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# Career Momentum

November to December 2009

## Educating Possibilities in the Skilled Trades – Reflection on *World Skills 2009*

By Darlene Baker, CDC – Career Coach, Bow Valley College

A talented pastry chef makes an intricate sugar sculpture of a lion.

A creative landscaper organizes a decorative row of trees.

An artistic dressmaker sews an intricate pattern on a Wedding Dress.

A detail minded electrician carefully performs a test of an alarm system.

What do these 4 things have in common? They are all highly valued skills that were part of the recent World Skills competition held in Calgary.

Think for a minute about all the people it takes to construct an office building. There are hundreds of skilled trades people with thousands of hours spent perfecting their skills; from the surveyor that marks where to start digging the foundation, to the interior designer that puts the finishing touches once the building is complete. How would this be possible without dedicated and skilled trades people?

As a Journeyperson and a Career Coach I had a unique experience being a Volunteer Skills Ambassador, having an understanding of what it is like to be able to utilize a skill (rusty as it may be!!) and helping others find a match for their own unique abilities and traits. I had the privilege to act as a guide to these explorers. I liked to call it being an “Educator of Possibilities”; to provide information about all the careers possible in the skilled trades. Skilled trades are occupational areas that can often be overlooked by Career explorers who only focus their career aspirations on academic areas. Now, of course there will always be a need for doctors, architects, engineers and MBAs, but these are not jobs for everyone. There is a need for the Doers of the world – the skilled trades persons and the artisans; the folks to make the vision a reality. An architect can design the most beautiful building in the world, but it would never come off the page without hundreds of highly skilled workers to make it happen.

The World Skills competition offered a varied terrain for Career Explorers. I was able to check out quite a few different booths representing many unique skill sets. I did, however, notice several commonalities between each of the competitors: passion, pride and joy. I watched a dress maker spend 20 minutes ripping out a seam that had been put in incorrectly, or more accurately, simply not good enough. I overheard her telling the judge that she just didn’t feel it looked right and she wasn’t willing to leave it that way, even though she spent hours doing it and would take hours to fix it. What struck me most about watching this was how calm and happy she was while she removed each stitch. This is the essence of loving what you do, taking pride in work that you do. Not necessarily from getting recognition from the finished product, but receiving great joy from simply doing it beautifully and skillfully. This is someone with a great career, and as a Career Coach my passion, pride and joy comes from helping others to achieve this.

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# Job Search with Culturally Different People

By: Lynn J. Berry – Futures by Design Inc.

As a career professional I have encountered immigrants frustrated with their job search. They have sent out hundreds of resumes with no results. What are they doing wrong and how can I help them? I heard Lionel Laroche speak at UBC in the spring, and I agree it comes down to one word – **Fit**. The main challenge immigrants have is to figure out where they fit into the Canadian labour market. It is really essential they do this in order to be successful.

**Fit** – what skills do they have and who might be interested in those skills? This is far more complicated than looking for words in a job description and applying for jobs containing those words. I need to be a career counselor, but also a detective. I use occupational profiles, actual job descriptions and even expert resources in the field, if available, to assist my clients.

Many immigrants will say they can do any work related to their field. They focus on the broadness of their experience. In other words, they present themselves, both in their resume and with their interview answers, as generalists instead of specialists. Have you ever run into a person who has said, “I am an IT specialist, I can do anything with computers”; “I am a civil engineer and I can build anything”? The situation in Canada is different. We are not looking for generalists, we are looking for specialists. As Lionel points out, the ideal candidate in Canada is *someone that has done the same job with the competitor for the past 5 years*. In other words, don't tell the employer that you can do anything, because the reaction of the employer is that you won't do anything *well...* you know the saying – *Jack of all trades but master of none*.

One of the main reasons for this reaction by an immigrant is that, in many cultures the person with the most education is expected to be able to do a variety of jobs or tasks. Being a highly educated person is usually the exception rather than the rule. Remember, that many of the countries people are coming from have a limited number of people with high levels of education. Education is viewed as more important than work experience in many cases. I remember a client sitting across from me, with very low English skills, insisting he should get a job because he graduated the top of the class in the 'Best' university in China. We were coming from two very different perspectives with different expectations.

If immigrants do not target their resume what happens? They will send their resume to many companies – sometimes hundreds of resumes and get no response because they are sending their resume to the wrong place; not targeting it.

