

Finding the right career path

BY BOB WEINSTEIN,
Troy Media Corporation

KNOWING that companies are hiring again is meaningless if you're unsure about which career path to take. Everyone knows dabblers who have tried their hands at countless jobs yet never settled permanently into one they really love.

There are many reasons for job wanderlust. Often, it stems from impatience. The result is never sticking around long enough to give a job a chance and to find the reasons why you like or hate a job.

If you fall into that vague career zone, don't consider it a personal failing. If it's any consolation, you have plenty of company. Nevertheless, it's a frustrating place to be, especially now that the job market in most industries is looking better every day.

Last year, the job market was in pretty bad shape, and future prospects looked grim indeed. Today, many tech companies are rebounding at a remarkable pace, and new ones are revving up just as quickly.

NO BETTER TIME TO GET ON THE STICK

If your career has been limping along and you're barely making ends meet, there is no better time to put yourself on the right track. The one thing you want to avoid is randomly applying to dozens of jobs on national job boards. That's as fruitless as spitting into the wind. You might land a job or an assignment, but what good is it if it leads nowhere?

Few of us are fortunate enough to be able to knock off for six months or a year in order to find a career we love. But, with some planning and belt-tightening, consider coasting on a modest salary that covers your costs so you can free up time in the evenings and on weekends to explore the career marketplace.



WHERE TO BEGIN

Unsure or confused about what career path to strike off on? The tried-and-true process of elimination is a proven way to begin. Make a list of all the jobs you've had over the past three years, and immediately eliminate the ones you hated. Of the remaining ones, which ones would you go back to and try again because they weren't given a fair chance? Even if nothing comes of it, it's a place to start.

EDUCATION, INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCE LEAD TO OPPORTUNITY

Once you have some direction, begin the search. In no particular order, the keys opening the doors to opportunity are education, information and experience.

- **Education.** Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation chief economist Jack Kyser says that the pulse of the career marketplace can be accurately taken by plugging into courses, degree programs and certificate programs taught at community colleges. "Community-college training programs and

courses are often fashioned around employers' needs," says Kyser.

Also explore online training programs. The amount of free material available online is staggering. You're foolish not to take advantage of it.

- **Information.** Tap everything available – friends, print newspapers and endless online newspapers and e-zines.
- **Experience.** What better way to test different jobs or companies than by registering with a temporary staffing company and pursuing short-term assignments? If you have easily marketable skills, the work will practically come to you, says Kyser. "Most employers are looking for good communicators who can read, write and who also have basic computer skills. Bilingual candidates have an edge."

MAKE NO ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT MARKETPLACE

Approach it with an open mind and positive attitude. The only thing you can count on is change. This is particularly true of technology jobs. Stick to what's hot. In IT, you can't go wrong pursuing networking and security jobs. Organizations are all about keeping their employees connected. That spells constant demand for project managers and network and software engineers, to name a few.

Small company, large company? All organizations, regardless of size, are hiring. Small ones are desperate for fast learners who can do everything. If you are a quick study and willing to work hard, pursue high-potential small companies with under 100 employees.

PACK YOUR BAGS

It often pays to travel when opportunity knocks. It could mean a long commute at first, and possibly a relocation later on. It might be worth your while to seriously consider relocation should a special job surface. Do you want to risk passing up a great opportunity, counting on something better coming along? You could wind up regretting your decision.

Labour minister meets with business and union leaders

THE HONOURABLE Lisa Raitt, Canada's new Minister of Labour, spoke with key labour stakeholders to seek their views on important labour issues and take suggestions in preparation for Phase II of Canada's Economic Action Plan. Meetings took place with the Canadian Bankers Association (CBA), the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and the Federally Regulated Employers – Transportation and Communications (FETCO), representing a large majority of Canada's federally regulated employees.

"These discussions have been fruitful and productive by focussing on the next steps of our economic recovery and the current issues in today's workforce," said Minister Raitt. "Hearing these views and suggestions firsthand will help us build a strong foundation

for our economic future, ensuring jobs and prosperity for Canada."

The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that Canadian workplaces remain fair, safe, productive and cooperative environments that contribute to Canada's prosperity and the well-being of workers and their families. Canada's Economic Action Plan has taken extraordinary and unprecedented action to help Canadian workers weather the economic conditions. The Government has provided more Employment Insurance benefits, greater training opportunities and better supports for employees and employers.

Source: The Government of Canada

Source: Troy Media