



EMPLOYMENT TIPS

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EAMONN O' LOGHLIN IRISH CANADIAN IMMIGRATION CENTER, TORONTO
("I/CAN")
CONSOLIDATED SUMMARY – WEEKLY EMPLOYMENT TIPS
DEVELOPED BY - GERRY O'CONNOR

TIP #1: NETWORKING

Whatever your occupation, the most effective way to find a job in Canada is by NETWORKING. Networking means that you a) focus on your target employment area and b) identify multiple personal contacts in that area. This is difficult during Corona. However, once you identify a contact send a personalized email with your resume and ask the person if he/she knows of any suitable openings. Other new arrivals can help you identify contacts.

TIP #2: GETTING READY FOR YOUR JOB SEARCH

Certain Canadian recruitment processes are different from recruitment processes in Ireland. It is important that you educate yourself about these differences **before you start your search** so that you do not lose an employment opportunity i.e. either before you arrive in Canada or immediately upon arrival or if you are re-entering the Canadian workforce during Covid. To help you, there are excellent employment resource materials on the I/CAN website <http://www.irishcanadianimmigrationcentre.org/> Essential Guides / Employment / Networking in Canada / Employment Preparation / Cover Letter & Resume Preparation & Templates. See also the Covid-19 section / Employment during Covid-19. If you follow these guidelines, your chances of finding a long-term career opportunity will increase.

TIP #3: FOUR KEY CANADIAN INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Many Canadian interviewers ask four key questions during an interview: 1. Tell me about your visa? 2. Tell me about your Canadian work experience? 3. How much money are you looking for? 4. How do you like living in (Canada or City)?

As a test, first answer these questions yourself and then compare your answers with the suggested right and wrong answers outlined in the employment guides on the I/CAN website <http://www.irishcanadianimmigrationcentre.org/> Essential Guides / Employment / Employment Preparation – specifically, Section 7, page 8. You may be surprised how your answers differ from the suggested right and wrong answers. The difference is all about how you market yourself in an interview. While on the I/CAN site, check the other excellent resource materials designed to help you find employment i.e. Cover Letter & Resume Preparation & Templates and the Covid-19 section / Employment during Covid-19. If you follow these guidelines, your chances of finding a long-term career opportunity will increase.

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TIP #4: NEGOTIATING YOUR TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT DURING CORONA

Be flexible with your initial salary or wage expectations. Focus on securing a position in your primary functional area at the best salary/wage you can negotiate. With this relevant functional experience on your resume, you can re-evaluate your compensation when the business environment hopefully improves in 3-6 months. If below your expectations, ask for a review in six months. To manage their compensation costs, instead of offering full-time positions with full benefit costs, some employers may offer an employment contract for a fixed term. If the role falls within your area of expertise, accept the contract. You can re-evaluate your position in 3-6 months. For more information, visit the comprehensive employment support materials on the I/CAN website <http://www.irishcanadianimmigrationcentre.org/> Essential Guides / Employment /Employment Preparation. If you follow these guidelines, your chances of finding a long-term career opportunity will increase.

TIP #5: GET READY FOR THE FALL RECRUITMENT CYCLE

Canadian recruitment typically slows down in August. Decision-makers are away at the cottage enjoying the remaining Summer season. Recruitment volume typically restarts after Labour Day (September 7) and runs right through to Christmas with increased recruitment budgets. Between now and then, lay the groundwork for your successful Fall employment campaign. Aggressively continue with your NETWORKING and COVER LETTER/RESUME CIRCULATION CAMPAIGN even though you may not see an immediate response until September. Your efforts may reach the right person at the right time. Focus on direct applications to corporate and institution websites; register with employment agencies; generate leads through members of the Irish community and Irish community organizations – they can help identify marketplace developments and potential opportunities. Chase every lead and, notwithstanding Corona, try to connect personally through face-to-face or by phone. For more information, visit the comprehensive employment support materials on the I/CAN website <http://www.irishcanadianimmigrationcentre.org/> Essential Guides / Employment /Employment Preparation. If you follow these guidelines, your chances of finding a long-term career opportunity will increase.

