ageing and complex diseases.

Priyanka's time with Prosper helped spur a decision to move beyond academia. She soon secured a role with MOSAIC TX as a Senior Data Scientist.

The Challenge

Priyanka was unsure about the next step in her career. She wanted to learn more about the inner workings of non-academic sectors and organisations in the healthcare space, and develop a clearer view of the full range of options open to someone of her skillset and background.

Like many postdocs in her position, Priyanka was also keenly aware that she lacked experience and training with aspects of professional development that are often taken for granted in the commercial world – from the ability to network effectively through to very practical things such as having the confidence and know-how to negotiate a salary.

> "I needed support to lay a solid foundation for my future career. I wanted to build my confidence and explore new career paths that I could potentially excel in."

The Prosper Journey

Priyanka found her engagement with Prosper to be both informative and inspiring, enabling her to realise her full potential and make a concrete decision about what to pursue next, and how to go about doing so.

Sessions and training on presentational skills proved to be of particular value – through these, Priyanka learned the importance of clear communication, and how to get her strengths and ideas across to a non-specialist audience in an effective and concise way. Resources on careers, employer engagement and networking gave her the means to put this into practice, both in terms of identifying roles and organisations of interest, and creating a system for getting in touch with relevant individuals on platforms such as LinkedIn.

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> "Prosper really helped me understand the extent to which persistence is the key to success – get in contact with recruiters on LinkedIn, be bold about what you apply for, keep going until you find the role that matches both your essential and desirable criteria."

Above all, Prosper imbued Priyanka with a newfound confidence in both herself and her future trajectory. The specialist nature of much postdoc research can sometimes make it a lonely vocation. But Prosper's group sessions allowed her to connect with peers across a range of disciplines and fields, and appreciate the extent to which they were all suffering from similar doubts and challenges.

> "Since working with Prosper I've started to focus my time much more effectively. I express my ideas more confidently in work meetings. I am more confident about the different options I have beyond academia."

Next Steps

From an initial position of uncertainty, Priyanka's engagement with Prosper helped crystallise her desire to seek a role outside of academia in the healthcare sector, and gave her the confidence and support necessary to pursue this goal in earnest. So much so that before the year was up, she had secured a new role as Senior Data Scientist at MOSAIC TX, a pioneering healthcare organisation based at the Wellcome Genome Campus in Cambridge, where she works to combine lab-based technologies with data science methodologies to develop innovative new therapies for cancer patients.

> "When I started the Prosper pilot I was very unsure about whether I wanted to move out of academia, or where I would go if I did. Prosper helped me get out of my comfort zone and make a clear decision about my next career move. It was a wonderful experience – informative, well-designed, and thought provoking."