

The Employment Journey

PEI's Top Source for Career Planning and Job Seeking

The key to a successful job interview

by Gloria Welton

Be prepared to market yourself. That was one piece of advice from the members of the National Technical Committee (NTC) of the job interview competition at the **Canadian Skills Competition 2009** held in Charlottetown in May. Job Interview was among the 40 skilled trade and technology categories at this event, which was held on PEI for the first time.

Four NTC members from across Canada spoke to the competitors after the job interviews. The members, who are all involved in the HR field, shared tips for marketing yourself.

It is important to be eager as well as relaxed during the interview. Both will come naturally when you are prepared.

Practice the questions

Make a list of questions you think the employer will ask you and practice your answers with someone. Also, list some questions you would like to ask the employer.

Relate your skills to the job

"When hiring new staff, employers generally look for specific qualities related to the job," says NTC Chair **Karina Garrett**, who is the Manager of Human Resources for the city of Richmond, BC. "Before the interview, take time to think about the challenges you have dealt with in different areas. To keep them fresh in your mind, write down four success stories and highlight how you handled them."

Many interviewers ask behavioral questions. For example: **If a customer wanted more money back in change than you thought was owed to them, what would you do?**

This type of question can really put you on the spot. The NTC members suggested using a system to quickly draw on your experiences. Organize your answers by keeping three letters in mind:

B - talk about the **background** you have in the area.

A - talk about the **action** you took. What did you do?

R - talk about the **results**.

Then relate your answer specifically to the question. "Give a detailed explanation of the action you took and the results because this is what the interviewers really want to know. You can also explain what you learned from the situation.

"If you get a question about something that you have never done, be honest and say it is a new area for you," says Karina. "Try to draw on your transferrable skills."

Why should we hire you?

This question is an opportunity to really shine. "This is a chance to summarize by recapping your skills, knowledge and experience. Even though it may be the last question, put all your energy into this one."

Know the company and the job duties

Read the job posting carefully. If you are not clear on the duties or qualifications, there are a few ways to become more confident. Research the company online and talk with others who may have worked there. Also, go to websites such as www.pei.jobfutures.org or www.jobfutures.ca and hunt up that job. You will find descriptions of job duties, education requirements, wages, and more.



Competitors in the Job Interview Canadian Skills Competitions 2009: Stephanie Matthews, Nunavut; Lynn Dawn, Newfoundland and Labrador; Katherine Melnyk, Manitoba, Jen Walsh, Alberta, Alyscia McMullin, Ontario, Katelyn Larson, Saskatchewan, and Katie Gallant, PEI. Alyscia won the gold medal.

Getting stumped

"It is perfectly OK to ask the interviewer to repeat a question," says Karina. "If you are not sure what to say, ask if you can come back to that question later."

Also, repeating the question out loud will give you time to think about the answer and it will show that you understand the question.

Hint for the interviewer

It is now becoming more common for the interview questions to be placed in front of the person being interviewed. "Having a paper copy to refer to helps the person being interviewed to be clear about what is being asked."

Competitors share tips to help with nervousness:

"Take deep breaths to try to relax."

"Treat the interview like a conversation and try to have fun with it in a professional way."

"When you are nervous you may start talking too fast - be aware of this."

"Practice doing interviews with a friend."

What to bring to the interview

Bring copies of your résumé, letters of reference, and a list of references to the interview. Refer to your résumé and references when given the opportunity.

Many job seekers now have a portfolio which lists their accomplishments. If you bring the portfolio to the interview make sure you refer to it and don't leave it behind. "The achievements, goals, and awards listed in the portfolio can come in handy when describing your experiences," says Karina. "Take the initiative by showing the information at the right time during the interview. Don't assume they will ask you about it."

Follow up and ask for feedback

Thank the employer at the end of the interview. Also, send a thank-you note by e-mail within 24 hours to everyone who interviewed you.

Ask for feedback on your interview skills whether you get the job or not. "We all have our strengths and weaknesses and everyone can improve," says Karina. "Feedback is valuable information which will help for future job interviews."



