

# Labour Market Report

## Centre for Skilled and Internationally Trained Professionals



### Centre Update May 2009

- Bredin Institute clients are invited to check our on-line calendar for scheduled workshops, study groups and occupation specific presentations for May 2009.

### Job Search Tip of the Month

#### Handling the salary question.

The initial interview has gone well and you're feeling confident as it draws to a close. "And what are your salary expectations?" The interviewer asks. You groan inwardly, knowing that you don't have enough information about the job yet and if you state a salary too high, or too low, you won't make it to the next interview.

So, you waffle, saying: "Perhaps we could discuss the salary question later, once we both have a better idea of my suitability for this position."

The interviewer fires back: "What did you make in your last position?"

You were generously paid in your last job and it's the very thing you didn't want to discuss with this smaller firm, at least not early in the interview process.

Salary discussions, which are never easy, can be particularly awkward in a shrinking job market. Some job seekers are willing to bargain now, as long as they don't seem desperate. Cost conscious employers are often in bargaining mode, as well.

Not all firms are bargain hunting, in fairness. Many have established salary ranges for specific jobs which they advertise and freely discuss during interviews. Salary questions still come up, but generally within the position's stated salary range. Interviews with employers without established salary structures tend to be more challenging.

Salary is generally a key issue and can come up early in the selection process – sometimes in the initial telephone screening call. And when you try to evade or delay the salary question until later, you run the

risk of frustrating employers and recruiters.. "Honesty is the best policy. An interview, over the phone or in person, is merely an exchange of information. It's very difficult for us to decide whether to pursue an individual without really knowing what category they fit into."

There are ways to assess your value in your particular workplace and to respond to salary questions intelligently without disqualifying yourself. Job boards like Workopolis offer Basic salary information on line, categorized by job title and geographical location. [Look for the Workopolis Salary Calculator in the 4th tab on the Resource Centre page.](#) The overall objective when doing such research is to come up with a fair and equitable salary range for someone with your background, in your area and in your line of work.

With information of this kind, when asked about salary, you can offer a salary range. Logistics managers, for example, can safely say, "something in the mid-\$40's", or, "I'm looking in the \$50-55K range," and leave it at that until the job is offered and actual salary negotiations begin.

*Adapted from an article by Janis Foord Kirk, one of Canada's first newspaper careers columnists, who has been writing about career and workplace issues for major Canadian newspapers, notably the Toronto Star, since 1980. Her columns emphasize, career self-management, job search, work/life balance, and the need for truly "healthy workplaces".*

### Monthly Reflection

We may have all come from different ships, but we're on the same boat now

- Martin Luther King, Jr