

The following Youth Employment Guide has been prepared by the Community Options Society as part of the Employer-Youth Engagement Project to assist youth in overcoming barriers to employment.

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Please visit www.coscowichan.ca for more information about this project.



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YOUTH EMPLOYMENT GUIDE

Finding the right employment can lead to a fulfilling and positive lifestyle. Working in an industry that best suits your needs and expectations can have a lasting effect on your life. While finding the right job may seem like a daunting task, there are steps you can take to alleviate some of the pressure. Being pro-active in your job search will help you land the right job and pave the way for future employment. We've put together this resource manual as a guide to help you get that job!

Generational Differences

Have you ever thought you and your boss come from two different worlds? Well, it is possible that you do! Generational differences can cause misunderstandings at work and be a source of workplace conflict. Often when in conflict we like to point our finger at others and say that it is their fault. It is important to consider that the generation that you are born into may affect how you view the world.

So before you start thinking "Oh, my boss is soooo old school", think about what this means and that it may not be HIS/HER problem but rather a result of the era he/she grew up in. If we intend to overcome generational differences, it is important all parties understand how they play out in the workplace.

The table on following page outlines four different generations and the workplace characteristics they possess.

Generational Workplace Characteristics

	Veterans (born 1922-1945)	Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964)	Generation X (born 1965-1980)	Generation Y (born 1981-2000)
Work Ethic & Values	Hard working Loyal Disciplined Respects authority Sacrifice Duty before fun Adheres to rules	Workaholics Work efficiently Personal fulfillment Desire quality Question authority Competitive	Independent Self-reliant Want structure & direction Skeptical of authority Resourceful	What's next Multitasking Tenacity Entrepreneurial Tolerant Goal oriented Lifestyle over salary Realistic
Work is....	An obligation	An exciting adventure	A difficult challenge A contract	A means to an end Fulfillment
Leadership Style	Directive Command-and-control	Consensual Reciprocal	Everyone is the same Challenge others Ask why	Collaboration Let's work together
Communication Preference	Formal	In person	Telephone or face-to-face	E-mail Voice mail Texting Social media
Feedback	No news is good news	Don't appreciate it Once a year is good enough	Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing?	Frequently, let me know how I am doing Tell me what I am doing well
Rewards	Satisfaction in a job well done	Title recognition Motivated by money	Freedom is the best reward	Meaningful work Motivated by personal growth or passion
View on Work-Life Balance	Work then live	Work to live	I need a balance of both	I live, then I work

Elements of the above table were retrieved from:

<http://www.fdu.edu/newspubs/magazine/05ws/generations.htm>

Informational Interviews

Just what is an informational interview??

It is an interview you request of an employer as a way to find out more about an agency or a position. It is important when you are requesting an informational interview that you make it clear to the person on the phone (or at the counter) that you are not requesting an interview for a job (although this would be nice!), but rather you want to speak to a manager or owner in order to get a better idea about that specific industry. When requesting an informational interview, be specific with how much time you are requesting of the manager or owner as they frequently have a busy schedule to keep.

If it's your first time requesting an informational interview it may feel a little awkward, however, keep in mind that most people enjoy talking about themselves and their organization. In fact, you may be surprised to learn how many people got their jobs!

Here is an example of what it might be like to request an informational interview.

You (on the phone with manager): Hello, my name is Susan and I am really curious about your organization. I wonder if you may be open to spending 15 minutes with me so that I can conduct an informational interview and ask you some questions about your industry?

Manager (typical response): Hmm, well we are actually not hiring right now.

You: I'm sorry for the confusion, I am not actually wanting to apply for a position, just really wanting to learn a little bit about what you do and maybe get some pointers on avenues I can explore in order to find work in this industry.

Manager: Oh, I see. Well I don't see why not, I should have time this Wednesday if you want to pop by at 10:00 am to have a chat?

You: That sounds great! I look forward to meeting you.

