



## THE LABOUR MARKET: RESEARCHING COMPANIES

Once you have determined what industry you would like to work in and what kind of position you are looking for, you will need to research specific companies that might hire you. Most jobs in Canada are not advertised in major newspapers. Instead, successful job searchers target companies where they would like to work, and they conduct research on a company and know something about it well before the interview.

### Steps to Researching Companies

- Determine what kind of job you are looking for and in what industry.** You should know what job titles you are qualified for and be prepared to present your skills and experience as they apply to that job title. You should also have a rough idea of what salary to expect.
- Find the names of as many companies as possible** that operate in the industry you are interested in. Use newspapers, magazines, the Yellow Pages, business directories and the Internet to find the names of companies.
- Find out some basic information** about those companies.
  - Do they hire people with your experience and skills?
  - Where is the company located?
  - What kind of working conditions and salaries do they offer for people in your position?

Use business directories at your local library, the Internet, and newspaper / magazine articles. In some cases, you may have to make a call to the company.

- Narrow your list.** Select about 10 companies that you think you are most interested in working for and that might have opportunities suited to you.
- Research those companies.** Use the sources described on the following page to find detailed information on your targeted list.
  - How big is the company? Is it growing or downsizing?
  - Are they changing, starting new departments?
  - Are there particular skills they need?
  - In what job titles are people with your skills hired?
  - Who is responsible for hiring them? To whom should you send a resume?
  - Do they post and/or advertise job opportunities?

## THE LABOUR MARKET: USING LIBRARIES FOR LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH

### *How library material is organized*

Most materials in a library are catalogued. Usually, library catalogues are contained in a computer database easily used by library patrons; however, catalogues may also be on microfiche or in card form.

Items in a catalogue are normally organized under three headings:

- Author
- Title
- Subject

Therefore, if you know either the author or the exact title of the item you are looking for, you will be able to use the library catalogue to find it. If you do not know the title or the author, you can search for the item using the subject function. Some library catalogues also have a "keyword" function; this allows you to search for items using a word or phrase.

When you have found the catalogue record for an item you are interested in, note its "call number" and use that number to find it on the shelves.

All libraries use a classification system to catalogue their holdings. In Canada the Dewey decimal system is the most widely used. The Dewey decimal system provides ten major indexing categories that are further divided into subcategories. The major Dewey decimal categories are:

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| 000-099 | General knowledge (Encyclopaedias, Newspapers) |
| 100-199 | Psychology & Philosophy                        |
| 200-299 | Religion                                       |
| 300-399 | Social Sciences*                               |
| 400-499 | Language                                       |
| 500-599 | Science and Mathematics                        |
| 600-699 | Applied Sciences and Industries*               |
| 700-799 | Fine Arts and Recreation                       |
| 800-899 | Literature                                     |
| 900-999 | History, Geography Travel and Biography        |

\*Most business information is contained in these sections.

## THE LABOUR MARKET:

### Some Basic Library Resources for Researching Companies

#### Business Directories

Your reference library will likely have some or all of the following directories:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Blue Book of Canadian business</i>     | <i>Made in Canada. B.O.S.S. Vol. 1</i>         |
| <i>Canadian Company Histories</i>         | <i>Product; Vol. 2 Company Ontario</i>         |
| <i>Canadian Directory of Search Firms</i> | <i>Business to Business Sales and</i>          |
| <i>Canadian Distribution Directory</i>    | <i>Marketing</i>                               |
| <i>Canadian Job Directory</i>             | <i>Scott's Industrial Directory (Regional)</i> |
| <i>Canadian Key Business Directory</i>    | <i>Scotts Canadian</i>                         |
| <i>Canadian Trade Index</i>               | <i>Sourcebook 2004</i>                         |
| <i>The Dun &amp; Bradstreet National</i>  | <i>Scott's Directories, Ontario</i>            |
| <i>Directory of Canadian Service</i>      | <i>Manufacturers</i>                           |
| <i>Companies (2004)</i>                   | <i>Scotts Directories: Greater Toronto</i>     |
| <i>Fraser's Canadian Trade Directory</i>  | <i>Business Directory</i>                      |

[www.canadone.com/business/](http://www.canadone.com/business/) provides business resources on line and includes the *Canadian Business Directory* link.

#### Annual Reports and Corporation Files

Some reference libraries hold the annual reports and other information about Canadian companies - usually those that trade on the stock market. Ask a reference librarian if they have this information.

The System for Electronic Document Analysis and Retrieval (SEDAR) provides electronic access to annual reports of publicly trading companies.

[www.sedar.com](http://www.sedar.com)

#### Financial Post Investment Reports

These reports are published for the top 500 Canadian public companies. They provide historical and current data, investment recommendations, latest earnings and performance analysis.