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TIP #6: MAXIMIZE YOUR APPEAL TO AN EMPLOYER

Your cover letter/ resume/interview should focus on two key objectives: A) REINFORCE YOUR INTEREST IN A LONG-TERM CAREER RELATIONSHIP as payback for the employer's initial investment in your training and orientation. B) HIGHLIGHT 5-8 KEY RELATED FUNCTIONAL AREAS that you are interested in, outside of your core qualification area.

In the current Corona business environment with limited opportunities, market yourself as a multi-skilled professional. Employers will appreciate your multi-functional approach that can bring value to the organization.

For example, a person with qualifications and experience in traditional journalism might also identify a keen interest in related areas like public affairs/public relations; internal and external communications; web design and management; social media; speech writing; creative writing; event management etc.

A Human Resource specialist might identify a keen interest in areas like project management; people management; business administration; office administration; policy development; customer service and marketing; data management etc.

Supplementary areas are not restricted to areas where you have prior work experience – they can also include areas in which you have a passionate interest that you wish to develop. A passionate interest means that you will excel. Highlight your interest to take supplementary training courses, as appropriate.

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TIP #7: DURING THE EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW, MATCH YOUR QUALIFICATIONS AGAINST POSITION REQUIREMENTS

An employment interview is fundamentally a sales and marketing exercise. You are the salesperson and marketer. This applies during interviews both with employers and employment agencies.

During the early stages of the interview, you can ask the interviewer to identify (or, if you are already aware, confirm) the position requirements (role, duties and responsibilities, ideal candidate profile etc. (the "Requirements"). Once these Requirements are agreed, the obligation shifts to you to "sell" the interviewer on a) your qualifications (cumulative education, skills and experience) in relation to the overall Requirements and b) match your qualifications in relation to each individual Requirement. You can do this using real-life examples of your past significant achievements, excellent results achieved, challenges you overcame, new approaches you developed, people management issues and, in particular, how the customer gained from your significant contribution. Highlight your effectiveness in delivering projects on time and within budget.

For example, in the case of an Accounting position, the first position requirement might be "preparation of financial statements". At the earliest opportunity in the interview, you immediately brief the interviewer on your past comprehensive experience preparing financial statements, including past project examples, problems and difficulties encountered, pressurized timelines, staff management issues, information delays from other departments, pressurized environment etc. Instead of a passive approach in which the interviewer draws information from you, you should adopt a more proactive approach and proactively match your attributes against the defined position requirements. Leave the interviewer in no doubt that you can do the job.

New arrivals from Ireland tend to be shy about promoting their past accomplishments. This may be an Irish cultural trait. In Canada, reasonable self-promotion is expected. One-line answers do not work effectively. Past accomplishments in Ireland are equally relevant in Canada.

In the current Corona business environment with limited opportunities, market yourself as a multi-skilled and results-oriented professional. Employers will appreciate your multi-functional approach that can bring value to the organization.

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TIP #8: KEY EMPLOYER RECRUITMENT SELECTION CRITERIA – SOFT SKILLS

During the recruitment process, employers use standard recruitment criteria (i.e. candidate qualifications, skills and experience evaluated against specific job requirements) in the decision to hire, or not hire, you. Note, however, that many Canadian employers also place major emphasis on your "SOFT SKILLS" – a set of intangible skills applicable to your perceived ability to a) fit within the organization and team as an effective team player and b) your positive interactions with, and positive influence on, customers. Key soft skill issues are: How well will this person fit into my group? Position fit; Teamwork skills; Leadership skills; Communication skills; Dress-code.

Re COMMUNICATION SKILLS, the two most common problems that Canadian employers have with New Arrivals from Ireland are: 1. Candidate speaks too fast; 2. Candidate speaks in such a low soft voice that interviewer cannot hear responses. If these apply to you, it is important that you a) speak slowly and deliberately to slow-down your responses and b) elevate your voice.

Re the DRESS CODE, in an office work environment, business casual dress is the norm. Dress code is very important when meeting with clients and customers and less important in a behind-the-scenes technical role. During interviews, always dress to make a good impression. Check local work environments to monitor local dress-code practices. If referred by a search firm, you can always ask the consultant for guidance on the client dress-code.

