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How to find jobs in the newspaper without reading the Help Wanted section

Have you ever heard the expression 'Acres of Diamonds'? It refers to an old parable about a farmer that leaves his fields to find his fortune. He searches and searches and searches finding nothing. Later it is discovered that under the very fields he left was a rich deposit of diamonds that he could have found if only he had looked. Oddly enough, the newspaper is much the same way.

90% of people read a newspaper looking to find out what has happened in the world, or more specifically for job seekers, who is hiring. But newspapers can actually provide much more useful information to job seekers than job ads. Job ads, which again most people looking for a job read, are the easy jobs to find. The problem of course is that because they are easy to find, everyone finds them and replies to them. This means a newspaper ad can literally generate hundreds of responses, and when you read the word 'responses' read competitors for the job. While there is nothing wrong with competing for those jobs, there are other places in a newspaper to find opportunities disguised as something else that far fewer people will be looking for.

Opportunities or job openings always are found when there is change. Always. No exceptions to the rule. A company hires someone because something has changed: someone else has retired, been fired, business has grown, regulations have changed, new markets open up, the company moves from location A to location B...there is always something that has changed. So when we read the other parts of a newspaper, the thing we need to look for as job seekers are those changes because they will precipitate hirings and firings. You can almost look at it as a weather forecast. If it is January in Canada and they are calling for precipitation, you can almost bet it will be snow. You might be wrong occasionally but more often than not it will be correct.

Lets look at a few newspaper sections and see what examples they might offer.

The Business Section

Company Re-location:

If you read an article about 'Company A' moving its head office from Ottawa to Toronto, there is going to be opportunities because not everyone will move with them. The distance does not even need to be that great. The company might move from Mississauga to Toronto and people will decide they don't want to commute and therefore leave to company which creates openings.

Sales Growth:

When companies do well there is more for them to do. This means that people in the company probably will get moved around and more people will probably be hired simply because there is more to do. So look for reports of companies that are doing well and growing.

The Politics/Government Section

Regulation Changes:

This is one of my favorites because if the government says you have to do something, usually you have no choice. Lets make up a government policy as an example (that may one day actually come to pass). The government announces that it will allow people to pay for MRI's with their credit card or even with their OHIP card. Ask your self who is going to need more staff as a result of that change? Private MRI clinics. But most people will not even make that connection and then 2 moths down the road see ads for positions in MRI clinics. But the really smart people have started to make contact with those clinics when the new regulations were announced and have already been working for the last month or two.

The Automotive Section

Labour Market Changes:

This one goes in the opposite direction so instead of being a forecast for more jobs, this one might indicate that trouble is on the horizon. General Motors and the United Auto Workers recently agreed to transferring the responsibility for health benefits from GM to the UAW. This means that GM will no longer have to pay health benefits to its workers in the United States. That means it just got a lot cheaper to make cars in the the United States. Might that mean trouble for the Canadian Auto Manufacturers? Maybe. If it is now cheaper to manufacture cars in the US than in Canada, might we lose some of those jobs?

The newspaper is full of information that might help us in our job search. Unfortunately most people looking for work only read the Help Wanted ads and ignore the rest of the paper. Or, if they read the rest, they look only at it as information that is nice to know and useful in conversations but rarely look at it as job leads and information that just might point them to the next position.

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