

## **Article #1: Job seekers find first task is jumping through hoops; Employers market makes landing job full-time work**

Employers can be very choosy.

With about six unemployed people for every posted job, hirers have the luxury of large--and often quite talented --applicant pools.

And, boy, is that frustrating the applicants.

In the quest to find the perfect hire, many employers are putting candidates through hours, days or even weeks of tests, interviews, presentations and tryouts.

Many job hunters feel caught in an endless cycle of investing time, sometimes money and always hope, only to be rejected again.

And, after all that, they often find that, if the job was filled at all, it went to an internal candidate.

Pam Sexton said she had what basically amounted to a full-time job for three weeks--applying for a job at the University of Phoenix. The process was all very professional, she said, but it swallowed an incredible amount of her time and energy.

She filled out an application and a more in-depth questionnaire, had a phone interview, sent her college transcripts, gave a sample teaching presentation, participated in a group exercise and had face-to-face interviews.

But, once again, after seven months of similar processes and "so many blood tests, drug tests, personality tests," she said she's jumped through lots of hoops to no avail.

Rachelle Rand, who's been looking for work since December, applied for a business school position at Grantham University. She, too, said the process was professional but time-consuming.

Her first hour-long interview was on the phone, with four people participating. Her second round, a week later, took all day: She said she interviewed with about 20 people back-to-back.

She learned within days (a much-appreciated quick response) that she didn't get the job.

Later, she read on the institution's website that the job went to an internal candidate--someone she'd met in her interviews.

Fair enough. But Rand, like many applicants who spend extended time and emotional effort on job applications, feels drained.

"I did a lot of preparation for the interviews and research prior to both interviews," Rand said. "I gave them suggestions on improvement, issues with the school and multiple people took notes on my discussion."

Only a fly on the wall would know if any of Rand's ideas were or will be adopted. But her experience points out why some job applicants are frustrated: They don't think it's fair that companies may be getting their ideas for free.

Mostly, though, unemployed job hunters are simply getting worn down by the lengthy application process, which also involves e-mails, thank-you notes, revised cover letters and resumes to fit each position.

Yes, it's an employer's job market. And, yes, it's right to hire the right person and avoid hiring mistakes.

Gordon Bonnes understands that, even after he came in No. 2 for a much-desired position.

His job-finding effort started with two telephone interviews from Kansas City before the target company flew him to the Minneapolis job site. There, he had four interviews.

A week later, the company flew him to Boston for six consecutive 45-minute interviews at the company's headquarters. A seventh interview followed by phone.

"I applaud the company for caring about how you interact with the people you would be working with," Bonnes said, "But 13 interviews may have been overboard. Maybe there could have been a group interview to catch several at once."

Job applicants also are being asked to submit to handwriting analysis, standardized personality assessments and mock work situations.

Some application processes have stretched out so long and dug so deep--financially and emotionally--that many are struggling to keep their spirits up.

Even those who recite the mantra that "each 'no' gets me closer to 'yes' " are feeling the strain.

**Stafford, Diane. "Job seekers find first task is jumping through hoops; Employers market makes landing job full-time work." *Calgary Herald*. Working: H4. Sat Oct 31 2009.**

## **Article #2: Rooting out the hidden jobs**

When confronted with a problem or challenge, humans naturally tend to seek the solution which is simplest and most obvious.

Natural though it is, however, this tendency can often lead us astray. Or, to use an example slightly closer to real life, picture a homesteader whose only attempt to find a water-source consisted of scanning his immediate surroundings to look for a spring or stream. Unless he considered other possible solutions, like the fact that water can be collected from rainfall or harvested from a well dug deep in the earth, he would die of dehydration before he ever had a chance to build his cabin.

The moral of this anecdote is that the appeal of the simple, obvious solution can blind us to other possibilities which - though they are less apparent and may require more work - may ultimately prove more effective.

For example, there is an amazingly persistent belief among job-seekers that if a company hasn't advertised any job openings, they're not doing any hiring. The reality is quite the opposite: most job openings never get posted in any medium, whether that's a newspaper, a job board or a website. Rather, they crop up behind the scenes, through channels not visible to the casual observer.

Consider it from the employer's perspective. If you have a job to fill, along with a thousand other pressing things you have to attend to, you're going to look at the fastest, cheapest and most reliable options available. Posting a job ad costs money; going through a formal recruiting process, complete with short-listing and

interviews, takes a great deal of time and effort. If there's a way you can hire through word of mouth instead, using recommendations from existing staff members or other contacts, odds are you'll jump at the chance.

In the world of work, the vast majority of jobs get filled through professional networks without any outward sign (namely a job posting) that the opportunity even existed. To put it in numerical terms, somewhere between 85% and 90% of job vacancies are filled this way, meaning that job-seekers who do nothing but look at job ads are targeting only 10% to 15% of all available openings.

All of which leads us to the \$64 million question: How exactly does a job-seeker go about accessing this "hidden job market," the bulk of job openings that never get advertised?

