

MODULE 3 Communication and Terminology for Work Search

TOPIC 1 Understanding Job Ads – Skills and Personal Attributes

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- ◆ read and extract relevant information from accounting job ads and apply employer criteria to themselves

- ◆ identify own skills and personal attributes, reflecting a broader knowledge of vocabulary related to the requirements of the accounting profession as exemplified by job ads

TOPIC	SKILLS	CLB COMPETENCE AREA	COMPETENCIES	PRE-TASKS	TASK	POST TASK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Understanding Job Ads – Skills and Personal Attributes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reading ◆ Speaking/ Listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ formatted texts ◆ exchanging information ◆ suasion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ extract information from text; scan job ads ◆ identify own skills and personal attributes ◆ identify employer’s needs and requirements in a field ◆ gain broader and deeper knowledge of terminology associated with personal attributes and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ exchange information on job-search techniques ◆ analyze accounting job ads ◆ associate terminology with language and expressions in job ads ◆ group personal skills and attributes according to categories ◆ use new terminology in correct structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ identify own skills and personal attributes and apply to job ads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ wrap up discussion of job ads

Facilitator's Notes for Module 3

Topic 1: Understanding Job Ads – Skills and Personal Attributes

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

Content

Facilitator should be familiar with the following:

Conference Board of Canada, Corporate Council on Education, Employability Skills 2000+: The Critical Skills Required of the Canadian Workforce. (This brochure is downloadable from the Conference Board of Canada's Web site at <http://conferenceboard.ca>.)

The Department of Human Resources and Skills Development, Essential Skills Occupational Profiles. (See <http://www15.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/English/general/es.asp>.)

The facilitator should prepare examples of skills and attributes required by accounting professionals.

Delivery

As many copies as necessary should be made of the following handouts:

- ◆ Handout 1 Job Ads from the Toronto Star
- ◆ Handout 2 Job Ads Chart
- ◆ Handout 3 List of Skills and Personal Attributes
- ◆ Handout 4 Matching Activity
- ◆ Handout 5 Phrases
- ◆ Handout 6 Word Bank
- ◆ Handouts 7-10 More Job Ads

Terminology List (optional)

Materials needed: access to an overhead projector, and OHT 1.

Methodology

Introduction

- (15 minutes)** 1. Divide the class into pairs and have participants interview their partners using the questions below. Pair up the pairs to create groups of four and have group members exchange information. Ask volunteers from each group to report to the class. Write ideas on the board/OHP.

Questions for interviewing:

1. Have you ever tried to look for an accounting job in Ontario?
2. If “yes,” how did you look for it?
If “no,” how would you look for an accounting job in Ontario?
3. Which job-search method do you think is the most effective and why?

Note for facilitator:

Job search techniques: classified advertisements, employment offices, recruitment agencies, library resources, self marketing, networking, friends, attending trade shows, using job-referral services of accounting bodies. Participants should realize from the discussion that while classified ads are a good source of finding out about employer expectations and skills and experience required, 80% of jobs are not advertised. (See Post-task for more discussion.)

Pre-Tasks

- (5 minutes)** 1. Elicit from the class the meaning of “skills” and “personal attributes”. Let participants negotiate the meaning in groups of three, then ask volunteers for answers

Skills: What can you do?

Personal attributes / traits: What kind of person are you?

- (15 minutes)** 2. Regroup participants into pairs and give them 5-10 minutes to brainstorm as many personal attributes and skills of an accountant as they can think of. Ask them to

compare with another pair. Take up with the whole class and make a list of skills and attributes on the blackboard or chart paper.

- (25 minutes)** 3. Distribute Handout 1 with job ads from the *Toronto Star* and ask participants (in groups of two or three) to locate all personal attributes and skills for each position and write them on the grid in Handout 2. Take up with class on OHP or on the board (volunteers from each group fill in one of the positions traits and skills, class corrects).
Ask groups to negotiate the meaning of all expressions and words and discuss with the class as necessary.
- (15 minutes)** 4. Distribute Handout 3 (List of Skills and Personal Attributes) and ask groups to read it and negotiate the meanings. Have volunteers from each group explain the meaning of terms to the class.
- (20 minutes)** 5. Handout 4 can be used in two different ways. To make the activity more challenging, participants can try to find the appropriate words on their own. Alternatively, they can use Handout 3 and locate several terms that reflect the skills and personal attributes in the statements. Take up with the class.
- (15 minutes)** 6. Divide the participants into groups of three and have them categorize words / expressions from the first column of Handout 3 (Personal Attributes) into four groups:
- ◆ task achievement
 - ◆ thinking and problem-solving
 - ◆ interpersonal relations
 - ◆ personal characteristics
- Take up by having volunteers fill in each category on the board; verify using OHT 1.
- (20 minutes)** 7. Distribute Handout 5 and introduce ways of expressing skills and personal attributes/traits.

