

Connecting job seekers with employers (continued)

Job seekers praise event:



"This event is a great way to see what my options are for work on PEI," says **Graham Smith**, who is in his second year of the Computer Information Systems program at Holland College.

"This is a great way to get a snap shot of the employment opportunities on PEI," says **Lisa Murphy**. Lisa has 20 years of experience in the IT sector, and is upgrading her skills at the Business Information Systems program at Holland College.



"This is a fast way of meeting a large number of employers," says **Hesam Fatahi**, who is in the Computer Science program at UPEI.

"Working in the IT sector is a never-ending journey of learning," says **Ken Tran**. He moved to PEI from Ontario three years ago, and is updating his IT skills at the Business Information Systems program at Holland College.



Other companies at the event looking to hire

DeltaWare Systems is looking for a Junior Programmer and a Junior Database Administrator. Visit www.deltaware.com

Timeless Medical Systems is looking to fill three spring/summer Software Engineer positions.

Timeless Technologies and **Timeless Professional Services** are also hiring for the following positions: sales, marketing, project management and software development. Visit www.timelessmedical.com

Cogsdale Corporation has the following positions that are suited to a new graduate: Junior Developer, Junior Consultant, and Software Quality Analyst. Visit www.cogsdale.com to review current open positions.

For more information, contact the **Innovation Technology Sector Council** at 566-3988 or visit www.itsc.ca

To check job listings for IT positions on PEI, visit www.peijoblink.ca and click IT/New Media.

Long-standing call centre expands workforce

by Heidi Riley

IT Jobs

On-Line Support (OLS) is a call centre company that began on PEI in 1993. The company has two sites on PEI, four in Nova Scotia, and three in Ontario. They currently employ about 1,750 people, with 225 in Charlottetown, 175 in Montague, and 22 people at the corporate office in Charlottetown.

OLS is looking to add at least 100 people across the two sites on PEI in the next three to six months. Both full-time and part-time opportunities are available.

"The effects of the recession last year saw many companies closing, downsizing, or freezing wages, but at OLS it was one of our best years," says **Kathy Follett-Lloyd**, Senior Director, Human Resources. "We opened a new centre in



Timmins Ontario. We launched a new employee reward and recognition program. Everyone who was eligible received a merit increase, and we enhanced our health, dental, and vision benefit package."

Recruitment and retention strategies

Kathy says their most successful way to find new employees is by referrals from current employees. OLS also advertises in the newspaper and on the radio. They collaborate with community partners such as local employment placement offices. They also participated in the **Passport to Employment** program. "We find that candidates from employment programs have a strong work ethic and motivation, and they make very valuable employees."

Positions

The majority of the positions at OLS are **Technical Support Agents** and **Non-Technical Customer Service Agents**. Some other positions include **Team Leader**, **Quality Assurance Associate**, **Lead Associate**, **Analyst-Workforce Management**, **Trainer**, **HR Manager**, **IT Manager**, **Site Director** and **Operations Manager**. About 90 percent of those employees started at the agent level.

Training

New associates are given training that can range from two to five weeks, depending on the program. "We want to make sure agents have time to thoroughly learn the program and feel confident when communicating with callers," says Kathy.

Qualifications

"Depending on the program, we look for people with a high school diploma or comparable upgrading, customer service experience, and basic familiarity with computers. Some programs require more technical experience, but as long as someone has the basic skills, we can teach the rest."

Bilingualism is an asset. "On the Island, we find our biggest challenge is meeting the bilingual requirements of our clients," says Kathy.

Wages

"Wages depend on the program you are in, and whether you are bilingual," says Kathy. "As a rule, associates start training at \$9.50 per hour. When training is completed, there is a raise in wages. Agents receive at least two performance-based increases in the first year. After that, they get an annual merit raise based on performance. Most earn above \$10 per hour after the first year. They may join the benefits program after three months."

Depending on the site and the program, hours of work run from 9 am to 1 am.

Long-term employee recognized

Bethany Broderick started in Charlottetown as a Customer Support Agent. While going to university, she worked part-time during the school year and full-time during the summer. She transferred to the Dartmouth location in 2002.

"I moved to the new site because as one of the first agents, I saw an opportunity to eventually move into a different role," says Bethany. "I became an **Operations Supervisor** and then a **Team Leader** where I managed a group of customer service representatives. I went on to become a **Recruiter**, and then I moved into the **Human Resource Generalist** role."

Two years ago, when she started a family, she wanted to move back home. After she returned from maternity leave, she was offered another promotion, and is now **Corporate HR Business Partner**. "One of the things I love most about working here is every manager I've had has supported my goals," says Bethany.



Bethany Broderick was recently recognized as one of about 30 OLS employees who have worked for the company for more than 10 years.

Apply on-line at www.onlinesupport.com, drop off a resumé at 82 Hillstrom Ave., Charlottetown or e-mail info_ols@onlinesupport.com