

The matter of . . .

JOBS

There are jobs to be found, but the competition's tougher

By J. BRETT ABBEY

Now that the economy is slowly mending its battle-scarred body, student employment possibilities are looking up.

Despite recent predictions that the economy will recover at a snail's pace and unemployment will remain high for the next few years, job opportunities do exist. Only the competition for employment has gotten tougher.

Finding a job today does require considerable effort. What used to be a simple task of searching through want-ads for prospective employers has now become an active time-consuming search based on skillful planning and research. And that's only the beginning.

Most employers today aren't willing to hire just anybody. They want people who can effectively demonstrate that they're well worth an investment. People who can stand out amongst the competition are now in demand. That's why jobs that come available today, are being snatched up by a relatively new breed of applicants. Applicants who possess both initiative and sincerity.

According to Mark Dutton of Dutton Advertising, a firm that specializes in Recruitment Advertising, "people often show very little initiative when it comes to finding out all they can about a particular field of employment and a specific company they may wish to join." In effect, people too often seek employment blindly.

The fault lies partially in our educational system, Dutton says. While Dutton spends a great deal of time actively recruiting at the college and university levels, he has come to believe that "our educational system leaves little room for individuals to excel." Accordingly, people he sees are too often a part of the mainstream. Today's high competition demand for jobs requires people who can stand out in a crowd.

Dutton further argues that "schools are falling short of equipping students with real world knowledge. The out-dated programs usually adopt a middle-of-the-road approach to fill courses, and essentially conform students to a common denominator," a point which is often reflected in the mass number of resumés, letters and applicants Dutton views each year.

But Dutton isn't the only person to receive such mail. Employers in every field of business

will often have on hand large numbers of resumés at any given time. It is a fact that is consistent with what Michael Koskie, Vice-President of Vickers and Benson Advertising Ltd., terms the "paper the world" approach to finding a job.

Koskie receives approximately 100 resumés a month and contends that "it is usually quite apparent that half the people really have no idea what they are trying to get into. People just seem to send out letters and resumés everywhere, hoping someone will hire them." A firm disbeliever in this blind search method of finding employment, Koskie feels sincerity is the key to successful job hunting.

"Nowadays employers want to know a person is actively keen and interested in a particular field or firm, and is willing to do something about it." This requires, according to Koskie, "a sincere effort to write individual letters to prospective employers, honestly stating one's desire and interest in obtaining employment.

"Later, a follow-up call should be placed to the employer (even if the firm is not hiring at the time), to try and arrange a get-acquainted session." That, Koskie insists, will demonstrate a sincere desire to the employer that you are interested in employment with the firm. Also, it will increase one's advantage over other applicants. In Koskie's words, it will succeed in "getting a foot in the door."

Once you've got a foot in the door, you are at the first stage of professional salesmanship. That's the advice of Peter Bender, professor of Effective Persuasion at Ryerson. Bender sees finding a job comparable to selling a commodity, and believes the first step should consist of "selling the interview not the product." Basically, once you have gained the attention of a prospective employer, you are in a position to effectively sell yourself.

And now is the time to begin. With the increased competition for available jobs, employers inevitably find themselves in a "buyer's market" situation—a situation that affords them greater flexibility in hiring decisions, and ultimately demands an even greater amount of effort and sophistication on the part of today's job seekers.

There is no sure-fire guaranteed method to successful job hunting. There never has been. It all depends on your ability and imagination to go out of your way and make that employer want you over others. And that takes initiative, sincerity, and hard work. But most importantly, the road to success lies in what Peter Bender terms the "golden rule": "never, never, never give up."



About to graduate? Job outlook is optimistic says York CEC

By JOHN WRIGHT

The picture for future employment prospects for York graduates is an optimistic one, according to Chris McKillop, manager of the York Canada Employment Center (CEC). McKillop, who delivered a lunch-hour talk Tuesday afternoon on Future Trends in the Job Market, said that there are more jobs posted in CEC than he can fill. McKillop also outlined the services his offices provides for graduates and students to aid them in the search for a career.

McKillop stressed the importance of the impact of computers on the future job market. In many industries that traditionally hire York graduates, technology is rapidly changing the nature of entry-level positions, he said. While this generally improves the outlook for students with some demonstrated computer experience, McKillop said students with general degrees have demonstrated the ability to adapt to new situations and learn to implement new ideas.

Those with general degrees are also now being given some preference over those with MBAs, he said. This arises, according to McKillop, out of a general industry dissatisfaction with the attitudes of MBA grads. Employers generally believe that those with an undergraduate degree don't expect to be running the firm overnight. This seems not to be the case with those with post graduate degrees.

There's a general surplus of jobs for York graduates, specifically in computer science and general administration jobs, said McKillop. While this situation seems to be in contradiction with common conception, McKillop said many people hold negative impressions of

some job titles that result in the lack of response.

McKillop also said many jobs go unfilled by York grads because they do not take advantage of the services the CEC offers. Most students "fade away into suburban Don Mills and wonder why there is no one to help them get to work. For whatever reason they are not coming back to the one employment service that lists jobs that will be of primary interest to them as university grads."

While McKillop realizes he cannot place every York grad, he notes the range of services CEC provides, such as necessary job-search skills to those he cannot give direct referrals. Use of the services can also improve a candidate's chance of landing a job from a referral.

The CEC offers resumé and interview workshops. Most important, according to McKillop, is the service's ability to help students develop a clearly defined career goal.

In conjunction with the Career Center, CEC also offers help in career planning. "Employers want people who have given serious thought to what it is they want to accomplish" McKillop said. Those who say they will take anything in the firm so as not to eliminate themselves are not taking the correct course, he said, adding employers want people who have demonstrated interest in a particular job.

McKillop said that even though the market is still tight for grads with specialized degrees such as Geophysics, the general outlook has improved since last year. Computer Science is still the "big" degree, but general Arts and Science grads can still look forward to a successful job search if they take advantage of the services available to them.

BOARD MEETING

The Excalibur Board of Publications meets today at 5:00 p.m. in 111 Central Square

