

WELCOME TO THE FINANCE & ACCOUNTING SECTOR HUB!

Panel Members:

Don Hutton, Certified General Accountants of Ontario, Manager – Admissions & Post-Secondary Liaison

Brendan D’Mello, Fidelity Investments Canada Inc., Client Representative – Retail & Retirement Services

Neeraj Pandit, Business Development Bank of Canada, Account Manager

Peter Lai, Aluma Enterprises Inc., Senior Operations Accountant

Facilitator:

Jo Ellen Logan, Working Solutions

Information and points put forth by panel members:

Don Hutton - CGA

- Don’t limit your opportunities – be open to new areas for you
- Future: scandals will lead to changes in Accounting
- Canadian experience – real issue is English communication
- Accreditation – Canadian equivalency, Canadian designation is critical
- Expected qualifications keep going up – must be a continuous learner
- expectation is you need to learn more

Brendan D’Mello – Fidelity Investments

- Mutual Funds Market is now in process of rebounding again (Financial Advisors, Mutual Funds)
- CSE – Securities exchange – Great courses – timing is great

Neeraj Pandit – Business Development, Bank of Canada, Account Manager

- Don’t give up – you were successful here
- Position yourself to what marketplace want
- Risk management – easier area to break in (entry level)
- Don’t hesitate to take a few steps down in order to go up a few later

Peter Lai – Aluma Enterprise Inc. Sr. Operations Accountant

Learn how to identify transferable skills

You need local knowledge – payroll, tax deductions, sales tax

Free courses and seminars are offered at Revenue Canada (1/2 day – 1 day)

Combine this with some relevant volunteer exposure

Small Companies

Big Companies

Accpac

DBK

Excel (need to be very strong)

Peoplesoft

Simply Accounting

AS-400

Advice – If you aren't ambitious, go through CPA payroll.

Questions, with corresponding answers, asked by IEP participants:

1. How do you get into entry level positions? Strategies for mutual fund industry specifically?
 - take CSC or IFIC course from the Canadian Securities Institute- these courses cover stocks, bonds, mutual funds.
 - apply at company websites for positions.
 - Seek part-time opportunities, volunteer, or temporary.
 - Follow paths that "open doors"; once you are working in some capacity, one thing leads to another.
 - Start in customer service area, get opportunity to be trained and be paid and company may pay for professional development courses.

2. What is the easiest way to get an accounting designation? Fastest? Cheapest?
 - Don't look for easy route- not effective- no easy route.
 - Who you need to listen to is the person who hires, not the school to determine skills, options needed in workplace. CGA is only designation that has own education program. Be sure work experience requirement matches interests- CGA program offers flexibility. Don't get pigeon-holed in only 1-2 areas if possible.
 - CGA and CMA is most flexible. CA is more rigid. Seek organizational sponsoring of courses if possible.
 - people in CGA does not qualify for government funding. Membership in CGA helps cover some costs. Go to university to get exemptions for courses already attained.

3. Effective and cost effective way of networking?
 - not be shy, don't undersell yourself, use CGA referral service to access employers.
 - Join networking groups- www.happen.ca. Halton and Peel Professional Association. It costs \$80 and meet professionals to enhance network and develop job search skills. It is structured and provides learning from one another as to effective strategies.
 - EARN. Executive Advancement Recruitment Network. www.earnworks.org.

- Everyone is a potential networking contact.
 - 80% of positions come through networking.
 - Get out there and volunteer so when opportunities come available you will know.
4. Best way of evaluating foreign credentials? Is there a way of getting recognition of prior work?
 - CGA requires two years of senior experience in Canada.
 - Start with part-time, contract jobs from agencies to lead to full-time opportunities.
 - U of T evaluates
 5. What is the flexibility Canadians expect from newcomers? How do you tailor your resume for Canadian employers?
 - be willing to learn something new.
 - identify area you like and consider community colleges i.e. George Brown College, that offers practical skills with computer and finance/accounting.
 - insert table on cover letter- match skills you have on left and skills needed on right side. This is time efficient for employers.
 - cover letter is important to highlight skills and experience to catch attention of the employer to read resume.
 - Too much detail on resume may not be interpreted positively. Focus on results attained or how value was added to organization. Employers want to see confidence, capability. Avoid slick and using buzzwords. Only show relevant information and achievements relevant to Canadian employers.
 6. How effective is CGA's employment referral service?
 - there are all types of jobs from entry level to senior.
 7. Is CGA best for someone with tax background?
 - CGA hires mostly CGA grads or students.
 8. How can I get my overseas experience/skills recognized in Canada? Where can newcomers learn about labour rights?
 - www.gov.ca. Ontario Government website takes you to Ministry of Labour.
 - Be sure skills are transferable and meets Ontario Labour standards. Canadian Custom Revenue Association offers free one day seminars. www.settlement.org can give info of recognition of skills.
 - Peel Board Adult Learning Centre- 5 month course provides placement of foreign-trained professionals, 905-981-3034, www.dpcdsb.org/coop.
 9. Does CGA have job counsellors?
 - no.

Progress Career Planning Institute is a non-profit community centre in East Toronto that offers career exploration programs and job search programs. Info on bags.

Damindra Dias is providing sector specific coaching sessions to help you become relevant to meet the needs of Canadian employers at PCPI. The Dufferin Peel Board Centre provides a similar service.

10. Emphasis on skills or qualifications?
- in Canada, employers are looking for you to use the skills or have "demonstrated ability". The qualifications are needed to get "in door".
11. What if CGA is too intensive to me?
- take payroll course.
12. Can you get exemption for a one-year?
- you can get exemption of one-year if you get a personal affidavit from former supervisor specifying former work experience.