For more information, visit www.skillscanada.com

Read more about the 2009 competitions on our blog at www.employmentjourney.com

Job search resources at your fingertips: It's never too late to apply

by Stella Shepard and Patricia Roy

You may be thinking that employers have done most of their summer hiring by now. But the reality is there may still be open positions in need of staff. So get in there and let them know you are interested!

There are many programs and resources available to help job seekers successfully connect with employers. Below is a list of resources from across the Island that provide help to job seekers.

Kingswood Centre Ltd. in Montague offers employment services such as needs assessment, case management, employment group service and support, and job coaching.

The target audience is clients with an intellectual disability who are in search of employment and wish to work about 20 hours a week.

Contact **Lori MacMillan** at 838-2516 or e-mail lori@kingswoodcentre.com or nancy@kingswoodcentre.com

This project is funded by the Canada/Prince Edward Island Labour Market Development Agreement (www.lmda.pe.ca)

PEI Council of People with Disabilities offers assistance with career decision making, skills enhancement, and job search including résumé and cover letter preparation, job maintenance, and pre-employment training. They also do direct marketing and job coaching.

Contact **Wendy Guindon**, Employment Manager at 892-9149 ext. 225.

They also offer a one day a week **Summer Transition Program** for graduating high school students. They will cover:

- job search techniques
- career assessment and planning
- employability skills
- life skills

Class sessions:

- Summerside: July 7 to August 25 call 436-9259
- Charlottetown: July 8 to August 26 call 892-9149 ex. 227

Kings County: **Judy MacLeod**, Employment Specialist, 838-5878

Queens County: **Patricia Allen**, Employment Specialist, 892-9149 ext. 226

Prince County: **Nancymarie Arsenault**, Employment Specialist, 436-9258

Visit www.peicod.pe.ca

This project is funded by the Canada/Prince Edward Island Labour Market Development Agreement (www.lmda.pe.ca)

Harbourview Training Center Inc.

in Souris provides a broad range of support services to clients with an intellectual disability. They offer skill enhancement programs, assist and support clients to gain meaningful employment in the community, and provide learning activities for individual skill development.

Contact **Judy Hennessey**, Executive Director, at 687-3032

Visit www.harbourviewtrainingcenter.ca

Active Communities Inc.

If you are unemployed, live in Eastern PEI and are thinking of starting a business, consider contacting Active Communities Inc. in Montague. This non-profit community and business development organization has information on business programs and services that may assist you with starting your own business.

For more information, call 838-4030 or toll free 1-800-953-4030.

This project is funded by the Canada/Prince Edward Island Labour Market Development Agreement (www.lmda.pe.ca)

Rural Community Learning manages three employment resource centres in West Prince. These facilitated resource centres offer unemployed individuals assistance with preparing a résumé, cover letter, and filling out work application forms. There is access to computers, photocopier and fax machine for employment purposes.

The Tignish centre is open year-round Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 4 pm Contact **Ruby Arsenault** at 882-2498.

The Alberton and St. Edwards locations are open Wednesdays 8 am to 4 pm during July and August.

In Alberton, contact **Valerie Gallant** at 853-2646

In St. Edwards, contact **Priscilla Handrahan** at 882-2352

The Rural Community Learning Employment Resource Centres are funded by the Canada/Prince Edward Island Labour Market Development Agreement (www.lmda.pe.ca)

Passport to Employment is a joint provincial and federal government strategy designed for Island workers ages 55-64 who wish to re-enter the workforce. Sessions are held across the province.

Training involves five weeks of classroom time. Participants enhance their résumé, cover letter and interview skills. Computer training is a large component of the program.

It is hoped that by the end of their training the majority of the class will have had an interview and have secured employment.

For further information, contact **Yvonne** at 620-3857 or **Melissa** at 620-3436.

This project is funded by the Canada/Prince Edward Island Targeted Initiatives for Older Workers.

PEI Career Development Services Inc.

provides

- Resource Centre with Internet access for job search, résumé work, and labour market research.
- Job Board
- Confidential one-on-one assistance with résumé and job search, research on training options, assistance with applications for funding.
- Confidential assistance with issues surrounding career, training and job search.