Okay, so now you have an informational interview and are probably wondering what kind of questions you should ask. Here is a list of possible questions. Remember, ask questions that are relevant to that industry. Also, keep in mind how much time the manager or owner has, and don't ask too many questions, as this will cut into their valuable time.

Some Informational Interview Questions

1. What requirements would I need to obtain employment in this industry?
2. What does a typical day look like?
3. What course and /or training would you recommend that I take?
4. What would you recommend I do in order to gain experience in this field?
5. How often does your agency/company hire new employees for this/these position?
6. Do you offer any training for new employees?
7. What type of qualities do you look for in an employee?
8. Do you anticipate there will be growth in this industry?

Additional Information

- ✓ You can get a lot of information from the internet about an organization, so it may not be wise to ask questions if you can find the answers yourself; for example, what are your hours of operation?
- ✓ Sometimes when an informational interview goes well and it appears that you already have the skills required in order to get a position, it is okay to ask if they expect to be hiring in the near future and to see if it would be appropriate for you to leave a resume or drop one off.
- ✓ If you want to obtain some post-secondary schooling and not sure whether there are jobs available in that industry, informational interviews are an opportunity to ask the people who will be hiring in your community.
- ✓ If the person you ask to do an informational interview does not have time, don't worry about it, find another employer who will!
- ✓ The more informational interviews you do, the better understanding you will have about the industry and the clearer it will become if you want to pursue a position within it.

Volunteer Work

Ever feel like you don't have the skills or experience most employers are looking for? Well, one way you can obtain these skills is by dedicating time to volunteer work. Volunteering is a great way to earn experience as well as to contribute to your community. Be selective when choosing a volunteer position as you want to make sure it will give you the skills or experience in order to transfer into the paid employment sector. In other words, you should try and match your volunteer work with your preferred career path. For example, if your long term plan is to work as a Registered Care Aide, you may want to see whether there is an opportunity to volunteer at a local senior care home.

If you are unsure what type of volunteer experience will help you gain the skills you need, an informational interview is a great place to get ideas about relevant opportunities. Remember, the point of volunteering is to gain transferable skills that you can use in the work force. Be upfront with the organization you wish to volunteer for and let them know what you hope to gain from that position.

In addition, be honest and realistic about the number of hours you can dedicate to volunteer work. If you need to find a job as soon as possible in order to support yourself, it is not a good idea to dedicate all of your spare time to volunteering. Instead, opt for a position that works with your schedule, whether that is once a week or once a month.

For a list of local volunteer options, please view the following link:

<http://www.volunteercowichan.bc.ca/>

Job Search Techniques

First impressions are one of the most important parts of the job search. How you present yourself sets the tone for what kind of employee you will be. Here are some tips to help you sell yourself to potential employers.

- ✓ **Dress to Impress.** Warning! Warning! Do not hand out resumes in sweat pants and a ratty t-shirt! A suit and tie is not always necessary either. The best practice when job searching is to get an idea what industry employees are wearing and aim to dress a notch above them. For example, if you are looking for a job in the construction industry, it is appropriate to wear a nice collared shirt and a clean pair of jeans for job searching. Additionally, if a uniform is required for the job, it is good practice to wear a clean, pressed pair of pants and a more formal top. It is also best to wear closed-toe shoes and avoid wearing intense-smelling perfumes. Many workplaces are now 'scent-free' and will not appreciate it if you smell as if you showered in cologne or perfume.
- ✓ **Don't hand out resumes with friends.** Is this ever okay...? The answer is simply 'NO'! If you bring your friend with you (even if they're standing in the background or near the door), it could convey that you are not independent or confident. For this reason, it is important for you to job search by yourself. If you want moral support, however, it is acceptable to ask your friend to wait outside, out of view of the business, or in the car.
- ✓ **Make sure your resume is proof-read and free of grammatical errors.** Don't rely on spell-check programs; get someone to proof-read it to make sure there are no errors. Additionally, you might try reading your resume out loud to hear if it makes sense.
- ✓ **Ask to speak with the manager.** Job hunting is stressful and handing out resumes can be a little embarrassing; however, don't just hand your resume to the first person you see at the front counter, ask to speak to the manager or supervisor in charge. The truth is that managers want you to hand in your resume to them and will often flag your resume for future openings if you take the time and initiative to hand it directly to them. If, for some reason, the manager or supervisor is not there, it is best to ask when he or she will be available and schedule a time to return.

