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Remember Me!

With spring just around the corner, many Canadians have young people in their lives who are graduating from university, professional schools or community colleges. When the excitement of Commencement wears off, they are faced with the challenge of finding their first full-time paid jobs.

The following are a couple of ideas from a book by executive recruiter, teacher and author Mark E. Wicken, who published Remember Me!. This book is a guide and workbook about helping recent graduates navigate the process of using resumes, cover letters, developing interview skills, time management and networking skills to land their first job. These ideas are also applicable to anyone looking for a new position following a layoff, plant closing or any other reason they may be looking for a new career opportunity!

The key is to stand out from the crowd. A former executive at Citibank recounts how she used to hire for entry level positions in Toronto and was often inundated with hundreds of resumes. From the employer's perspective, how do you sort through that many applications to find a couple of people to interview?

One day, while scanning resumes, one stood out from the crowd. A young lady of about 25 had included a colour picture of herself on her resume – something that no one else in the hundreds of resumes had previously done. She immediately called her only to find out the applicant had already been hired elsewhere.

Wicken stresses that the whole point of a resume is to **land a job interview**. Moreover, the key of any job interview is to stand out from the sea of monotony where every interview candidate sounds and acts the same.

The purpose of the interview is to evaluate the candidate's communication skills and how they will fit into the work environment and culture and ultimately determine if they are really serious and want the job. The best interview tips, says Wicken, is to demonstrate that they want the job by showing initiative, professionalism, confidence and enthusiasm.

Another tip: Graduates need a business card as part of their job-search resources, which need only list your Name, School, Phone Number and Email. A well-prepared business card makes you look serious, professional and enthusiastic. Additionally, business cards can also be handed out as you are networking and is an easy way for people to remember you and contact you in the future.

First impressions count: This may determine if you are hired or not. Your email address, your voice mail, your cover letter and resume are all potential points of a first impression. Make sure they look and sound professional. Clean up your social media pages and hide those shots of chugging beer while you are at it as employers now routinely review your web presence.

Once you have landed your job, Wickens recommends contacting everyone you were in touch with about your success, which will build your long term credibility in the market place. Tell everyone you met, friends, former colleagues, people and companies you interviewed with and even the people and companies you may have approached and never received a response....."tell everyone, yes everyone: I now have a job!" concludes Wickens.*

*Visit LaunchYourCareer.ca [1] for more tips and techniques. Search for the book by entering "Remember Me by Mark E. Wicken" either at Amazon.ca or on Google.

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