

JOB HUNTING – DO'S AND DON'TS

Reported by: Sdri. Kee Wai Fun, G&S Section

During the 2003/2004 session, the Graduate & Student (G&S) Section organized two talks on tips for job hunting. The first talk was held on 15 November 2003 and the second was held in conjunction with Engineers Week on 18 March 2004. Ms. Chong See Ming from JobStreet.com and Ms. Liew Wai Bing from Shell were the invited speakers for the first talk, and Mr. Suresh Thiru from JobStreet.com was the invited speaker for the second talk in March. Both talks were held at IEM Conference Hall A, and touched on simple tips for writing resumes and for attending interviews. Since most job seekers were also naturally curious as to what employers look for in potential employees, the speakers also brought up relevant points regarding this issue during their talks.

According to JobStreet.com, the first question you need to ask yourself before looking for a job is "What Do You Want In Life?" And so the talks started with statements such as "You will never reach your destination if you don't know where to go" and "Passion equals enthusiasm about your work, your life, yourself and your surroundings". According to Mark Chang, CEO and founder of JobStreet.com, "If you find the job you love, you don't have to work a day for the rest of your life". So once a person is able to determine their goals, then the job-seeking experience becomes easier.

RÉSUMÉ TIPS

The most important task to be completed before attempting to look for a job is to prepare a resume or *curriculum vitae*. Below are some of the tips given by JobStreet.com regarding resume preparation.



Mr. Suresh Thiru from JobStreet.com delivering his talk

- Humility doesn't rhyme with resume. Your resume is your personal advertisement. If you don't toot your own horn, no one will.
- Put the substance on the first few pages.
- Don't copy another resume. Your goals, background, and personality are unique, and everyone deserves a unique resume.
- Insert statistics, measurable achievements. All prospective employers speak "statistics". Whenever possible quantify your accomplishments and responsibilities. For example,
 - Promoted three times in seven years
 - Managed a \$3 million budget
 - Supervised a staff of 4
 - Sold 50 orientation concert tickets
 - Recruited 20 new members for society
 - Raised 5K for orphanage
- Make a list of all your accomplishments. Probe your memory to remember all the great things you've done, and ask your colleagues & your friends. Keep an Achievement Journal. When you

write your resume, you can draw from it whenever you need to note an achievement.

- Research the company that you are approaching. Customise your resume to its technology, markets, etc. whenever possible. Help the company to easily see what contributions you could make.
- Accuracy matters, a typo or misspelled word in your resume implies that you're lazy or sloppy or stupid. None of these attributes will get you hired. So, check and recheck your resume and make absolutely certain that your address and telephone numbers are correct and current.

INTERVIEW TIPS

According to JobStreet.com, job interviews have gotten tougher, with the people on both sides of the table more savvy when it comes to tough questions. On one side, job seekers armed with how-to books are smarter about selling themselves. On the other side, employers are using a relatively new technique *behaviour-based interviewing*, which is based on the concept of interviewing for core skills and attributes rather than experience. So for interview tips, both JobStreet.com and Shell had this to say on the matter:

- The interview does not start in the interview room. Be careful of your language while talking over the phone and when writing e-mails. Be polite to the receptionists, the secretaries and all the staff that you happen to meet while awaiting your interview.
- First impressions count, so be punctual and attired properly (*Tip: Iron your clothes!*). Also be aware of the unwritten rules, such as mobile phones.
- Remember scenarios, and tell stories about your experiences.
- Ask for the job (if you really want it), sincerity counts.
- Take note of absenteeism while in school, university or while at a previous job.



G&S Vice Chairman, Sdr. Tan Chee Fai, presenting a token of appreciation to Mr. Suresh Thiru

WHAT ARE EMPLOYERS LOOKING FOR IN EMPLOYEES?

During the talks, the participants were reminded that *"It is what you can do for the company first and what the company can do for you second"*. With this thought in mind, the speaker presented the following general skills and attitudes that employers are looking for in employees.

1. Passion for your job
2. Effective communication skills

3. Welcomes challenges (adaptability, ability to think outside the box, continuous learning)
4. Innovative
5. Responsible
6. Proactive
7. Competent presentation skills
8. Able to work in a team (team dynamics, project management)

However, JobStreet.com also warned the participants that there have been recent human capital trends in the new economy, such as

- Changes in nature of work from Functional to Project Management (e.g. product launch, system implementation).
- Increase in uncertainties, thus a rise in Contractual Employment or Temporary/Trial positions, instead of full-time or permanent employment.
- Changes in mobility, with cross border employment and emphasis on transferable skills like

languages and PC-type skills.

At the end of the talks, the final advice from the speakers to improve one's chances of securing a job were:

- Read! Read! Read! (read anything from industry publications to philosophical texts). Keep learning
- Travel and broaden your mind
- Acquire multiple skills such as computer, language and business skills – problem solving, strategic thinking, negotiation
- Network like crazy (*it's not who you know but who knows you*).
- Brand yourself
 - Always have your name cards
 - Determine your differentiation factor
- Actively source out speaking opportunities
- Say "I'm the expert" and write to prove it!
- Be sensitive to the competition
- Volunteer internally and externally (professional organisations, etc). ■