

How you can find a job

The following article is an excerpt from *Sell Yourself! The Career Handbook for Canadian University Students and Prospective Students (1982-1983 Edition)*. Written by Theresa Goulet, a 1981 graduate of the University of Calgary, *Sell Yourself!* offers job-hunting advice based on a nationwide survey of employers of Canadian university graduates conducted in the Fall of 1981. *Sell Yourself!* will be published and available in university bookstores in February.

By Theresa Goulet

If you're graduating this year you may have already heard the "horror stories" about how tight the job market is, how a university degree isn't as marketable as it once was, and how it can take graduates of non-professional disciplines as long as a year to find a permanent full-time job. Ignore the stories. They're not untrue--but they don't have to apply to you. Regardless of how bad (or good) the general job situation is for most graduates of your discipline, no "horror story" or Stats Canada unemployment figure can tell you the one thing that should concern you: your personal job situation.

And, as long as you take your job-hunt seriously and treat it as almost a full-time job in itself, you can succeed on the job market. Following are some suggestions on how you can find out about job openings:

Read Newspaper Ads

Job openings are usually advertised in the business section of daily newspapers and may be listed under such headings as "Careers", "Employment Opportunities", or "Help Wanted". Since some companies will only advertise in one issue it's wise to check the newspaper every day.

As soon as you find an ad for a position that interests you, prepare a resume that shows your qualifications for the job. (Most ads have job descriptions: "Will be responsible for...", "Should have experience at..." and you should tailor your resume to the job description.) Try to get your resume in within three days after the ad appears (and make sure it arrives--drop it off if the company's in town). You should also clip the ad to your resume and specify which position you're applying for since companies sometimes advertise several positions at the same time.

Use Your Campus Placement Office

Your campus placement office can provide you with listings of job vacancies. These alone can be valuable but you should also take advantage of

the other services offered. The placement staff can provide you with information on when recruiters are coming, show you how to sign up for interviews, give you an application form to fill out (which they then copy and pass on to recruiters), and provide you with information about the companies you'll be interviewed by.

These services are particularly valuable if you're graduating from a professional discipline (such as engineering, computer science, or accounting) but you should visit the placement office even if you're graduating with a general arts or science degree to make sure you don't miss any opportunities. While you're there you can pick up free copies of publications that will help you in your job-hunt: "Career Planning Annual", "The Financial Post's Careers and the Job Market", and "Canadian Campus Magazine".

Read Professional Journals

Many professional organizations produce journals (or magazines) for their members and some of these journals list job openings. Most campus libraries carry professional journals among their periodicals collections and you can find out about them by asking the reference librarian.

Use "The Grapevine"

Tell all your friends and relatives that you're looking for a job and explain what you're looking for. You might not get any results from the grapevine but (who knows?) you could get a call from someone who read an ad you missed or has heard about an opening that hasn't yet been advertised.

Visit a Personnel Agency

Private personnel agencies (they're listed in the yellow pages) are responsible for finding suitable candidates to fill positions and if you want to explore all job-hunting options you might consider using the services of one. You should realize, however, that their goal is not to help you; the agencies work for the employers. (The employers pay the agencies for their services.) So don't expect much personal attention.

Talk to Employers

The best way to find out what kind of positions are available in a particular company is to ask a personnel officer in that company. Almost without exception employers are happy to provide you with information if you approach them in a business-like manner. When seeking information from companies you have two options: (1) you can write to

the head office for a copy of their recruitment literature and annual report (see "Conduct a Direct Mail Campaign" for details on how to find company addresses) or (2) you can call the local office for an information interview.

Are you skeptical about using the information interview approach? Don't be: 94 percent of the Canadian employers I surveyed will "sometimes" or "often" speak to job-hunters who phone them even when there are no positions available and 73 percent will "sometimes" or "often" speak with job-hunters who drop in without an appointment. It's good public relations for them. And, even if no positions are available at the time you apply, you might be the answer to their prayers in a year or so.

However, even though employers are (usually) tolerant of such activities you certainly won't leave a favourable impression if you don't exhibit some common courtesy. Since employers and personnel officers are busy people you should call first to set up a formal appointment. The vast majority will be happy to meet with you and provide you with information about careers in their company.

Try the Trans-Canada Job Exchange

The Trans-Canada Job Exchange is a pleasant variation on the personnel agency. They too match job-hunters with employers but it's done on a confidential basis by a computer. You can be matched with employers from across Canada or from one region of Canada (there are also Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, and Alberta Job Exchanges). For an information package and a registration form write to: Trans-Canada Job Exchange, 1110 Sherbrooke Street West, Room 2206, Montreal, Quebec H3A 1G8.

Buy a Copy of the "Globe and Mail's Career Opportunities"

Each week all the career ads that have been run in the previous weeks' issues of the "Globe and Mail" are published in a separate issue ("Career Opportunities") and distributed to newsstands across Canada. You can invest in a single issue or take out a lengthy subscription. (I advise you to do the former; approach your student association to do the latter.)

Conduct a Direct Mail Campaign

Don't just wait for your ideal job to be advertised--apply for it before the employer needs to advertise! A mass mailout to employers can be one of the

most effective ways to acquire job offers (employers would much rather find an employee through an unsolicited resume than go through the grueling task of advertising and weeding through the mountains of resumes that always flood in after a position is advertised). What do I mean by a "mass mailout"? I mean send out a lot of resumes. The exact number you'll need to send out to get some interviews depends on how marketable you are but this employer's comments should give you an idea:

"Job-seekers must be aware that a good response rate (ie. letters sent to interviews granted) is between 3-5 percent. Therefore, an applicant must expect to have to apply to between 100 and 200 firms. Sending out 20 resumes is considered an inadequate job search."

It may seem like a lot of work but it's worth it: even if a company doesn't have an immediate opening, 70 percent of employers will keep an outstanding resume on file for six months or longer. (However, if you want any action taken you'll have to keep contacting the companies to indicate your continued interest and notify them of your new address if you move.)

To do a mass mailout you can have your resume photocopied or printed. In most cases printing will be cheaper and look much better. (Look up printers in the yellow pages.) You should then write a (brief) personal covering letter to accompany each resume you send out. You can start your letter with a direct statement or question ("Do you need a ... with experience and


training in...?) and go on to relate one or two of your major qualifications for the position you're applying for. (Make sure you apply for a specific position; employers automatically reject resumes from applicants who will "take anything".) You can then finish off your letter by saying you will call in a week.

So who do you send your letters to? You can find out employers' names and addresses from the following sources:

The Yellow Pages: Your telephone directory can provide you with lists of local companies and organizations in your career field and their addresses (and the directory assistance operator can advise you on where to look if you're having trouble finding that


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GET ALL THE HELP YOU CAN GET!



The
HP-34C

You need a powerful calculator to get you through thick and thin. This advanced scientific programmable with Continuous Memory has two unique keyboard functions: Solve and Integrate. Get all the help you can get. Get HP.

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UNB/UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SCHOLARSHIP EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

Again this year, three Scholarships will be awarded to students selected to take part in the undergraduate student exchange programme operated between UNB and the University of Maine at Orono, Maine.

The Scholarship pays tuition fees and provides a grant of \$500.00 which can be used to defray other expenses.

Students selected will be required to enter their junior year at the University of Maine in a programme approved by their respective department at UNB. This is to ensure that students can receive full credit for the year's work upon return to the UNB Campus.

Interested students may pick up application forms from the International Student Advisor's Office and return them completed by February 16th/82.

Doreen Kissick
International Student Advisor.