

The Employment Journey

Please take one

PEI's Top Source for Career Planning and Job Seeking

Fresh tips for successful job seeking by Heidi Riley

In April, the Career Development Association of PEI Inc. held a conference which focused on Fresh Career Initiatives on PEI. The audience consisted of about 70 career counsellors, practitioners, and others who work directly or indirectly with people who are looking for work or planning a career.

For more about the Career Development Association on PEI Inc., visit www.peicda.ca 

The following three speakers gave great job search tips:

Social media for job seekers

Maureen Kerr,
Kerr Consulting



“Word-of-mouth is the most common way of getting a job,” says Maureen. “Social media is word-of-mouth on steroids.”

“Social media means engaging others with conversations, sharing information, and offering value with pictures, words, and video. Job seekers can use social media to network and share information. Employers are using social media to recruit.”

Start with popular social media sites

facebook is used by about 48 percent of Canadians. Job seekers can use it to create a community and share information. Employers are using facebook to spread the word about job opportunities.

LinkedIn is a social networking site for professionals. It's a place to present your resumé and an on-line portfolio of your work.

twitter is an excellent tool for networking and marketing. Job seekers can use it to market themselves. Recruiters often use twitter to post jobs.

Suggestions for using social media

1. **Be careful** with the messages you send. If you are thinking about posting a comment or a picture that your grandmother wouldn't approve of, don't do it.
2. **Link** your twitter, facebook, and personal blog to present a complete profile of your activities, credentials, and opinions.
3. **Google yourself!** What will people find when they Google you? Before a job interview, many employers will search your name on-line. This could either jeopardize your job chances or impress them with your professionalism.

For more information, visit www.yourmarketingmavens.com

To watch a video on **Social Media for Job Seekers**, visit www.employmentjourney.com



Company's hiring tips

Darrin Mitchell,
Manager of Trout River Industries in Coleman



This company manufactures, distributes, and sells a unique type of trailer. They have 55 employees. Job titles include **Sales, Accounting, Engineering, Service, Welding, Machining, Painting, Plumbing, Shipping/Receiving, and Finishing.**

“Hiring staff is a double edged sword,” says Darrin. “If we expect to find great employees, we need to be great employers. As a company we treat people the way we want to be treated. We offer training programs, medical/dental coverage, family days, RSP contributions, work boots, and local discounts. I know everyone's name, we eat in the same lunch room, and I remember their birthdays. Everyone's job is important.”

When applying for work

“When people apply for work with us, they should be aware of the impression they make and that we are watching them carefully to find out everything we can about them. One small thing can make or break a job offer.

“For example, if I see you pull into a disabled parking space just because it's the closest spot, I already know how you will act on the job. If you flick your cigarette butt in front of our door, it gives a negative impression. Our staff need to care about the little things, because that means they will care about the big ones.”

“If you don't get a job you apply for, ask yourself how the employer may have seen you.”

Darrin Mitchell, Manager.

For more information, visit www.troutriverindustries.ca



Putting your best foot forward



Margaret Gallant, Fresh Image 360

“You never get a second chance to make a first impression,” says Margaret. “People develop their first impression of someone in just seven seconds. Appearance comes first, then body language and voice. Ask yourself what your image and energy presents to the employer.

“Be comfortable with your positive qualities, and understand where you are not so comfortable. What you think of yourself is vital to your relationship with others.”

Professionalism: what is it?

“Project a professional image in how you look, speak, write, act, and treat others. Your attitude colours everything you do.”

Tool kit for a job interview

- well groomed - but no perfume
- shirt with collar - no golf shirts, no logos
- dress pants or skirt
- a fitted jacket is your best investment
- clean shoes
- wear a top with colour
- minimal jewelry
- a scarf will complete the outfit
- dress to inspire, not to intimidate.

For more information, visit <http://freshimage360.blogspot.com>



Not just a job...a career

Employer describes what he looks for when hiring an employee

by John Arenburg

Bill Martin, a native Islander, has spent his working career in retail, marketing, seminar training, curriculum development, self employment, and helping youth to start their own businesses.