Optional

Assign six to eight traits and skills (from Handout 3) to each group of three and ask groups to express these traits or skills using one of the ways from Handout 3.

Review by having volunteers read selected phrases to class.

(15 minutes) 8.

Give each participant Handout 6 and ask them to complete five phrases with personality traits or skills from the box. Participants should compare their work with a partner's work.

Task

(30 minutes)

Ask participants to select eight skills and eight personal attributes (the latter should contain examples from the four categories in Pre-Task 6) that apply to them. Have them write down the skills/attributes in point form or in a short paragraph in Exercise 1 (Handout 5), using the expressions from Handout 6. Encourage participants to provide an accounting context to their sentences or give examples of their personal attributes or skills.

Then instruct the participants to match these skills/attributes with one or two of the job postings from Handout 1 or Handouts 7, 8, 9, or 10.

Post-Task

(15 minutes)

Participants should be encouraged to keep a file of job ads that will help them keep abreast of employer needs and industry trends. It is also important that participants be aware of the variety and quality of newspapers that advertise jobs and the role of agencies. Discuss this with the class, if the subject was not raised earlier.

Handout 1

Handout 2

POSITION	PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES/TRAITS	SKILLS
CONTROLLER ¹		
INTERNAL AUDITOR		
ACCOUNTANT FINANCIAL REPORTING		
ACCOUNTANT		
ACCOUNTING MANAGER		
CONTROLLER ²		

FACILITATOR’S ANSWER SHEET FOR HANDOUT 2

POSITION	PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES/TRAITS	SKILLS
CONTROLLER ①	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>energetic</i> ◆ <i>take-charge</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>organizational abilities, financial-management abilities, cost-accounting abilities</i> ◆ <i>solid computer skills</i> ◆ <i>people skills</i>
INTERNAL AUDITOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>resourceful</i> ◆ <i>eager</i> ◆ <i>well-organized</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>communicates effectively</i> ◆ <i>works with various levels of management</i> ◆ <i>thrives in a busy, deadline-oriented environment</i> ◆ <i>excellent computer skills</i> ◆ <i>proficiency in selected software</i>
ACCOUNTANT FINANCIAL REPORTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>proactive</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>thrives in a fast-paced, challenging environment</i> ◆ <i>excellent analytical skills</i> ◆ <i>ability to meet deadlines</i>
ACCOUNTANT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>dedicated</i> ◆ <i>self-motivated</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>flexible to communicate with all departments and personnel</i> ◆ <i>advanced Microsoft Office skills</i>
ACCOUNTING MANAGER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>hands-on</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>expert knowledge of Microsoft Excel</i> ◆ <i>superior analytical skills</i> ◆ <i>superior organizational skills</i>
CONTROLLER ②	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>a team leader</i> ◆ <i>hands-on</i> ◆ <i>hard working</i> ◆ <i>take-charge</i> ◆ <i>detail-oriented</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>strong analytical and computer skills</i> ◆ <i>capable of reporting timely and accurate information</i>

Handout 3

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES / TRAITS	SKILLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ energetic ◆ take-charge ◆ resourceful ◆ eager ◆ motivated ◆ well-organized ◆ proactive ◆ dedicated ◆ self-motivated ◆ hands-on ◆ outgoing ◆ hard working ◆ detail-oriented ◆ capable (of reporting on a timely basis) ◆ a team leader ◆ a self-starter ◆ self-reliant ◆ efficient ◆ objective ◆ systematic ◆ ambitious ◆ analytical ◆ reliable ◆ decisive ◆ takes initiative ◆ results-oriented ◆ thorough ◆ competent ◆ co-operative ◆ a team player ◆ accurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ financial management ◆ cost accounting abilities ◆ solid/excellent computer skills ◆ excellent people skills ◆ superior organizational abilities ◆ auditing skills ◆ proficiency in selected software skills including accounting packages ◆ thrive in a busy, deadline-oriented environment / a fast-paced, challenging environment ◆ ability to meet deadlines ◆ interpersonal skills ◆ technical skills ◆ leadership skills ◆ managerial skills ◆ superior/excellent/strong analytical skills ◆ effective writing and oral communication skills ◆ ability to interpret information ◆ ability to make judgements based on facts ◆ ability to analyze information

FACILITATOR'S ANSWER SHEET FOR HANDOUT 4

- 1) *Results-oriented*
- 2) *Efficient*
- 3) *Co-operative*
- 4) *Takes initiative*
- 5) *Thorough*
- 6) *Excellent leadership skills*
- 7) *Confident*
- 8) *Self-starter*
- 9) *Well-organized*
- 10) *A team player*
- 11) *Strong interpersonal skills*
- 12) *Solid computer skills*
- 13) *Resourceful*
- 14) *Thrives in a deadline-oriented environment*
- 15) *Excellent communication skills*

