Robert Half Canada

Notes for the Class of 2018: Five Job Search Stallers and How to Overcome Them

Scenarios that Can Slow Down Your First Job Search

TORONTO, April 18, 2018 /CNW/ - The Class of 2018 may have some solid job prospects heading into the working world, with Canada's unemployment rate holding at a 40-year low. Many new graduates, however, will leave school without a job offer in hand. Robert Half outlines five common situations that can stall the search and how to approach them.

Situation No. 1: I've submitted for many jobs online and haven't gotten any interviews.
Solution: Rework your resume and find a connection. Tailor your resume for each position so it contains keywords from the job description, as that will help resume scanning software identify you as a potential match. More importantly, find any connections you have at the company and ask them for input about the role. See if they would be willing to submit your resume directly to the hiring manager. A personal connection can help you stand out from other applicants. Plus, managers often prefer to hire candidates who are referred to them by people whose opinion they value.

Situation No. 2: I don't have any experience in the field I want to pursue.
Solution: Pinpoint transferable skills and find other ways to gain experience. Highlight examples on your resume that show how you've helped save money, create efficiencies, and find new business in summer jobs or volunteer positions — these skills are valued by any firm. Also show your abilities to train others, learn, take on new duties and collaborate. Gain relevant experience by volunteering your time with an organization that needs your skills. If you're interested in the marketing field, for instance, offer to redesign the website, write a blog or plan a fundraising event. Add that experience to your resume and LinkedIn profile.

Situation No. 3: I'm thinking about returning to school for a graduate degree to help me get a better start in my career.
Solution: Think carefully and consult others. Before you invest substantial time and money in another degree, know the expected return on your investment. Talk to people in the field to see if it's a must-have or nice-to-have in your chosen industry. In some situations, a certification or technical skill may be in greater demand — and command higher pay — than a master's degree.

Situation No. 4: The starting salaries I'm seeing in my field are too low. I need to make a lot more to cover bills, student loans, rent and other expenses.
Solution: Change your mindset from what you need, to what the market will pay. Hiring managers don't base a salary decision on what you need or want; their focus is on supply and demand. Highly specialized skill sets that are in short supply command higher pay. If salaries in your field are too low, consider taking on extra work as a contract employee or pursuing a different industry.

Situation No. 5: I'm feeling alone in my job search.
Solution: Spend less time on your devices and more on face-to-face interaction.
The job search can be isolating, particularly when you spend most days behind a computer looking online for jobs. Leads to new contacts and jobs can come from anywhere, so spend time interacting with new people at volunteer activities and industry events.

Finally, make sure you build a strong network during your job search and keep it active throughout your career. Greg Scileppi, president of Robert Half, International Staffing Operations, suggests adding these people to your circle:

- **Mentors** — These are seasoned people in the industry who can offer insight on tough career and job search decisions. They can help you steer clear of mistakes they made along the way.
- **Recent grads** — Members of the classes of 2016 and 2017 are fantastic resources to advise you as you begin your professional career. They've been where you are and may offer leads to informational interviews, jobs and other resources for your search.
- **Specialized recruiters** — They know market demand for skill sets and work with diverse employers in the area. Recruiters like Robert Half can help you get your start in the field through temporary assignments, many of which convert to full-time jobs. They can also help you find roles that may not be posted online.
- **Professional industry contacts** — Find professional associations in your area and attend meetings. Meet the leaders and volunteer to help the group. Members may introduce you to hiring managers, offer to review your resume, or help you refine your elevator pitch.
- **Class of 2019** —As you get started in your career, offer to mentor upcoming grads. Keep in touch with professors and advisors too — your feedback on the relevance of certain classes to your career can help shape future curriculum.

About Robert Half
Celebrating its 70th anniversary, Robert Half is the world's first and largest specialized staffing firm. The company has more than 300 staffing locations worldwide and offers online job search services on its divisional websites, all of which can be accessed at roberthalf.ca. For career and management advice, follow our blog atroberthalf.ca/blog. Follow Robert Half Canada on Twitter at @RobertHalf_CAN for additional workplace advice and hiring trends.

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