



## Your Employment Plan: Beginning the Job Search Process

1. Set a long-term and short-term career goal. Prepare an employment plan with steps to reach your goal. Decide what job you want in Canada. How can you get there?

- Think of one to three job titles/targets you can do right away without requiring further training or experience, or requiring really minimum training. These may be entry-level positions in your industry/field or even unrelated positions in which you could still earn not only an income but practice valuable skills that will support your career in the future.
- Do not spend too much time not working and waiting for jobs to come. Employers in Canada pay much more attention to experience and to candidates who are active, even if this means working in unrelated jobs. Being currently employed means you are healthy, eager and employable. And it counts toward Canadian experience!

2. Research what skills and qualifications employers are looking for in your field. Find a posting for a job you'd like and make sure you have the right qualifications and skills. If not, add steps to your employment plan to develop your skill set.

- Read job postings carefully, not only the requirements but also the job description and the responsibilities. Read, when possible, about the organization who is hiring. This will give you a better understanding of the market and the jobs
- With a coloured highlighter, underline the aspects of job postings that you don't understand or feel that your skills and experiences are a weak match. This exercise will help you to figure out whether you are targeting the right jobs or whether you may need to upgrade your skills
- With a different colour, highlight or underline the aspects on job postings where you think you have strong skills and experience to offer. This will help you to tailor your resumés and cover letters, focusing on those skills.
- Make sure to customize your resume for every job posting, keeping in mind the key words, requirements and qualifications used in the job description.
- Keep track of all of your job applications to make things easier to manage, including the date of submittal, company, company contact information, the company representative/hiring manager, when you followed up, what job position you applied for, etc. (excel works well).
- Select training and seminars strategically so you can improve your skills while meeting other professionals and potential employers.
- Do not delay credential assessment and recognition. If your trade or profession is regulated, the earlier you start the process with the regulatory body, the better.

3. Learn about the hiring process of different companies. Strategize to network and connect with employers using email or LinkedIn while still overseas. What company would you like to work for?



Attend networking events such as a Newcomers Club to meet with local employers once arrived to Canada. There are many associations and clubs that lend the opportunity to network.

- Cold calling or informational interviewing are great techniques to contact company contacts to ask them questions about the company and other information.

4. Find a mentor. Use social media and existing professional groups, associations and networking events to connect with potential mentors who can introduce you to people, guide your steps, review your resumé and provide references. Always remember that this is a reciprocal game; don't ask for more than what you are willing to give.

5. Seek volunteer opportunities in your field to better understand the Canadian workplace and gain local references.

Find a local organization looking for volunteers and gain experience in your community. Not only will you learn about workplace culture in Canada, but if you work hard, you will also gain a reference.

6. Learn to market yourself. Be ready to convince the employer you are the right candidate for the job. Prepare for a job interview and learn how to explain to employers your accomplishments and successes at work.

- Use the STAR technique
- Find out the do's and don'ts when going to an interview
- Register with an employment service provider to get help with your interview skills and practice by doing mock interviews
- Think outside the box: the old model of working 40+ years for the same company until you retire is becoming extinct. Consider part-time and contracts and be ready to relocate!
- Think even broader: why not become a social entrepreneur? The community where you are settling in may have unmet needs and potential for self-employment, small business and even co-operatives, where you join other professionals to create jobs for yourselves and others and support the local economy.