

Chris Maiers – Des Moines, IA (KWOI)

1) Describe your job and the duties you must fulfill day to day.

I am the weekend meteorologist, so that means that on weekends I am in charge of putting together a comprehensive forecast, making graphics, and presenting that information on-air. In addition along with other workers, I tape weathercasts for the web and iPhone. We also update our text forecast on the web. I'm on-call from Saturday at 2 am until Monday at 2 am, so if there is any type of emergency weather situation I have to be at work.

During the week I'm not on-air. I'm technically classified as a reporter and photojournalist, but I'm mainly in charge of taking care of our weather center computers, testing software from our vendor Weather Central (WXC), coordinating with others on beta projects, updating the station web site with news stories, and doing some developmental work on the iPhone and Blackberry — i.e. mobile web. I also work on making new graphics for our weather department and our sister stations' weather departments. Sometimes management will present me with a certain 'look' to the graphics and say 'Make it work.'

2) What are some of the positive things about your job?

There is a lot of variety each day. I'm a guy that likes to solve problems and puzzles, so the different activities each day help break up the monotony. I also get to meet a lot of people.

3) What are the drawbacks of your job?

The hours are tough since I'm on call so much during the weekends. Time spent with my wife is too little, and I don't have many opportunities to see my family. The first couple of years in the business the pay tends to be really low as well. This is really a profession where you have to spend years 'paying your dues.'

4) What are good qualities and attributes to have if you want to be a broadcaster?

You have to be able to put everything that is bothering you aside if you want to have a consistently good weathercast. If you can't do that, your mood will show through. You also have to be able to control your speech and inflection.

What this boils down to is being able to think on your feet. Often there will be six other things going on at once, and being able to handle those is a must.

5) Should you intern somewhere and where?

Intern as much as you can. It is one of the most cost-effective investments you can make in yourself to gain experience. Don't just show up though. Eat, sleep, and breathe your internship, so you learn as much as you can. You only get out of it what you put into it. If you just show up and wait for things to happen, you won't get much from it.

6) How can you prepare to become a broadcaster?

Besides internships and doing well with school, networking is also important. Having connections can really pay off. I know of several people who were contacted about jobs before the job was even posted.

Keep your Facebook and MySpace profiles pretty tame as well. You don't want to come across as a party animal and unreliable because of those cool pictures from spring break or something.

7) What are good tips to keep in mind for being on the wall and presenting the weather?

Just relax and focus. If you can do those two things, the rest will fall into place.

8) How do you go about making a tape to send out to jobs?

Lots of repetitions and takes to start. Then show your tape to as many people as possible to get feedback on it. Pay attention to detail and print out everything, including labels. Hand-written stuff looks bad.

9) What are tips that you have for making it in the broadcasting field?

Be ready for criticism and know how to handle it. Constructive criticism is good because usually there are ways for you to get better based off of it. The successful people have learned how to handle that. As always. . . Network!

10) Any other comments on the broadcasting field?

Be ready to take on lots of responsibility. You'll also have to learn to do multiple things. The era of TV people just going on air is quickly ending. If you can diversify your skill set, you'll be much more valuable to an employer.