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TIP #9: THE WORKPLACE WILL BE A WHOLE NEW WORLD

Whether you are returning to your former workplace or starting employment in a new position, it is important for you to prepare for changes in the work environment arising from the Corona epidemic. A recent article in the Globe and Mail (Report on Business, September 4, 2020 "The Workplace will be a whole New World – A Guide to Returning to the Office") provides an excellent commentary on what you can expect in the Corona and post-Corona workplace. For those seeking employment, suggest you educate yourself in this matter as a component of your employment search preparations to impress an employer and/or search firm during the recruitment process.

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TIP #10: EFFECTIVE USE OF EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES can play a major role in your job search. They have contacts in all national and local organizations. Employment agencies have strong relationships with employers and are aware of internal organization developments even before positions are publicly advertised. The hiring agency business model is built on finding vacancies and placing qualified people. Hiring employers pay a placement fee (typically 25% of the starting salary) to the employment agency upon placement. You do not pay any fee. Some agencies place candidates on a contract basis that may lead to full-time employment.

Especially during Covid-19, you have nothing to lose by registering with a reputable employment agency. You can identify an employment agency in your geographical area on Google search or in your local yellow pages. Alternatively, other new arrivals can recommend an agency (or a particular recruiter in an agency) that has a good track record placing new arrivals from Ireland. Select an agency that specializes in your line of work e.g. Engineering, IT, Human Resources, Finance and Accounting, Administration, Sales, Marketing etc. Your cover letter/resume should identify roles that you are interested in. The agency will classify you in their search database based upon your target functional area(s). If you are not sure what you want to do, indicate to the agency that you are primarily interested in A LONG-TERM CAREER OPPORTUNITY – the agency may be aware of roles or positions that you have not considered before that may be an excellent career fit for you. The hiring employer will provide orientation and training.

Whereas the agency may ask you to submit your resume, be proactive and, in addition to filing your resume, try to arrange a face-to-face meeting with the agency consultant either in person (with a mask and social distancing) or by Skype or Facetime or a telephone interview. If you are near the agency office, visit the office in person. In Canada, FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT is significantly more effective than just filing your resume. During discussion, the consultant will have the opportunity to evaluate your education, experience, skills and potential and determine which employers are the best fit for your skills and personality. Register with 5-10 employment agencies in your area – the more consultants you have working for you, the better your chances of finding employment.

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TIP #11: AM I AN EMPLOYEE OR SELF-EMPLOYED?

For taxation purposes and participation in government benefit programs, you need to determine your employment status, including, for example, if you work on contract. Generally, the degree of control over the work you perform is a determining factor in deciding whether you are an employee or self-employed.

You are likely considered an **employee** if your employer:

- decides where, when, and how the work is to be done
- establishes your working hours
- determines your salary amount
- supervises your activities; and
- assesses the quality of your work.

As an employee, you could be entitled to receive certain benefits such as sick leave, paid statutory holidays, and vacation pay. Also, you will probably be subject to Canada Pension Plan (CPP) or Quebec Pension Plan (QPP), and Employment Insurance (EI) deductions. You should receive a T4 slip from your employer.

You are likely considered **self-employed** if you:

- control the time, place, and manner of performing your activities
- supply your own equipment and tools, and assume the rental and maintenance costs
- make a profit or incur a loss, and cover operating costs; and
- integrate your client's activities into your own business activities.

As a self-employed worker, you might be entitled to claim expenses incurred to earn business income. Generally, you are not entitled to receive EI benefits. In addition, you will have to remit both the employer's and employee's shares of CPP (QPP in Quebec) contributions and pay your income tax in quarterly instalments.

For more information, get the guide RC4110, *Employee or Self-Employed?* from the CRA Web site at <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/forms-publications/publications/rc4110/employee-self-employed.html> or by calling **1 800 959-2221**.

For more employment information, visit the comprehensive employment support materials on the I/CAN website <http://www.irishcanadianimmigrationcentre.org/> Essential Guides / Employment. If you follow these guidelines, your chances of finding a long-term career opportunity will increase.

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Gerry O'Connor

gmak@sympatico.ca

647-400-4824