In 1988, he purchased the **Water Street Bakery & Deli** in Summerside and began an entrepreneurship training business at the same time. The bakery employs **16** full-time and **five** part-time staff. When he interviews prospective employees, he says that he likes to see people express the attitude that they are not just after a job, they are looking for a career.



Bill Martin, Owner/Operator of Water Street Bakery & Deli in Summerside.

Bill gives us his insight on what works when hiring an employee.

Informational interview

Bill suggests that job seekers make an appointment to speak to the employer to find out more about the company, the present staff, and future needs for workers. "The informational interview is a very powerful tool," says Bill. "Every single time I have advised someone to use this technique, they got a job."

Resumé or application

"If someone takes the time to identify who the resumé should be directed to, drafts a cover letter, and addresses it to that person's attention, I will look it through," says Bill. "Otherwise, it may never be seen."

Resumé tips

- Should be up to date
- Free from grammatical errors
- Clean and uncluttered
- Explain any employment gaps
- Include past employer references.

Cover letter tips

- Identify yourself
- State why you are writing
- State your qualifications
- Include contact information.

Body language

"When a job candidate comes in for an interview, I watch their body language," says Bill. "If they seem to have this 'can't get out of my own way' gait, that is not an employee I am going to hire. Gait refers to the way they carry themselves."

Interview tips

- Present yourself well. Consider the impression made by your clothes and appearance
- Your handshake should be firm but not too firm
- Walk and carry yourself with confidence
- Be prepared to talk about yourself
- Your answers should be honest and forthright
- Take a moment to consider your response to each question
- Prepare some questions to ask the employer
- Know something about the company or position you are applying for
- Do your homework.

Bottom line

"There are two key qualities I look for in an employee: **dependability** and **attitude**," says Bill. "Skills can be taught, but it is extremely difficult to change your attitude. After everything else checks out, I go with my gut and my intuition when deciding who to hire."

Advice from a recruiting firm

by Heidi Riley

Island Recruiting in Charlottetown provides tailored recruitment services to their clients, helping them find suitable candidates for position vacancies. They advertise, screen, and interview job seekers who respond to advertised positions.



Ashlee London, Recruiting Consultant for Island Recruiting.

"A job posting can attract hundreds of applicants," says Ashlee. "To make sure you stand out, provide information that will make the recruiter's job easier. When applying, follow the submission details."

The resumé

"The resumé should be well organized and clear," says Ashlee. "Ask someone to proofread your resumé to check for clarity, spelling errors, and typos. Or get help to write your resumé from a professional. Avoid a cluttered resumé. You want to share enough information to capture the reader's attention, but not too much because the important information could get missed at first glance."

The cover letter

This should be tailored to each job you apply for. Introduce yourself and highlight your relevant work experience and express why you are a good fit for the advertised position.

Applying

Pay attention and adhere to the submission details. If responding by e-mail, always include content in the body of your e-mail. Tailor this information to the specific position and company. This indicates you have thoroughly read the job description and researched the company. Never submit your resumé to multiple employers with one e-mail."

Make sure the resumé, cover letter and e-mail message is free of spelling errors and typos. Read, re-read, and use spell-check before pressing send!

The call

When you get a call from the employer, give the employer 100 percent of your attention. If there is noise in the background, ask if you can call them back.

Preparing for the interview

Before the interview, brainstorm challenging situations you have faced at previous jobs and how you resolved them successfully. Also, research the company and prepare a few questions.

The interview

- Always bring a copy of your resumé with you. Introduce yourself with a firm handshake.
- Show you are engaged by maintaining eye contact.
- Dress professionally. It's better to be overdressed than underdressed.
- If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification. Pause to organize your thoughts before you answer.
- Focus on your strengths and provide examples.
- Let your personality shine through and be yourself.

At the end of the interview, give another firm handshake, smile, and thank the interviewer for their time.

The references

Bring a copy of three references to the interview. The first two can be from former employers or people you worked with. The third can be a personal reference from someone who knows you outside the workplace. Make sure your references know you will be listing them.

Job seekers can visit www.islandrecruiting.com to find a list of current position vacancies.

Island Recruiting maintains a confidential database of resumé to match candidates with current and future vacancies with their clients.

