

How do youth succeed in a tough Canadian job market? Corporate headhunter breaks it down



[\(http://metronews.ca/author/grahamlanktree/\)](http://metronews.ca/author/grahamlanktree/)By [Graham Lanktree \(http://metronews.ca/author/grahamlanktree/\)](http://metronews.ca/author/grahamlanktree/)
Metro Ottawa



Hunting CEOs as a talent recruiter, Stefan Danis took time out to offer students a helping hand in the tough job market.

Contributed

The job market for youth today seems, in many ways, tougher than ever. Although youth are only 16 per cent of the Canadian workforce, their demographic marked 50 per cent of recession job losses.

Metro Ottawa got in touch with Stéfan Danis, a talent headhunter for CEOs with [Mandrake](http://www.mandrake.ca/corporate/about_us/consultant_details.asp?Id=BE6BC7A2-A547-49F7-8AB4-03B8C2051796) (http://www.mandrake.ca/corporate/about_us/consultant_details.asp?Id=BE6BC7A2-A547-49F7-8AB4-03B8C2051796), and asked him to use his 25 years of experience in matching the right people with the right jobs to answer your questions about how to write a killer resume in an [online Q&A at Reddit.com](http://www.reddit.com/r/IAMa/comments/18yaz0/its_reading_week_in_canada_students_if_you_have/) (http://www.reddit.com/r/IAMa/comments/18yaz0/its_reading_week_in_canada_students_if_you_have/)

Here we've compiled some of the most interesting questions and helpful answers:

Is it really harder for today's grads to get jobs?

NukEng42

The media always refers to our generation as screwed for jobs as a backlash from the baby boomers. What is your perspective on this? Is it really harder for University graduates these days to get a solid job? Could the difficulties lay in not having the right skill set, or is it because of a lack of jobs?

Stefan_Danis

I had 16 job offers in 1985 when i graduated. Companies actually came to recruit on campus. There was a relatively standard recruitment process. No longer the case. In general, now, it is about opening the door to go in versus being invited in. Of course, the market moves faster than the labor and it is difficult to "come out" with the right skills at the right time. Being a lawyer or an engineer was a dead end education not too long ago. No more. Things change.

How long should a resume be?

Kdyme

Thanks so much for doing an AMA! What are your thoughts on the assumption that resumes have to be 1-page? I'm just finishing up my undergrad degree now and am taking a few years off to pay down some student debt before applying to a master's program. Are there any tips to make this time useful for more than paying off that loan (career-wise)? Specifically, I want to pursue a career in archiving (so any tips for getting your foot in the door at a heritage institution would be great).

Stefan_Danis

HR and functional leaders are overwhelmed with resumes. They scan for the info they need and they appreciate someone who gets brevity and gives them the info the way they need it.

We work in the 15 second era, and a one pager fits that mold. Make sure what the company needs is there:

- 1) all your contact data;
- 2) bullets to describe your competencies;
- 3) a reverse order business experience with years and titles held;
- 4) data about you as a person/not for profit and other achievements;
- 5) Education; and most often forgotten
- 6) references. If you must expand on the business experience, then you can suggest the reader refers to page #2 where you can detail achievements for the inquisitive reader.

Bottom line is few people read resumes end to end. Adapt and adopt a less is more approach! Relative to Heritage, if you have a unique knowledge, call the head of the archiving area and invite them to a coffee.

I am certain it is a small community where like-minded passionate people want to connect! Best of luck.

What's the biggest job seeking mistake?

Yertle

What would you say is the most common misconception or mistake you see from otherwise diligent and well-qualified job seekers?

Stefan_Danis

First, most plan for the best as opposed to plan for the worst; we tend to under-estimate how much time a job search takes and we operate in the vacuum of not knowing who else is avail for the role. Best to assume it will take time and that most others in that position are also diligent and well-qualified.

So there is no real competitive advantage. Then the question becomes about standing out from the crowd. I find marketing oneself is the missing for most. It is easier to market oneself as a subject matter expert using consulting platform to solve issues versus an active job seeker looking for a job.

There are few jobs and unlimited projects.

How do you stand out from the job hunt pack?

ElChalif

As an employed graduate living in Atlantic Canada, that found work while still studying, I consider myself one of the lucky few. Do you have any advice on how to set yourself out of the crowd in the toughened economy in this part of the country?

Seems as though everyone is gunning for the same promotions and with more and more employers downsizing, furthering your career seems to be getting more difficult. Barring moving out of the province what is your advice?

Stefan_Danis

Expand your network proactively, before you need it. Attend conferences, networking groups. Build your relationship capital now and you will be set. Depending on your specialty/functional expertise, I may be able to help your networking too.

Should you volunteer?

Lgmnsoccerfan

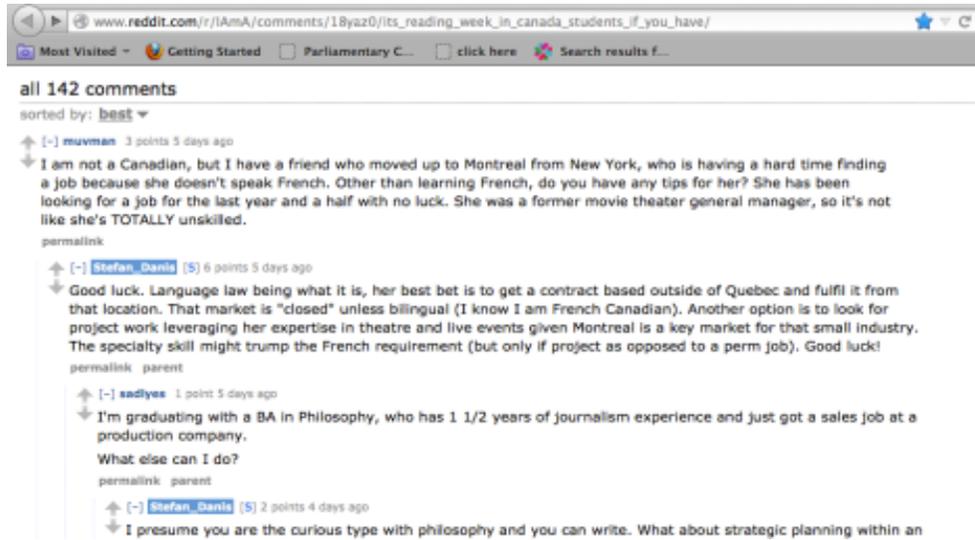
As a high school student, what can I do outside of school to make my resume more appealing to potential employers? Should I volunteer or look for a summer job? I am also thinking either an economic or finance degree, what field do you think will be hot in the next couple of years?

Stefan_Danis

When hiring young talent, employers look for potential. Later, they look for credentials. The key is to build a narrative around potential and competencies. You will be hired for what you could do, not what

you have done.

Focus on NFP or jobs that will give you either a brand to put on your resume, or an experience so rich and unique that you have a story to tell. And make sure the fundamental competencies employers look for are covered: communicator, industrious, committed, resilient, leadership. Best!



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