Name: Benjamín Glasner Vivanco, PhD

Position: Environmental Consultant

Affiliation: Independent Contractor

Location: Puerto Montt, Chile

Pronouns: He/Him

Please briefly describe your current role in your position
I develop data-based recommendations for sustainability and production in aquaculture.

What is your terminal and/or current position in academia?
Postdoc

How did you hear about your current position? Was it a career option that you were aware about during your educational process?
I was not aware of the possibility to work in aquaculture, during my training I wasn't aware of possibilities to work in industrial settings. I begun by working with data for the industry and then moved to consultancy.

How did you end up working at your current affiliation?
I found an opportunity to work in a small company related to the salmon industry and decide to begin an independent career of a consultant in innovation and sustainability due to the relevance and current requirements for data analysis.

How long have you been working at your current affiliation?
>1 year

What type of position is your current job?
In-Person

Is your role more a managerial or individual contributor role?
Individual contributor

What are the defined roles of your position?
Have meeting with clients and TI teams within companies, analyse data and perform talks with them exposing results.

What are your day to day tasks that you perform in your position?
I have regular meetings with clients, perform data analysis from productive and environmental data.

What do you like best about your job?
I have the opportunity to propose novel strategic decisions to incentivize sustainability in production and operations within the industry.

What do you dislike about your job?

Sometimes I have to deal with tedious meetings or to write reports that are not useful but are part of the working culture.

If your job is outside of academia, what is similar and what is different about your current job and your terminal position in academia?

Outside of academia, the work culture is really different. It usually is not possible to work with the same rigor and precision as in [academia], however, the operations continue sometimes with no full understanding of how things work. Furthermore, the general perception of urgency is common and people work really hard sometimes.

How did your microbial ecology education prepare you for your current position?

My microbial ecology training has been really complete [and helped me] to get into industry. Many [microbial ecology] skills are quite useful..., especially data science skills, and the understanding of the environmental context in which the production process takes place.

What skills do you wish you learned during your educational process that would better prepare you for your current role (e.g. machine learning, management skills, etc.)?

I think that managment and any skill related with dealing with people is necessary to improve careers outside academia.

Do you have any recommendation and/or tips for early career microbial ecologists looking for jobs similar to yours?

Never stop searching. Outside academia people don't know what microbial ecology is and all the skills and knowledge that you have. Understanding the industry vocabulary and needs are fundamental steps to get in [the door], but not mandatory. It's possible to transfer science and general academic skills to an [industry] setting, but the main work is ... to create a coherent translation from academic language to industry to be considered for a position.