Kings county tourism business outlines what they look for when hiring

by Stella Shepard

Rodd Hotels & Resorts look forward to another successful year as they recruit workers and maintain staff. About 140 employees are hired seasonally in Kings County at **Rodd Crowbush Golf & Beach Resort** and at **Rodd Brudenell River Resort**.

“Treating staff very well and providing training opportunities are the reasons why we are successful in maintaining employees,” says **Mary Lou**. “Many of the staff are returned seasonal workers. However, we are presently seeking a **Night Bell Person** and **Food & Beverage** staff at our Crowbush location.”



Mary Lou MacFarlane, Human Resources Manager, Rodd Hotels & Resorts.

Q & A with Mary Lou

Q: What do you look for when reading a resumé or a job application?

A: We look for some experience in customer service, good grammar and spelling, and a clear indication of what job is being applied for.

Q: How important is a resumé in the selection process?

A: A resumé is very important because it is my first introduction to the individual. I like to see contact information, a clear objective, and a list of any education or certifications that the candidate may have. Work experience should be listed chronologically with the most current first, and references should be included.

Q: How much detail should the resumé include?

A: It is best to keep things simple, one or two pages at the most. If the resumé is too wordy, it takes too much time to read through.

Q: How important is a cover letter with an application?

A: Entry level jobs do not need a cover letter, but any supervisory positions should have one. A cover letter should be no more than three paragraphs. It should briefly state what position is being applied for, and why you think you would be a great candidate for this job. As well, provide your contact information.

Q: What do you look for when meeting candidates in an interview?

A: I like to see a neat professional appearance because first impressions do matter. I'm impressed by someone who is knowledgeable about the company and the position applied for.

Q: What else is important when applying for a job?

A: **Do** include your current contact information on the application or resumé. Follow up to see if your resumé was received. If you apply for another job posting, send your resumé again.

Don't send an e-mail without a resumé attached.

Don't send a generic cover letter. Make sure it is tailored to the job.

Check to make sure you have addressed it to the right person.

For more information about employment with **Rodd Hotels & Resorts**, contact **Mary Lou MacFarlane** at 629-2328.

Visit www.roddvacations.com/careers



The hiring process at Sobeys

by Heidi Riley

Sobeys Inc. has grocery store locations across Canada, and, closer to home, in Charlottetown, Summerside, Montague and Stratford.

Stephanie Forsythe, Director of Human Resources and Store Experience, Sobeys Atlantic, spoke to *The Employment Journey* from Sobeys' Regional Office in Stellarton, Nova Scotia.



“Most job openings are posted at www.sobeyscareers.com

“Occasionally, jobs are also posted on a sign inside the store. If we are hiring a large number of people for a new store, we might hold a job fair.”

Tips from Stephanie for applying

For jobs posted on-line, e-mail your resumé and cover letter through the website. The cover letter should be specifically tailored to the job posting. Show that you have an understanding of the job you are applying for. Include the job title and explain how your skills, education and experience make you a good fit for the role. The more specific you are, the better.

The resumé should not be “fluffy” with a lot of details which do not relate to the position applied for. Don't list everything you can do, but instead connect your job experience, education, and volunteer experience to the skills needed for this particular job. A page or a page and a half is sufficient, and include only the relevant facts that relate to the job.

As well, list your job history and how long you worked in each position.

The interview

Job applicants are generally interviewed by one of the department managers in the store.

Before the job interview, think about the job you are applying for. What skills does a person need to do that job? How do your skills, education, work and volunteer experience make you a good fit for that job?

During the interview, take a moment to think about how to best answer each question. Don't be afraid of silence. It's better to pause and deliver a well thought-out answer than to give a quick response.

When the interviewer asks if you have any questions, you could ask if you will receive any training. This shows that you are looking beyond doing just a job, and that you care about doing the job well.

Let the interviewer know if you have any extracurricular activities that will require time off or if you can't work certain times of the day. Then you will both know if the job will fit your lifestyle. Don't ask about how much you will get paid until you receive a job offer.

References

Include references with your resumé when you apply. List names, contact information, and their connection to you in the workplace. Make sure you ask permission to use them as a reference, and make sure they will be able to talk about your strengths. Students with limited or no work history can list a teacher, volunteer organization, or coach - but not a family member.