To be eligible for free services, individuals must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Unemployed
- Working less than 20 hours a week
- Expecting a lay-off notice
- Leaving job for medical reasons

Montague: 838-5485

Souris: 687-1526

Charlottetown: 626-2014

Bloomfield: 859-2776

Summerside: 436-0706

Wellington: 854-5456

Visit www.careerservicespe.com

PEI Career Development Services is funded by the Canada/Prince Edward Island Labour Market Development Agreement (www.lmda.pe.ca)


Job search resources at your fingertips: It's never too late to apply (continued)


Service Canada has a wide variety of services to help individuals find employment or develop their skills. Some of Service Canada's employment services include labour market information and job postings. Service Canada may provide financial support for eligible people interested in obtaining skills training.

 For more information, visit your local Service Canada Centre or check out the website at www.servicecanada.gc.ca

Service Canada Centres for Youth

(SCCYs) are for young people who require help in their job search, to complete a résumé, or to get labour market information. The Service Canada Centres for Youth are open from May to August. The SCCYs are staffed by Youth Services Officers who are themselves students. A Service Canada Centre for Youth is a great place to start for any young person looking for work.

 To find the nearest SCCY, visit www.servicecanada.gc.ca

 Call toll free **1-800-880-7823**

E-mail: ns-pe-sccy-cscj-gd@servicecanada.gc.ca

Inquiries will be sent directly to the nearest Service Canada Center for Youth.

Locations:

Charlottetown: Jean Canfield Building,
191 University Ave

Summerside: Government of Canada
Building, 294 Church Street


O'Leary: 371 Main Street

Montague: 491 Main Street

Souris: MacPhees's IGA Mall

Services provided to students include:

- Free access to computers
- Job postings from employers in your area
- Assistance with résumé, cover letters and interview skills
- Information on wage rates, Government of Canada programs and services, health & safety in the workplace and employment standards.

 Service Canada Student Job Bank at www.jobbank.gc.ca lists jobs available in your area. Be sure to check back often.

www.youth.gc.ca has great information for students and youth. The website features information about programs and services and covers topics such as jobs, education, salaries and careers. For more general information on career choices, visit www.pei.jobfutures.org

CAP Sites offer job seeking services such as access to computer programs designed to assist with résumé writing, access to desk top publishing to create job portfolios, and access to job banks and other related job search Internet sites. Fax machines are available to send résumés and job applications to potential employers.

	Afton Computer Resource Club	675-2842
	Alberton CAP Site	853-2720
	Atlantic Technology Centre	569-7600
	Borden-Carleton CAP Site	437-2225
	Breadalbane CAP Site	964-2520
	Cavendish CAP Site (Winter Location)	963-2698
	Centra Link (Bedeque)	887-3400
	Centre d'accès communautaire de Rustico	963-3252
	CIFTA Technologies (Wellington)	854-3398
	Confederation Centre Public Library	368-4642
	Conseil scolaire-communautaire Evangeline	854-2166
	Cornwall CAP Site	628-8633
	Crapaud CAP Site	658-2788
	Digital Innovations (Tignish)	882-2392
	East Prince Youth Development Centre	436-2815
	East Point CAP Site	687-7130
	Eastech Business Centre Cardigan	838-2509
	Eastern Kings Community Access	357-7225
	Fort Augustus Tech Centre	569-3802
	Future Tech West (O'Leary)	859-1962
	Georgetown CAP Site	652-2924
	Grand Tracadie CAP Site	672-7450
	Hunter River CAP Site	964-2800
	KenNet CAP Site (Kensington)	836-4003
	Kinkora Spud Net	887-3032
	La Belle Alliance (Summerside)	888-1681
	Montague CAP Site	838-2928
	Morell Region Community Learning Centre	961-2642
	Mount Stewart Discovery Centre	676-2881
	Murray Harbour CAP Site	962-3875
	North Rustico CAP Site	963-2323
	Reciprocity CAP Site (Bridgetown)	583-2885
	Rotary Regional Library CAP Site (Summerside)	436-7323
	Souris Community CAP	687-7083
	St. Peter's Bay CAP Site	961-3415
	St. Teresa's CAP Site	583-8597
	Tyne Valley CAP Site	831-3136