It is a huge challenge to understand where people's skills fit, but it is fundamental if people are going to be successful. According to Lionel, there are four questions you need to be able to answer when working with immigrants:

# Job Search with Culturally Different People – Continued...

1. **What problem are you good at solving?** The answer to this question is far less obvious than it seems. They will probably come back with a job title but this usually requires probing questions to really understand what they are good at.
2. **Who has this problem?** These would be potential employers, and the second part is – are they willing to pay money to have it solved?
3. **How do you let them know you exist?** This is where we help – resumes, networking, interview practice etc.
4. **How do you convince the employer you are the best at solving the problem for them?**

When clients present themselves for a resume critique we usually jump in at question 3, just assuming the clients know where they fit. In my experience, giving immigrants reading material about resume development without walking them through the process is not a strategy for success. This is the easiest, most time efficient process but the end result is failure on the part of the job seeker. My suggestion: start at question 1 and move through the list.

A final example: I met a gentleman from Pakistan who was an 'Architect'. He had been applying for any job with the word architecture in it. During our discussion I realized he was actually an 'urban planner'. I was able to get him an informational interview with a City of Calgary planner which helped him focus his job search.

If you ever get an opportunity to hear Lionel Laroche speak, take it!

Recommended reading:

*Recruiting, Retaining, and Promotion Culturally Different Employees* by Lionel Laroche, Ph.D., Don Rutherford.

## Did You Know?

### Career Momentum Editors Invite Your Ideas and Submissions!

Career Momentum is YOUR newsletter!

The expertise of CDAA members spans the spectrum of the career development field within the province and beyond. Is your niche or interest being represented? The entire membership would benefit from information, awareness, and insight about the issues, trends, events and new developments in your representative fields.

Pass on your ideas for articles, or submit one! See the CDAA website for submission guidelines.

Cheryl Côté, CCDP CLSC

Carolyn Jonsson, CCDP CDC

Send Comments/Submissions to:

[momentumeditor@careerdevelopment.ab.ca](mailto:momentumeditor@careerdevelopment.ab.ca)

# Working the Web

By: Victoria (Vicky) Driver

I may have told you about **Canadian Resume Service** but it has been awhile.

<http://canadian-resume-service.com/default.asp>

There are some good tips and many links. Some of the links are not current or in Alberta. The author of the newsletter is located in Grande Prairie, although it does not follow that Alberta is where she finds her clients. Perhaps a job finding coach just thinks about finding actual jobs, while a CP would also tell the work seeker to do research on the industry before they apply for jobs, and that s/he needs to tap into the hidden job market i.e. resources other than advertised work opportunities.

To supplement what you find on the above site I have done some research of my own; not every sector, but enough to whet your appetite to find more on your own.

**Agricultural jobs:** <http://www.agriemployalberta.com/>

**Insurance Bureau of Canada** (to learn about the varied work in that sector):

<http://www.abc.ca/en/index.asp>

**Information Technology** Discover IT Website: <http://www.discoverit.org/home.aspx>.

This site was designed for young career planners and developed by the IT Sector Council

**Innovative Manufacturing:**

<http://www.albertacanada.com/productivity/manufacturing/innovativemanufacturing.html>

**Vector On-Line** will let you find resources for many different sectors and occupations:

[http://www.vector.cfee.org/english/index.php?section\\_id=1&language=english](http://www.vector.cfee.org/english/index.php?section_id=1&language=english)

It is a service offered by the CFEE (Canadian Foundation for Economic Education)

<http://www.cfee.org/en/about.shtml>, and it seems they have reintroduced *Career Circuit* in a modified form.

**Editorial Comment:** It seems as if the financial sector is picking up from its malaise this past year, but the pundits feel it will be a while before the work sector becomes healthier, especially for recent graduates from Post Secondary or High School. The double whammy is that if they do not find work in Alberta they are mobile and will simply move on. Remember we paid 100% of their first 13 years of "public" school and about 70% of their post secondary education.

- How nice for some other province's work sector, (or worse) some other country to reap the benefit of a keen young worker that they did not pay to educate.

