

Cracking the Island's hidden job market

Submitted by Korrena Keizer, Employment Consultant

Job Search

In today's job market, most jobs are not advertised. They are filled by people who heard about the opportunity or by job seekers who contact the employer directly to ask if there are any openings.

Self-marketing is the key when it comes to tapping into the Island's hidden job market. Job seekers must know specifically what type of job they are looking for, their skill set and accomplishments. They must tailor their resumés and cover letters to the job, and follow up with their contacts. Conveying confidence is crucial because if you believe in yourself and your qualifications, employers will too.



Korrena Keizer

Self marketing tools

Networking, elevator speeches, calling cards, and informational interviews are all effective forms of self-marketing.

Networking is a way of increasing your chances of hearing about suitable opportunities. Networking means telling everyone you know and meet that you are looking for work. Contacts could be family, friends, school instructors, social groups, former colleagues, employers or people you do business with. These people know other people and some of them have inside information about jobs.

Elevator speeches are quick introductions to make when meeting new contacts. You need to be able to clearly explain what you do and what you are looking for in less than 50 words.

Calling cards are a great tool to hand out in situations where your resumé is not feasible or when you encounter an unplanned networking opportunity. This card looks like a business card. It lists critical career and contact information in a quick and easy-to-read way. It provides a summary of your objectives, skills, and experience, and is a great memory cue to help your contacts keep you in mind. Calling cards leave a lasting impression.

Informational interviews matter because there is an entire world of unadvertised (hidden) jobs which may be right for you. Research indicates that less than 25 percent of all jobs are advertised. You can often find out about non-advertised jobs by talking to as many people as possible.

An informational interview is a 15 to 20 minute conversation with someone in your field of interest. The objective is to get another great lead, leave your resumé, find out what is going on in the labour market in your field, and build a new relationship with a new contact. You are getting advice, information, possibly your next network contact, and in some cases a job offer. Although this opportunity is not asking for a job, sometimes job offers happen as a result of setting this up.

Statistics say that one out of every 12 informational interview result in a job either with who you spoke to directly or a contact they gave you. Informational interviews are the ultimate networking technique.

Job seekers should keep track of contacts and follow up each lead. Always thank everyone in your network, preferably with a thank you letter. It is common courtesy to show your appreciation for their time and assistance, plus your contacts will no doubt remember your good manners.

Be prepared to wait as you uncover the hidden job market. The results may not be immediate but they may lead to employment.

Kings County Job Fair connects job seekers and employers

by Stella Shepard



Shannon Keenan and Pam MacDonald of Harmony Training Center are busy planning the 4th annual Kings County Trades Expo & Job Fair.

Where: Cavendish Farms Wellness Centre in Montague

When: Thursday, April 15 - 10 am to 3:30 pm

Job seekers will have opportunities to:

- ✓ Meet with career counsellors.
- ✓ Introduce themselves to potential employers.
- ✓ Talk to representatives from many sectors.
- ✓ Listen to guest speakers who will focus on the labour market.

Who should attend?

"The fair is open to the general public," says event organizer **Shannon Keenan** of **Harmony Training Center** in Souris. "Our primary target audience is youth searching for employment or seeking labour market information. We are focusing on the trades and technology sectors as well as other employment opportunities."

The following tips can help you make the most of your Job Fair experience.

Before the Job Fair:

- ✓ **Create a resumé and bring copies with you.** This will save you time and show employers you are serious about seeking employment. If you don't have an up-to-date resumé, there will be help available at the event to help create one.
- ✓ **Prepare some questions to ask the recruiters.** You might ask how long he/she has been with the company or what they like about working there.
- ✓ **Prepare and practice responses to typical interview questions.** Some common questions are:
 - What job experience do you have?
 - When would you be available to work?
 - What would you really like to do in life?

During the Job Fair:

- ✓ Check the list of employers attending the Fair. Then visit the booths you are most interested in first.
- ✓ Make a good first impression: be courteous, positive and polite.
- ✓ Don't leave the booth without getting contact information for follow-up.
- ✓ Take a few minutes after each meeting to make notes about your conversation.

After the Job Fair:

- ✓ Organize all your contact information, including business cards, notes you made, and any literature you picked up from the booths.
- ✓ Decide on a follow-up plan.
- ✓ Write thank-you notes to recruiters who you plan to follow up with.

This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada.

For more information or to book a booth, call **Shannon Keenan** at **687-2458** or e-mail info@jobandcareerfair.com

Check out details about the event at www.jobandcareerfair.com

