

- ✓ Find out all you can about Hong Kong and Asia, both the business and cultural climate. If you're planning far enough in advance, you may want to take a Cantonese or Mandarin language course that you can continue once you're in Hong Kong.

## Canadian Community

There is a well-established Canadian community in Hong Kong through which you can start establishing your network of contacts. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce holds regular lunch seminars and a Happy Hour on the first Friday of each month. The Canadian Club organizes a wide range of social events and outings, ranging from Thanksgiving dinners to nights at the races. Many Canadian university alumni associations have branches in Hong Kong.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong puts out a directory called *Canadian Business in Hong Kong* which lists all Chamber members and gives details about their companies.

## Expatriate Packages

In the past, expatriates with skills in demand were hired on expensive expatriate job packages which included flights home, housing allowances, subsidized education for children and hospital and medical benefits.

Now, companies can meet the vast majority of their employment needs locally from the pool of well-qualified Hong Kong residents. In order to be able to compete, you must be willing to forego an expatriate job package.

## Footing the Bill

You must be prepared to finance your stay in Hong Kong until that first pay cheque arrives. You need to budget about HK\$1,000 per day, with most of that going for basic food and accommodation. Even mid-range hotels like the YMCA cost about HK\$700 a night, and daily food bills will come to at least HK\$200.

If you want to commit to leasing an apartment, be prepared to put down at least the first two months rent. Rents are extremely expensive in Hong Kong, with a basic 400 square foot apartment in the

centre of the city costing about HK\$10,000 monthly. Even if you're willing to commute an hour each way to and from work, be prepared to pay HK\$12,000 for a basic 800 square foot apartment in the New Territories or Discovery Bay.

Apartments that approach Canadian standards in terms of size and appliances cost more than HK\$30,000 monthly.

## Employment Agencies

Hong Kong has a multitude of employment agencies, ranging from those that cover a wide range of job levels and industries to those that specialize in certain professions. You can check the Yellow Pages under Employment Agencies for a listing.



Most employment agencies are paid by the employer, so there's no cost to register. Send your résumé to several agencies which cater to job-seekers at your level of expertise and the industry in which you're interested. They will contact you or keep your résumé on file if there's nothing available at the moment.

Executive search firms tend to recruit only for top-level jobs, those that pay more than HK\$800,000 annually. In addition to accepting résumés for consideration, they actively seek out prospective employees for their clients.

## When To Come

The best time to find a job is just after Chinese New Year in early February when most employees are given an extra month's pay. Although you may want to arrive before this time to start making contacts, most job openings will not appear until February, after employees have pocketed that extra paycheque.

# east

Job hunting in July and August is generally less productive as many key decision makers are away on holidays.

## Contacts, Contacts, Contacts

Contacts are always important in job hunting, and in Hong Kong they're especially vital. It's important to get out into the community, meet people and talk to prospective employers.

When you're contacting potential employers, a useful approach may be to ask for an appointment to talk to them about their company, the industry and the Hong Kong job market, rather than just saying you're looking for a job. This can be an effective way to become known to people in the industry. Even if they don't have a job at that time, you may be referred to someone who does, or you may be considered when something comes up down the road.

## Other Job-Hunting Tips

When responding to job ads, do not expect to receive letters of acknowledgement or rejection. Most employers receive hundreds of applications for positions advertised and will only contact you if they're interested. Although you will receive responses eventually, responding to job ads is only one part of your job hunt and can't be relied upon exclusively to find a job.

Employment agencies recommend that you know your target market and carefully craft a letter of introduction which you should send with your résumé. Follow up the letter a few days later with a phone call.

If you're staying at a hotel, you might want to enlist the services of a professional answering service or business centre to make your job hunt easier and more professional.

Business cards are exchanged extensively at business and social meetings, so you will want to have business cards made up once you have a local address or telephone number.