Standing out from the crowd

“Don't use coloured paper or hard-to-read fonts,” says Stephanie. “The content of the resumé and cover letter will make you stand out. Present the facts clearly and concisely.

“During the interview, show your enthusiasm, high energy, and sincere interest in the role. Show that you care about getting the job, and that you are excited about working for us.”

Job postings can be found at www.sobeyscareers.com

Life after forty

by John Arenburg

The gym at the Boys & Girls Club in Summerside was full as many friends and family joined in congratulating the accomplishments of 87 students from the **Holland College Adult Education (AE)** program.

In May, 11 students received Level Certificates, 37 completed their GEDs, 47 earned High School Credits and two students received their PEI High School Graduation Certificates for Mature Students.



Karen McNally Sullivan was the student speaker at the Summerside Adult Education program recognition ceremony.

An inspirational story

Karen McNally Sullivan was the student speaker at this year's event. Karen says, "Like many people, I was looking for a change in life. I certainly had no idea that a year and a half ago I would be traveling down a new path in my own life."

Periodically throughout her life, Karen thought about going back to school and doing something that would really make her feel like getting out of bed in the morning. "I wanted to do something that would help others," she says. She would give the idea some thought and then dismiss it because going back to school full time didn't seem possible.

One door closes, another one opens

A family illness, combined with her workplace closing, became the catalyst that would open Karen's eyes to a profession she never thought she could do.

At Karen's age, over 40, she viewed going back to school as a huge leap of faith. She researched the **Practical Nursing** program and found the potential for employment here on PEI was promising. This meant Karen would have to go back to school to upgrade her grade 12 and study subjects like algebra and chemistry that scared her in her high school years.

Don't let fear hold you back

Karen had many fears: the fear of failing, the fear of not having an income, and the fear of going back to school. But that was not her biggest fear. "I was afraid that life was passing me by."

She was able to overcome her fears with the help of some guidance from her mom, her boy friend, and from **PEI Career Development Services** and **SkillsPEI**. Now she has been accepted into the Practical Nursing program at Holland College and is fulfilling her dream.

Her strength comes from her children

by John Arenburg

Holland College Adult Education (AE) recognition ceremonies are an opportunity for family and friends to celebrate the efforts and great strides the students have made in their academic achievements given all the barriers they may face.

In May, the Westisle Adult Education Centre highlighted the achievements of students from Westisle, O'Leary, and Tignish centres. Of the 35 students, 15 earned high school credits and 20 received certificates from the GED Preparation Program.



Kathy DesRoches was the student speaker at the Westisle Adult Education program recognition ceremony.

Kathy speaks from the heart

Kathy DesRoches has completed an English credit and is on her way to the Holland College Practical Nursing program.

"My children Katie-Shyanne and Chantel have always been my strength," says Kathy. As part of her address to the audience, she shared a poem she wrote about her oldest daughter Chantel, who was tragically killed in a car accident at the age of 17.

Education is like money

"Education was not always important to me until I had my children," says Kathy. "For the last 20 years, I have returned to school for different reasons, either for upgrading or for different interests that I thought may be useful in the future."

"Education is like money. You can never have too much of it."

Kathy shared this poem written for her daughter

Our Time

by **Kathy DesRoches**

Our time is spent chatting,
Never a boring word.
Chats are sometimes short but sometimes long,
Without a word from you.
You still give me great strength,
Strength I know now that I got from you.
You were so strong at the tender age of 17,
Your smile so bright,
A smile I will never forget.
So for now our time is spent apart,
But someday we will share it together.
Until then our time together will be spent here,
Me talking to you, you giving me all the answers I need,
And you're not saying a word,
My Butterfly.

For more information about the **Adult Education** program, contact the central office at **566-9628** or **1-800-446-5265** and press 3.



Check the website for Calendar of Events - July to Sept

The Employment Journey is a monthly publication available to residents and businesses of PEI. The publication is produced by Gloria Welton. Funding for The Employment Journey is provided by the Canada/Prince Edward Island Labour Market Development Agreement.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Canada, the Government of Prince Edward Island or the Publication Manager.

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