- ✓ Follow-up with another resume. If you haven't heard back from an employer within a couple of weeks, go back to the business and ask to speak to the manager. Ask him or her if they've had a chance to look at your resume, explain your availability again, and reiterate that you're very interested in the position. If you haven't applied for an advertised position, be persistent but not aggressive – let them get to know your face. When a position becomes available they will remember you.



Interview Preparation

Congratulations! You've been called in for an interview. Interviews can be a nerve-racking and intimidating experience, especially if it's your first interview. One way to reduce your fear and anxiety is to make sure you are prepared. Being prepared will give you more confidence about the interview process and will make the whole experience more enjoyable. Below is a list of things to do in preparation for the interview, as well as after the interview.

- ✓ Research the company. Make sure you know something about the company before going into the interview. There is nothing worse than being asked "Why do you want to work for this company?" and not having a clue what to say. Doing your research will prevent this from happening and will show the interviewer that you have done your homework. Some of the things you might want to research include the products and services the company offers, its history and company size and its values.
- ✓ Research the position. If you applied for a position that is relatively new to you, it is important that you have a general idea of what you would do in that position. One way you can do this is by going to the following website <http://www.workbc.ca/Careers/Pages/Careers.aspx> and search for that job title in the 'Career Profiles' section. Once located, look over the 'duties' of that position. While you are there you might as well check the typical earnings for that position in case you are asked "What kind of wage do you expect in this position?" Many people don't have a clue what to answer when an employer asks this question, but if you have done your research you will know the average salary for that job. The reality is that if you have evidence to back up your wage expectation, there is a greater chance you will get it!
- ✓ Prepare to answer interview questions. Of course you can't be 100% sure what questions they are going to ask in the interview. However, there are a number of standard interview questions that employers like to ask. If you are unsure what these questions might be, use the internet and search for 'common interview questions'. You will find a ton of great resources online. Remember, be ready to sell your skills and reduce your weaknesses!

- ✓ Prepare to ask the employer questions. Typically, this happens near the end of the interview and goes something like this: “Do you have any questions for us at this time?” When this happens there is only one appropriate answer and this is “YES!” Have a list of questions to ask the employer before you leave. Employers are receptive to youth who are interested in their companies; this is your chance to ask them anything you are curious about. If you are unsure what is or is not appropriate to ask, again use the internet as a resource. However, one question which you should always ask is “When can I expect to hear back from you about this position?” Asking this question will greatly reduce your stress in the days and weeks after the interview as you will know when they were supposed to call. If they didn’t call back, oh well, time to pick up your socks and try somewhere new.

After the Interview

- ✓ Interview evaluation. As you leave, evaluate how you feel you did in the interview. Maybe you have a sinking feeling in your gut because you think you bombed some interview questions or, on the contrary, maybe you have an extra little skip in your step because you’re feeling great about your responses! Either way, it’s good to review everything that happened and make some decisions on how you might improve your skills for the next time. If you think you did terribly, please don’t beat yourself up, as you will improve with practice! As Willie Davis says “The road to success runs uphill.”
- ✓ Employer follow-up. A couple of days after the interview, it is good practice to follow up with the employer and thank them for their time. This can be achieved by making a phone call, sending an email or even a thank-you card. Also, if you forgot to mention something in the interview this is the time to let them know.
- ✓ Don’t get discouraged. This is easier said than done, however, it is the best piece of advice you will get! There will be disappointments in your job search but this is to be expected, and normal, especially in a tough labour market. Regardless, it is important for you to know that this will pass and if you keep up the hard work you will find a job in time.

Make sure you follow all the steps in the youth employment guide to increase your success!!

Good Luck!