Here are some ideas from experts:

- Research potential employers. Rather than waiting for employers to come to you with a job posting, seek them out instead. Use the Yellow Pages or an online equivalent, like SuperPages, InfoSpace or Canada 411, to get names and contact information for companies doing the type of work you're targeting.
- Next, contact these companies. Ask to speak directly to the person who is responsible for hiring. If they have nothing to offer at the moment, ask if they expect any openings in the future or if they know of any other companies in the field who might be hiring. Whether or not they're in an immediate position to hire, making yourself known to them will help keep you prominent in their memory for when a job vacancy is available.
- Visit career and hiring fairs. These public events provide a tremendous opportunity for you to network with multiple employers all at once. The Alberni Valley Employment Centre held such an event this past spring, and service providers in neighbouring areas have been hosting such events every year or two. Local job-seekers may also want to check out the Vancouver Island Education and Career Fair being held in Nanaimo on Dec. 3 (call 604-681-2153 for more information).
- Utilize your network. Networking is far and away your best strategy for finding a job. Make sure everybody you know is aware you're looking for work, and ask if they know of anyone else you could talk to. Keep up touch with associations in your occupational field, as these can be a gold mine of job opportunities.
- Take part in a workshop or job-finding club. Being part of a group of fellow job-seekers, with guidance from a professional in the career development field, is a tremendous source of personal and emotional support (not to mention job leads!). In addition, you can hone important skills like developing resumés and cover letters, preparing for job interviews, networking, and suchlike that will better prepare you to carry out your job search.

MacFadden, Dave. "Rooting out the hidden jobs." *Alberni Valley Times*. Business: B12. Tue Oct 13 2009.

### **Article #3: Would you like a story with that coffee?; Networking is key to finding a job in today's economy**

Dinner at home had just finished when got the phone call. "Congratulations Nicole, you have been accepted into the program," said the director of graduate admissions at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism in Illinois.

Medill is one of the top journalism schools in the United States.

At that moment, the contents of my thought bubble looked something like this: will go out into the big, wide world and seek answers to the time's most pressing questions. will work in a bustling newsroom with

opinionated, no-nonsense editors and scruffy, truth-seeking writers. will mingle with powerful and pretty people and be an eye-witness to historical moments. Cue inspirational music. will be a journalist.

OK, maybe these expectations were a tad unrealistic, but the underlying hope of finding a job wasn't. The Medill Web site clearly states graduates are "highly sought by employers in all media sectors." It boasts of recruiters from media meccas such as The New York Times, The Washington Post and Conde Nast.

Undoubtedly, some past Medillians made their way to these prestigious organizations, but Bob Dylan said it best: The times they are a-changin'.

In journalism, layoffs and hiring freezes began before the recession hit and are likely to continue after the economy starts to recover and other sectors increase their payrolls. am seeking employment in an industry that is shrinking and changing shape faster than an ice-sculpture in India -- a wee bit of info Medill's Web site failed to include.

My master's glow quickly began to fade once returned to Toronto.

Complete extinguishment occurred in an interview for an internship at a prominent Canadian magazine; the editor had never even heard of Medill. Cue defeated music.

After several months of futile door-knocking, became a cliché and turned to the place most "struggling artists" go while they're trying to catch a break: a coffee shop. Out with the interview recorder, in with the drive-thru headset. still ask questions every day, but they are lower on the investigative scale: "Can take your order?", "How do you take your coffee?" and my least favourite, "Would you like anything else?"

I would like to pause here to say there is nothing easy or undignified about working at Second Cup.

Standing for nine hours and serving people who are habitually particular about their daily beverages is not for the faint of heart. Making perfect micro-foam is a skill have yet to master. My last intention is to belittle hard-working baristas.

Rather, intend to vent some frustration that probably share with other underemployed graduates.

I thought all those years of reading and writing and studying and stressing -- particularly during my undergrad years at McMaster University -- would amount to more than serving lattes and muffins. thought the heaps of money and time invested in my education would be worth more than minimum wage.

Here's where the self-pity rant ends, because am sure most people in my position would agree that whining feels good in the moment but achieves nothing long term. What should work is a focused strategy -- and university career centres can help graduates formulate one, or at least provide the guidance to polish resumes and cover letters to best show your skills.

Career counsellors will caution against combing through online job boards and sending resumes into overflowing human resource inboxes. This is the easiest way to job search, thereby the least effective. Most employers don't have the time to sift through hundreds of resumes, so they hire internally or based on referral.

So, what's an outsider with no connections to do? Make them. Fellow job hunters know what's coming next: have to bring up the intimidating N-word many try to avoid -- networking. jumped the networking hump when started to think of it less as corporate schmoozing and more as reaching out to people who could help me.

Tell anyone and everyone -- your cousin, a neighbour, a cute stranger at the corner store -- that you're job hunting, and make sure you can concisely summarize who you are and what you want.

This article is proof networking opportunities can arise in unlikely places. My Second Cupco-worker learned one of our regular customers is a National Post editor, and a short introduction over the counter led to the not-so-short article on this page.

It's also a good idea to join your alumni association and schedule informational interviews at organizations where you'd like to work. key is to score personal time, whether through an e-mail, a phone call, a career fair, or a volunteer stint. Not all networking attempts will be fruitful, but the more seeds you plant, the more likely it is for something to grow, even in a harsh climate.

I have yet to leave Second Cup, so this advice is more a sharing of ideas than a guaranteed guide to landing an office with a panoramic city view. There is no set formula, just a lot of trial and error and more trial. So, until my frozen career thaws, have persistence, patience and plenty of coffee.

**Kallmeyer, Nicole. "Would you like a story with that coffee?; Networking is key to finding a job in today's economy." *Calgary Herald*. Business: D10. Wed May 27 2009.**