East Prince Youth Development


Centre is geared to youth 15 to 30 years of age. The centre provides support and assistance with:

- Résumé and cover letter writing
- Guidelines for doing an effective job search
- Job board (updated daily)
- Program referrals
- Free workshops
- Internet access/basic computer training
- Resource library
- Job referrals

Location: 223 Water Street, Summerside

Hours: year round from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.


Website: www.epydc.org

 To find out about workshops during the summer months, contact **Lila MacIsaac-Buchanan** at **436-2815**.

This project is funded by the Canada/Prince Edward Island Labour Market Development Agreement (www.lmda.pe.ca)

Community Inclusions Ltd.

provides employment, residential and training services to adults with intellectual challenges in western PEI. Some clients work for local businesses supported through the organization's Employment Unit, while others attend Vocational Services at the Maple House Centre and Bakery in O'Leary and at the Tignish Workshop. The organization also runs a residence in Tignish. The administration office is in Bloomfield.



 For more information, contact **Kevin Porter** at **853-3944** or visit www.communityinclusions.com

This project is funded by the Canada/Prince Edward Island Labour Market Development Agreement (www.lmda.pe.ca)

Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI Employment Services

operates three employment centres across the province:

- In Prince County, contact **Curtis Reilly** at **831-3245**
- In Queens County, contact **Betty Gordon** at **626-3834**
- In Kings County, contact **Fay MacLean** at **676-2353**

  For more information, call MCPEI at **436-5101** or visit www.mcpei.ca

The service is funded by The Government of Canada Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy.

Tips for writing résumés and cover letters

by Heidi Riley

Tips for writing résumés and cover letters were provided at the **Canadian Skills Competitions 2009**. The members of the **National Technical Committee (NTC)** for the job interview category provided their expertise.

They said frequently as little as a minute is spent screening each résumé and cover letter. You need to make it easy for them to see that you are a good candidate for the job.

They said to think of your résumé and cover letter as your advertisement about yourself. The interview is like an infomercial, where you have more time to go into detail.

General tips

- When sending a résumé and cover letter by e-mail, the formatting can become corrupted or changed from the original. This is especially true if pasting it into an e-mail. To ensure that the format remains unchanged, send your documents in PDF format, which is created using Adobe software. This format will remain stable when it is opened.
- It is very important to check spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Make sure you get the right spelling of the person you are addressing the letter to. Mistakes really stand out. It shows a lack of attention to detail.
- When including your e-mail address on your documents, make sure the name is appropriate. The e-mail address should show that you are a serious candidate for the job.

Cover letter tips

- Follow a business letter format. Include your contact information and the company you are applying for.
- The cover letter should not be more than one page and should have three paragraphs:

Paragraph #1 should state the job you are applying for.

Paragraph #2 is where you sell yourself. Match your skills to the qualifications listed in the job posting. Make it easy for the recruiter to see that you could do the job.

Paragraph #3 is where you thank the interviewer for their time and ask for an interview. Repeat your phone number to make it more convenient to locate.

Résumé tips

- Have a very clear idea of what skills are necessary for the job you are applying for. Tailor your résumé to show how your skills match the qualifications required.
- Include a job objective, and tailor it to make it relevant to the job applied for.
- A student with limited job experience can list courses that are relevant to the job.
- Highlight your skills: draw from your job, volunteering, babysitting or any other experiences.
- The résumé should be no more than two pages. Busy HR managers do not have time to read more. Save the details for the job interview.
- When listing work experience, use action words to describe your duties and accomplishments. e.g. "Assembled sandwiches to exacting quality standards."
- List your awards and highlight the skills you displayed to win the award.
- When listing your previous jobs, make sure the job titles accurately describe the job. Show how you can apply the skills learned in your previous jobs to the job you are applying for.
- If you are having trouble describing your previous jobs, check websites such as www.pei.jobfutures.org to get a detailed description of the duties and skills needed.
- Make sure the formatting is consistent throughout the résumé.