#### On-Line Databases

Your library may offer access to computer databases. You can use these to find articles and other information about companies.

## THE LABOUR MARKET: USING LIBRARIES FOR LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH

### Glossary of Library Terms

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**Call number:** A group of letters and numbers, given to each book and to each serial in a library that acts like an address.

**Circulating/Non-Circulating:** Indicates whether material can be borrowed from the library (circulating) or must be used within the library only (non-circulating)

**Citation:** Information about a publication or other item that will help someone identify and locate that publication. For example, a citation to a magazine article will usually include the author and title of the article, the title of the magazine, the volume number, page numbers and the date of publication.

**Holds:** A function that allows someone to request a book that is currently signed out to another person, preventing that person from renewing it.

**Index:** An alphabetical list of topics, names of persons, authors or titles which serves as a guide to finding information in a publication or a group of publications. In the library, you may use journal indexes to find references to journal articles.

**On-line database:** Information stored in computer files. Examples of databases found in libraries are catalogues of library collections and indexes to journal articles.

**Periodicals:** Publications that appear at intervals of more than one day, such as weekly, monthly or quarterly. Magazines are an example of a periodical.

**A Reference:** A citation to an item such as a book or magazine article.

**Reference Material:** Material that cannot be taken out of the library, such as dictionaries, directories, atlases.

## THE LABOUR MARKET: USING THE INTERNET FOR LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH

To use the Internet, you must have an account on a network that is connected to the Internet. If you do not have a computer with Internet access at home, many libraries and employment resource centres offer access to the Internet on-site.

The Internet provides a variety of services and information of use to job seekers and professionals, such as:

- Company and employer profiles through the World Wide Web
- Discussion groups, offering networking opportunities
- Government documents
- Information about professional associations and licensing bodies
- Email, allowing you to send and receive messages.

The World Wide Web is a network of machines all over the world that provide information and are linked together. Users go from one page to another simply by clicking a linked image, word or phrase within the text of the document.

The World Wide Web has become the foremost information service on the Internet. Virtually anything you can think of is on the Web. Unlike libraries, however, the World Wide Web is not catalogued – that is, it is not organized by any one central source. The best way to find information on the Web, therefore, is by using a “search engine”.

A search engine is a program that searches the World Wide Web for sites that meet the criteria you enter. You access search engines on the Web itself. Some search engines offer “subject trees” – a series of categories and sub-categories that you select to find information you are interested in. Some popular search engines include:

[www.altavista.com](http://www.altavista.com)  
[www.yahoo.ca](http://www.yahoo.ca)  
<http://www.google.ca/>  
<http://groups.google.com/>  
(for specialty topics)

<http://www.alltheweb.com/>  
[www.metacrawler.com](http://www.metacrawler.com)  
[www.hotbot.com](http://www.hotbot.com)  
[www.msn.com](http://www.msn.com)

## THE LABOUR MARKET: USING THE INTERNET FOR LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH

### Glossary of Internet Terms

**Email:** Electronic Mail – messages, usually text, sent from one person to another via computer. Email can also be sent automatically to a large number of addresses; this is called a Mailing List or Listserv.

**HTML:** Hypertext Markup Language – the coding language used to create Hypertext documents for use on the World Wide Web.

**Hypertext Link:** Links are pointers to other web pages that make it easy to follow a thread of related information. These links lead you to more information whenever you choose to follow them.

**Newsgroup:** The name for discussion groups on Usenet.

**Query:** A search request. A combination of words and symbols that defines the information that the user is seeking. Queries are used to direct the search tool to appropriate databases.

**Search Engine:** A program that searches for web sites that correspond to parameters you set.

**URL:** Uniform Resource Locator – a standardized system for describing the location of any resource on the Internet that is part of the World Wide Web; often called a Web-site address. Example: [www.gov.on.ca](http://www.gov.on.ca).

**Usenet:** A world-wide system of discussion groups called Newsgroups.

**Web Browser:** A software program that connects you to sites on the World Wide Web. Examples: Netscape, Internet Explorer.

**Web Pages:** The World Wide Web consists of web pages, each of which contains information on a particular topic. The main Web page of a web site is called its Home Page.

**Web Site:** A specific address or URL in a computer network.

## THE LABOUR MARKET: RESEARCH PLAN

Use the following worksheet to create a research plan that will help you stay on top of the trends and issues for members of your profession and increase your understanding of the labour market. If necessary, use the list of labour market resources provided on the following pages.

Identify at least three sources of information you will use to find out about the **skills in demand** for members of your profession. For each source, indicate where you will find the source (e.g. a library, resource centre, Internet, subscription, etc.)

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Identify at least three sources of information you will use to locate and learn about **specific employers**:

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Identify at least three resources you will use to find out about specific **job opportunities**.

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