OHT 1

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS	
INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS	
THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING	
TASK ACHIEVEMENT	

FACILITATOR'S NOTES FOR PRE-TASK 6

TASK ACHIEVEMENT	THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING	INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS	PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>take-charge</i> ◆ <i>eager</i> ◆ <i>motivated</i> ◆ <i>proactive</i> ◆ <i>dedicated</i> ◆ <i>capable of reporting on a timely basis</i> ◆ <i>self-starter</i> ◆ <i>efficient</i> ◆ <i>takes initiative</i> ◆ <i>results-oriented</i> ◆ <i>thorough</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>resourceful</i> ◆ <i>well-organized</i> ◆ <i>hands-on</i> ◆ <i>detail-oriented</i> ◆ <i>systematic</i> ◆ <i>analytical</i> ◆ <i>decisive</i> ◆ <i>accurate</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>outgoing</i> ◆ <i>a team leader</i> ◆ <i>objective</i> ◆ <i>communicative</i> ◆ <i>co-operative</i> ◆ <i>a team player</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>energetic</i> ◆ <i>self-motivated</i> ◆ <i>hard-working</i> ◆ <i>ambitious</i> ◆ <i>self-reliant</i> ◆ <i>reliable</i> ◆ <i>competent</i>

Handout 5

Phrases used to express personal attributes / traits and skills

“I am + adjective (e.g., well-organized).”

“I am { a good
a very good
an excellent } + noun (i.e., organizer).”

“I am able to +verb (e.g., organize) + (adverb; i.e., very well).”

“I have { superior
excellent
outstanding
solid
strong
good } + adjective / noun (i.e., organizational skills).”

Exercise #1

Write about your skills and personal attributes and match them with one or two jobs on Handouts 1, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Handout 6

The words or phrases in the box are either personal attributes/traits. Use each of them to complete one of the following phrases.

- A) I am (a) _____ (person).
 B) I have excellent _____ skills.
 C) I am able to _____ (very well).

Examples:

I am energetic.

I have excellent analytical skills.

I am able to mobilize a team for high performance.

people	mobilize a team for high performance [get along well with others
leadership	thrive in a busy environment	quick learner
analyze	meet deadlines	flexible
reliable	interpersonal	dedicated
decisive	proactive	computer skills
technical	self-motivated	communicate
resourceful	systematic	results oriented
motivated	team player	efficient
communication	organize	self-reliant
analytical [resourceful	delegate tasks
accurate	approachable	thorough
to thrive in a challenging environment	conceptualize	detail-oriented
competent	troubleshoot	lead a team
liaison	managerial	administrative
data management	negotiate	self-starter
team building	conflict resolution	cope well under pressure
time management	problem solving	energetic [

Handout 7

Handout 8

Handout 9

Handout 10

Terminology List

Skills and Attributes

- ◆ people skills
- ◆ leadership
- ◆ to analyze
- ◆ reliable
- ◆ decisive
- ◆ technical
- ◆ resourceful
- ◆ motivated
- ◆ effective communication
- ◆ excellent analytical
- ◆ accurate
- ◆ to initiate
- ◆ to thrive in a challenging environment
- ◆ competent
- ◆ liaison
- ◆ data management
- ◆ team building
- ◆ time management
- ◆ mobilize the team for high performance
- ◆ thrive in a busy environment
- ◆ meet deadlines
- ◆ interpersonal
- ◆ proactive
- ◆ self-motivated
- ◆ systematic
- ◆ team-player
- ◆ organize
- ◆ resourceful
- ◆ approachable
- ◆ conceptualize
- ◆ troubleshoot
- ◆ managerial
- ◆ negotiate
- ◆ conflict resolution
- ◆ problem solving
- ◆ get along well with others
- ◆ quick learner
- ◆ flexible
- ◆ dedicated
- ◆ computer skills
- ◆ communicate
- ◆ results oriented
- ◆ efficient
- ◆ self-reliant
- ◆ delegate tasks
- ◆ thorough
- ◆ detail-oriented
- ◆ lead a team
- ◆ problem-solving
- ◆ administrative analytical
- ◆ team player
- ◆ administrative
- ◆ self-starter
- ◆ cope well under pressure
- ◆ energetic

Other words / expressions:

- ◆ performance
- ◆ to accomplish
- ◆ outcomes
- ◆ an approach
- ◆ to mobilize
- ◆ to initiate
- ◆ to interact
- ◆ to maintain
- ◆ a timely basis
- ◆ to conduct
- ◆ computer software