The various work sectors had better figure this out before it really is too late. It probably already is for the health sector. I understand that once again there are no full time permanent jobs for nurses, and many fewer opportunities for medical residencies, whether you are educated here or not. The US, on the other hand is promising the moon if our best and brightest will relocate south of the border. Decisions not to hire front line medical professionals are not evidence of tough financial decisions; they are fiscal mismanagement of the worst kind. I know I am preaching to the choir, but it sure is frustrating for young people to plan for their education and career not knowing that there will be work when the time comes.

## Working the Web – Continued...

**About.Com Careers and Work Search:** <http://www.about.com/careers/>.

It has been a while since I put this site in the column. It is based in the USA so not everything relevant for our clients or practice. I receive a newsletter edited by **Dawn Rosenberg McKay**. She often includes Canadian links but not for every topic.

For example, she highlighted **Dress for Success**, which is in some Canadian Locations including Central Alberta, but not other similar programs such as:

- **The Walk-In Closet**, in downtown Calgary provides its' clients with interview and work appropriate attire, including cosmetics, accessories and outerwear. This is all at no cost to our clients. Referrals come from Volunteer Calgary and other agencies that assist women to return to the workforce.
- **Women In Need:** <http://www.womeninneed.net/>

**The Calgary Career Show** will be over before this column is published, however they have a web site that is always available and includes articles of interest to work seekers, students and practitioners:

<http://www.thecareershow.ca/articles.html>

- In case anyone missed it in an earlier column, here is the link for other Alberta Career Events: <http://alis.alberta.ca/ce/cp/cs/careerevents.html>

The fall newsletter from **Contact Point** is chock full of excellent articles:

[http://www.contactpoint.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=93:fall-2009&Itemid=75&layout=default](http://www.contactpoint.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=93:fall-2009&Itemid=75&layout=default).

- Be sure you read about working in the environmental sector as the hot and growing career path. ECO Canada is the sector council. While it is located in Calgary, there are affiliates across the country, and the sector is growing all the time: <http://www.eco.ca>
- Another sector council here in Alberta is Careers in Oil and Gas <http://www.careersinoilandgas.com/>

### Reading Reference:

In case you missed it, here also is a Reading Reference from Contact Point Summer Bulletin: **Not for Sale!** "Why we need a new job search mindset"; author Cathy Keates MA. Read a detailed review by Allan Kearns of Career Joy.com who is also a columnist for Working.com:

[http://workcabin.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1105&Itemid=154](http://workcabin.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1105&Itemid=154)

- The bonus is that I also discovered that the above web site is for jobs in the Environment Sector <http://www.workcabin.ca>

**Invitation:** if you have a topic that you would like researched i.e. want some relevant web sites or have some of your own I would be happy to include your picks in this column giving you credit for the finding out of course.

Yours in networking!

# Educational Programs Approved to Qualify for CCDP Designation

By Sue Kersey – Past Chair, CDAA Standards & Certification/Registration Committee

The Standards and Certification Committee recently conducted a review of the current career development educational programs offered to qualify for the Certified Career Development Professional (CCDP) designation in Alberta. If you are registered in any of these programs you qualify for a reduced membership rate as a “pre-certified” member with the Career Development Association of Alberta.



- Certificate in Career Development
  - Bachelor of Arts, Psychology Concentration with Career Development Specialization
  - Master of Counseling: Career Counseling
  - Post-Master’s Certificate in Counseling: Career Counseling
- 



- Diploma in Career Development
  - Bachelor of Arts OR Bachelor of Management with Career Development Minor
- 



- Certificate in Adult Learning: Career Specialization
  - Master of Counseling: Career Counseling Specialization
  - Post-Masters Certificate in Counseling: Career Counseling Specialization
- 



- Master of Counseling: Career Counseling Specialization
  - Post-Masters Certificate in Counseling: Career Counseling Specialization
- 

## DISCONTINUED PROGRAMS APPROVED TO QUALIFY FOR CCDP DESIGNATION

**Bow Valley College:** Life Skills and Career Development Coach Diploma

**University of Calgary:** Certificate in Career Development

*\*Graduates from these programs are encouraged to continue to apply as criteria for completion these programs continue to be recognized by the CDAA*

# Ignite's Professional Panel a Hit with Attendees

By Ann Nakaska – Ignite Your Passion Chair 2009

On October 1st 2009, the Ignite Your Passion Conference welcomed 137 attendees – numbers equaling last year's figures. In a time of economic downturn, the Ignite committee is thrilled with the attendance and the feedback from all those who participated!