References

Take a printed list of three references to your job interview. Make sure your references include employers or supervisors from your previous jobs.

Before you give out your references, contact each person on the list to let them know they may be contacted by a recruiter.

Job interview competitor enjoys the challenge

Katie Gallant is a grade 12 student from **Westisle Composite High School**. She decided to enter the Job Interview Skills Competition after hearing about it in Career Futures Class.

"After I won gold for PEI, the judges from the provincial skills competition helped me prepare for the nationals. They went over my performance with me and offered tips on how to improve."

"Being interviewed feels really natural to me," she says. "I like being interviewed and answering questions. I usually find myself listening to others more than talking, so this competition gives me a chance to offer input."



Katie Gallant has worked at part-time jobs throughout high school. She plans to go to UPEI next year and study English and History.

Job interview advice from Katie

- Many people stress out when they are in a job interview. Don't worry. If you don't get this job, it's not the end of the world. There are more jobs out there. Remain calm.
- Be yourself. The interviewers will know if you are faking it.
- Dress appropriately. Shorts and a T-shirt won't cut it. You should dress up, but don't overdress. You need to be comfortable.

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Job skill demonstration takes the cake - or the pie

by Heidi Riley

The ability to demonstrate specific skills is important for school and for work. For example, presenting the findings of a project is often required throughout a student's academic life. On the job, you might need to give an update to a project team, make a sales presentation to a client, or pitch a proposal concept to your supervisor. This skill is important no matter what your career aspirations.

At the **Canadian Skills Competition 2009**, **Julia Riddle** from Guelph Ontario gave a pie baking demonstration that was done to perfection. She rolled through the competition and was awarded the Gold Medal in the Job Skill Demonstration category.

This grade 10 student from Centennial Collegiate Vocational Institute says that skilled trades are very important - they are the engine that keeps society running.

"Three years ago, my grandmother taught me how to bake a pie. Pie baking seems like a dying art, and it's important to keep those skills alive by sharing them with the next generation," says Julia. "During my demonstrations, I ask who in the audience can make a pie, and less than half says they can. With all the convenience food available, I feel we are losing the ability to feed ourselves.

"Making traditional food from scratch is a celebration of culture. The skills involved in making food can

be shared, and specific foods are one of the things that determines your identity."

Skills learned

"Making pies and following a recipe taught me about paying attention to detail," says Julia. "It's the little things that make a good pie - like not rolling the dough too hard, because that makes a tough crust."

This competition also taught her about organization. All the ingredients and tools needed for the demonstration had to be transported to the competition on Prince Edward Island. She even baked pies in advance to pass out to the judges and the audience. The pies were heating while she gave the demonstration. The smell of apples and cinnamon probably helped to put her over the top in the competition.

Julia did a great deal of fund raising to earn the money for the trip to PEI. She made at least 40 pies and sold them at school. "The teachers were really supportive, and I appreciate their help," says Julia.

"I made more money than I needed to cover my part of the trip expenses, and I've decided to donate the remainder of the money back to the school. The school's environmental projects need funding for a vegetable garden and for a green roof."



Julia Riddle won gold for the Job Skill Demonstration category of the Canadian Skills Competitions 2009. She made this pie during the demonstration.

Career plans

"I'm not sure what I want to do in the future," says Julia. "I don't think I want to bake pies for a living. But I liked the business aspects - selling, marketing, doing spreadsheets, finances, and management. This competition taught me many of the skills needed to run my own business. I might keep the business going, because I still have more orders to fill when I get back home. Pie baking is a skill I want to keep."

Skills/Compétences Canada offers skilled trades and technology competitions at the regional, provincial/territorial, national and international levels, as well as other awareness programs. The organization actively promotes careers in skilled trades and technologies to Canadian youth.

For more information, visit www.skillscanada.com