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## March 2013 Extended Newsletter Content:

Starting Your Job Search  
Full-time, Part-time...What's Best for Me?  
Profiting from a Non-Profit Experience

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### Starting Your Job Search

You're a few months out from the end of the school year and for some, that means graduation! Whether it's for a summer internship or that First Job - it's never too early to start thinking about your job search.

Where do you begin?

#### **Student Services**

Luckily while you're still a student, you're able to access the plethora of Student Services available to you. From resume workshops to interviewing skills - take advantage of these resources while you can. Your Student Services department should also be posting up any upcoming job/career fairs or work search seminars. This is a great foundation for setting up a plan for job searching.

#### **Networking**

Hopefully by now you will have cultivated some contacts that are happy to help you look for work. These contacts can help you further network, get your name/resume circulated or provide important guidance in your search. Industry professionals can help you with using optimal keywords or highlighting particular nuances of your relevant experience examples. Your contacts can also potentially get you access to those jobs not posted (the hidden job market) or put you in consideration for roles that may be created later.

#### **Job Searching**

Ah - now the real work begins! It seems as if job postings are found anywhere, so be resourceful. Reach out to newly hired contacts (hello LinkedIn updates!) to politely inquire (and congratulate them) on how they scored the new gig. Was it through an internal referral? Job posting on the website? E-lists? Professional association? Leave no page unclicked!

#### **Social Media**

It would be irresponsible for me not to mention the power of social media for job searching. As communicators, we must use different resources to be heard - so we must use these methods to seek out new opportunities! An internet marketing company recently asked applicants to bypass the traditional methods of sending in a resume and cover letter and create a targeted landing page instead. Use social media to showcase your portfolio, contacts and knowledge base and continue to grow your web presence as you search. If you Google-d them, it's likely they will Google search you.

**Good luck!**

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## Full-time, Part-time...What's Best for Me?

It's that time of year: campus job boards are starting to fill up with summer job opportunities and many graduating students are thinking about finding their first job out of school. To navigate the job search and find the jobs you want, you'll need to ask yourself a few questions. While most of these questions are familiar, and have obvious answers – "Do I want to work for this organization?" and "Are my skills a good match for this position?" – one that isn't so obvious is "is this job type a good fit for me?". Each job type whether it is full-time, part-time, or otherwise, has unique advantages and disadvantages. Below you'll find an overview of the most common types of job and their pros and cons.

### **Full-time**

Finding a full-time job is, for many people, the ultimate goal. Full-time jobs, whether they are paid hourly or by annual salary, provide a sense of stability because they offer at least 30 hours of work a week. Permanent full-time jobs can also offer added non-wage benefits like paid vacation, sick leave and extended health coverage. These benefits vary by employer, and typically increase with the amount of time that you work for an organization. The biggest disadvantage of a full-time job is that it leaves less time to devote to other interests.

Pros: Consistent number of hours; additional non-wage benefits (permanent full-time)

Cons: Lack of flexibility

### **Part-time**

Many students have balanced a part-time job with coursework while they were going to school. Working a reduced number of hours means that you have more flexibility and time to devote to school and volunteering. If the job is at an organization that you would like to work for full-time, or in an industry that you want to break into, taking a part-time job can help you to get your "foot in the door" and to make connections that could help you in the future. It also helps to keep your skills current while you search for full-time work. The biggest disadvantages of part-time employment are the lack of stability and benefits.

Pros: Flexibility; can help you to break into a field or an organization that you're interested in

Cons: Lack of stability and benefits

### **Contract and Seasonal**

Summer jobs fall under the category of contract or seasonal employment. As the name suggests, seasonal jobs extend over a season. Contract jobs can be offered to cover the leave of a permanent employee (e.g. maternity leave) or when there is a project that requires extra temporary staffing. Both types of job can offer full-time or part-time hours and, depending on the length of employment and the organization, can occasionally offer limited benefits.

Like part-time opportunities, contract or seasonal employment can help you to get your “foot in the door” and to make connections in your chosen industry. It can also be a good opportunity to try out an unfamiliar industry or organization. The biggest disadvantages of contract or seasonal work are that there is no guarantee of long-term employment and that there are rarely non-wage benefits.

Pros: Flexible; can help you to make connections in an organization or field that you’re interested in

Cons: Typically no benefits; lack of stability; no guarantee of long-term employment

### **Self-employed**

Especially in communications, working as a freelancer can be a really effective way to build your portfolio and make industry connections while getting paid. How much you make is dependent on how much you work, so you are responsible for seeking out clients. The biggest advantage of being self-employed is that you can decide when and where you work, which is helpful for students who are trying to juggle coursework at the same time.

Pros: Flexible; helps to build your portfolio

Cons: Inconsistent, no guarantee of continued contracts, being consistent about seeking out work

### **Volunteering**

The biggest disadvantage of volunteer work is obvious: it’s unpaid. However, it still provides a great way to network, gain practical skills and experience, and to add to your resume. Volunteer positions range from short-term event assistance over a weekend to full-time internships that require a commitment of three months. In addition to skills and networking, volunteers are often provided with a letter of reference or recommendation to use in their search for paid work.

Pros: Provides opportunities for networking and skills development; good way to add to resume

Cons: Unpaid; Can require a long-term commitment

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## **Student Contributor: Profiting from a Non-Profit Experience**

*Douglas College and SFU Communications student Amanda Maxwell shares a few tips on getting the most out of volunteering experience.*

For a communications student, volunteering with a non-profit is a profitable experience. With a little focus, you can find a volunteer role which enhances your professional development and gives back to your community. Many smaller community-based non-profits run tight budgets on limited resources and time, with few employees to keep the basics running. Skilled volunteers supplement this, often with projects such as starting a newsletter, setting up a blog or website, or designing promotional materials. These tasks, though simple, take up valuable staff time but are ideal for volunteers developing professional skills.

- Real life – Put classwork into practice, or take the opportunity to find your way around programs not commonly found on the home PC, such as Raiser’s Edge.
- Project management – How many times have you seen a project through from start to finish? As a volunteer, you may be the only person who can ‘make it so’ - seize the opportunity.
- Thinking outside the box – Real life brings you up against budgets, variable skill levels, and limited resources. Think laterally – does a newsletter need an expensive email

program or can you adapt low-cost or free options? Is a built-from-scratch website best when staff don't understand html and there's no budget for hosting? Do you really need bells-and-whistles software or will an open source equivalent work?

- People skills – If you're not working for pay, why work at all? Volunteering is a great way to develop management skills based on motivation and job satisfaction. It's also a great way to develop self-discipline to work solo, at home, and get the job done.

One last word - keep notes!

That draft diagram on scrap paper became a social media network that engaged community and boosted sales. Likewise, save a copy of those snappy event tickets, brochures and testimonials – they all look good in your portfolio.

### **Useful Resources**

[Blackbaud's Raiser's Edge](#) - donor management software

[Charity Village](#) - community website for all things non-profit in Canada

[GoVolunteer](#) – matching up volunteers and their skills with organizations in need

[VolunteerBC](#) - gives information for BC's volunteer community

### *About Amanda*

Amanda has a wide range of volunteering experience spanning over a decade. These activities have included teaching, research, education administration, social media management and Board experience. She is currently exploring the world of magazine publishing in her latest volunteer role. All these roles have been key to developing her skills and portfolio. She's currently enrolled in Print Futures: Professional Writing at Douglas College and the Digital Communications Certificate program at SFU.

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