88 people completed feedback forms and gave the new panel format an overall rating of 8/10. They liked the panel format and would want to see it incorporated into other professional development events. There were also comments suggesting that we needed more time or that there should have been more interaction. We agreed, and the Ignite committee would like to see these suggestions incorporated into future events.

Our three speakers – Dr. Amundson, Dr. Neault, and Dr. Arthur were very well received, obtaining ratings of mainly 8's, 9's and 10's. We were so lucky to have three distinguished professionals from the career development field. Some felt that certain speakers were a bit more relevant to their work than others, but overall people were happy with the speakers, feeling that they got good information. Others suggested that more information on new career theories should be a part of future PD events.

Of the 88 people who completed feedback sheets: 27 were newbies, and it was their first Ignite; 36 had attended 2-4 times; 15 people, 5-8 times; and eight of our attendees have been to Ignite over 8 times. We are excited that we had so many newcomers to our event, and hope that they thoroughly enjoyed it. It is also just as exciting to receive such positive feedback from those who have attended Ignite for many years. 80% said that they would attend again next year, and 18% said maybe. Only 2 people said they would not attend next year. 89% of attendees said they would recommend this event to other people, and a whopping 94% said they felt that the conference was a good value for their money.

There were, however, mixed reviews when it came to the venue and the food. Only 52% said they enjoyed the food, and 34% said they enjoyed it somewhat. I did respond to the comments about the baked goods not being as fresh as they could be, and we were given a credit from the Holiday Inn on the baked goods. 67% liked the venue and said we should use the venue again, while 30% of the people were somewhat happy with the venue. Only 2 people were completely unhappy with the venue.

Many people suggested that we should return to Fort Calgary or the FCJ Centre. While I also love Fort Calgary, as a venue we unfortunately no longer fit there. We cannot grow as a chapter and stay at Fort Calgary. I am sorry, but that is just the reality of our situation. This also goes for the FCJ Centre. They can only hold 125, and we are now well beyond those numbers.

Also, because of the shape of the room at Fort Calgary, people were not able to hear the speakers at the back of the room last year and this resulted in many side conversations and negative feedback comments on the venue for last year. This was not a problem at the Holiday Inn, and overall I think the room worked better for everyone for hearing the speakers and staying engaged.



## 2009 - 2010 CDAA Board of Directors and Committee Chairs

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## Ignite's Professional Panel a Hit with Attendees – Continued...

Overall, the comments were extremely positive around the event itself. The organizing committee would once again like to thank all the attendees for coming out, and making Ignite Your Passion 2009 an incredible day. Feedback from our speakers also mirrors these sentiments.

Lastly, I would like to thank all those who helped on the committee. Without you Ignite would not have happened. To Debbie Pratt who was my right hand woman and supporter, I am going to miss working with you so much. It has been an honour and a pleasure. To Ellen Bandelow-Chung, for helping get our member-nonmember lists up to date, we salute you. To Joan Kathol, who took on getting our door prizes and making some attendees feel very lucky, we are thrilled you took on the job. To Virginia Posados, who helped get folders together and greet attendees at the door, kudos for all you did. To Julie Zurbrigg and Arlayna Alcock, who made sure Eventbrite got up and running, we could not have done it without you and no one could have come without you, so thank-you so, so much for all your time and attention. And to Anand Manickaraj, Laura Trettwer and Debby Jones who made sure the day went smoothly for all our registrants, thanks for being the friendly helpful people you are. And lastly, although he was not on our committee this year, I also need to thank Rob Shewchuk for all his help around Eventbrite, what a great guy! I truly appreciate all the help everyone did to make this event the success that it was.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working on the Ignite Your Passion Committee these last three years and look forward to taking on the role of past chair. We already have people lined up, anxiously awaiting getting started on Ignite 2010. If you would like to be a part of this wonderful Calgary Chapter tradition, please contact me at [Ann.nakaska@shaw.ca.](mailto:Ann.nakaska@shaw.ca), we would love to have you on board.

***The past is not your potential. In any hour you can choose to liberate the future. ~Marilyn Ferguson***

***May the peace, joy and hope of the holiday season be with you throughout the coming year!***