

Job Search Worksheet - Halifax

Halifax is a bustling Canadian medium sized city with a lot of opportunity for great work at all levels. Our research shows us that there are over 1500 jobs available in Halifax (as of September 2009).

Depending on what type of work or employment are looking for in Halifax there are a number of great strategies for finding a job in Halifax.

Pound the pavement to get a job or work in Halifax – Halifax is a medium sized city with a lot of smaller town people than say, Toronto or Vancouver. Therefore, a personalized approach can be effective for at least two reasons. First, there are less options than a bigger city, which means that you can cover a large number of employers who are hiring employees in Halifax. In other words, once you have narrowed your list of potential employers and found the type of work you want to do in Halifax you can easily make a list to start your personal job or career search. Second, if you meet an employer in Halifax they may have more time to talk to you personally than they would in a large corporate center such as Bay Street in Toronto. This means you can get to the boss or decision maker quicker. East coasters enjoy a personal approach very much.

Have a plan to find employment in Halifax: having a plan means before beginning your search for careers in Halifax, you have to plan how you will do it, so you don't waste your time and you will make the most efficient use of your time job searching. Remember, more time wasted means more time with no, or less money in your pocket.

Be unique and you will find employment in Halifax: one of the tricks to east coast job searching is that there are a lot of people looking for generally a few jobs. So you have to be able to make yourself stand apart from the crowd. Employer's want to remember you amongst the mass of resumes they get. Generally we find that using coloured paper doesn't work well. However, you can do some of the following things;

- Staple your cover letter and resume together so they don't get lost or separated from each other
- Put your name and contact info on each page in case one page does get lost
- Write a short cover letter that the employer can quickly scan – this is where you want to put some "bait", to make the employer go on to your resume. A short note about an interesting point about you which makes you unique from the average joe in a good way, which you can expand on in your resume
- Your resume will cover some broad bases focusing in your strengths as a person, an employee and someone who will add value to the employer.
- Format must be clear, easy to scan and not too crowded, too wordy and above all use the spell and grammar checker 😊 before you give it to someone.

Remember, above all else: it is key that you frame your job application, which includes your cover letter, resume and interview in a way which delivers to the employer that you can add more value to the employer than anyone else out there can. You can get creative with this and teaching this is beyond the scope of this short article, but just ask yourself, “What is it that I can do better than most others (if not all others) for this employer?” Remember, you are not competing with the world, you are only competing with the other job seekers in Halifax who applied for this Halifax job also, so you have a real chance of being successful if you can find a way to let the employer know that you are bringing real value to this job. The reality is, probably each and every job seeker in Halifax who is searching for Halifax jobs has something that they can bring to the job which is better than any other person, and that something is different that any other person – BUT – the reality is that most people will fail to communicate to the employer in their application that they are able to add such wonderful value to the job and will therefore fail to stand out. Don't make that mistake in your job search. We are sure that he or she who stands out (in a good way) will get the job more often than the others with the great resume and experience and education, regardless of age.

Now, where do you begin your search for careers in Halifax? You can go to the local newspaper, the Halifax / Chronicle Herald. On Saturdays there are a lot of job postings, there is also the Halifax Daily news. Our favourite resource however is the internet. There are many internet sites you can go to, but perhaps this one will help you a lot: www.SmartJob.ca, it is known as Canada's Smartest Job Site. They have many features which make it easy for finding employment in Halifax, jobsearches in general and also specific job search in Halifax for various careers. The nice thing about SmartJob.ca is that you will get more job results than any other job site we have found, so you can do most of your job searching from one place.

For example; on SmartJob.ca we found there to be 1600 Halifax Job Postings in total. Of those 1600 Halifax job postings, we were able to search by different keywords and here are some of the samples we found.

- Halifax Bank Jobs: 110 Halifax Bank Jobs
- IT Jobs: 357 IT Jobs in Halifax
- Part Time Jobs: 369 Part time jobs in Halifax
- Student jobs: 26 student related jobs in Halifax

With this tool, you can also vary your searches for completeness for example: we searched for lawyer jobs and got 11 results for lawyer jobs in Halifax, then we searched using the keyword “legal” and got 59 job search results for legal jobs in Halifax.

Also, we searched for truck driver jobs and found 7 jobs, but when we searched for truck driver jobs in Nova Scotia (removed Halifax from the search box), we got 32 Halifax employment job results for truck driver jobs. The point here is, the website is a great tool, but you have to remember to use all of its features in order to get the most out of your Halifax job search efforts.

Good luck in your job search for Halifax careers and finding gainful and interesting Halifax employment!

Review worksheet / activity Discussion for ESL Students:

1. Why is it important to staple your resume and cover letter together?
2. Why is it important to have your name on every page?
3. Where is Halifax? (country, province)

Internet Search Quest Activity: (in class or for homework)

Go to www.SmartJob.ca and answer the following questions: (teachers can survey the class to see if everyone got the same number of jobs)

1. How many jobs in the city you are in now?
2. How many jobs in the country you are in now?
3. How many jobs for “nurse” can you find in Toronto?
4. If you work now, what is your career or occupation? How many different words can you think of to search for it? For example: lawyer, legal, litigation:
 - a. Now, do a search and see how many jobs you can find for your desired career.
 - b. If you are not yet working, choose a career you want and see how many jobs there are.
5. What is the job market like for your career in your city or country? (for example – how many jobs for your occupation in your city)?
6. Now compare your job market analysis in the previous question to 5 different countries, which country has the most jobs in your profession?

Job Application Simulation / Preparation Activities: Your unique blessings

1. Now, brainstorm and come up with 5 different things that are unique about you. These can be about anything at all, as long as it is you. List them on a piece of paper
2. Now – write one or two sentences about each of them
3. Describe each of them to your partner and ask them to choose the two most interesting or cool things
4. Take your top two and refine them in the following ways;
 - a. Written form, brief for a cover letter and resume – your goal is to get the employer to want to ask you about this unique point, so they will gain some curiosity about you and perhaps it will lead them to calling you for an interview.
 - b. Spoken form: if an employer asked you, “Tell me about XXX which is here in your cover letter and resume.” (your goal now is to have a short, interesting story,

it can be funny if you like, as long as it is appropriate and let's the employer know that you are interesting and hopefully will cause them to remember you – then offer you the job. You want the employer to feel that you are someone that he wants in his or her company, give them a good gut feeling about you and this short story about your quality can really help with this).