

WELCOME TO THE IT & T SECTOR HUB!

Panel Members:

Himanshu Shah, Senior Manager, Deloitte Consulting Canada

John O'Grady, Prism Economics & Analysis, Partner

Sam Fareed, WinNet Systems, President

Rick Davey, RCC College of Technology, President

Paul D. Swinwood, Software Human Resource Council, President

Abid Rana, George Brown City College, School of Information Technology, Professor

Elida Detfurth, Testimonial, IEP

Facilitator:

Cathy Tait, Western Management Consultants, Principal

Instructions to participants: (if Facilitator provides)

- Build on the points of the plenary
- We would like to leave having had a worthwhile session
- Interactive session
- Panel will introduce themselves
- Then an exercise to introduce each other
- Pick a partner (someone you don't know); practice networking
- Three questions to answer:
 - Where are you from and how long have you been in Canada?
 - What did you learn from Lionel Laroche that can help you in your job search?
 - Could you share the 30 second elevator pitch with me?

Information and points put forth by panel members:

Rick Davey

- IT sector has changed
- Fewer jobs after the end of Y2K
- Huge bust associated with the dot com meltdown and the changes that came about after 9/11

- Devry program in IT went from 300 students to 0 today
- Hiring fell
- More specialization, with an amorphous change in IT with more special knowledge
- You know specifically what you know and are able to communicate that in terms of what you can do
- Understand the needs of an organization and what you can do for them
- Others need to know what you know
- You need to have the soft skills
- The person who hires wants to know “can I work with you?”, “do I want to work with you?”
- Need communication skills, need to understand the norms of the Canadian workplace
- This is more important when the market is bad

Elida

- Within the last three years there has been a significant shift in IT
- During the internet boom, many people went for short courses and were employed in good positions – no longer the case
- The market is shifting back to where it used to be – looking for professional experience, not just “Canadian” experience
- If you have worked in IT before coming here, make that the main point on your resume and business card
- The more serious professional is now more in demand
- Security is now important (in terms of banks, etc.)
- Positioning yourself is one of the first steps for career development
- Find your niche – what is your area of expertise
- Saying you do everything will strike an employer that you can’t do anything well
- Take charge of your own career – own your destiny
- Skill-wise, it is your responsibility to keep your skills current
- A matter of give and take (for example, salary might be less at first, but if you are working in your area you will be able to demonstrate your value)

Paul

- You haven’t seen anything yet in terms of change
- You will need to evolve and learn
- If you are a Canadian citizens, Career Focus offers a \$10,000 subsidy
- www.shrc.ca
- Still 50 placement subsidies that they haven’t used this year
- Labour market intelligence in IT – bottomed out in March 2002
- 52% of all IT employment in Canada is in Ontario; 60% in 416 and 905

- 185,000 IT jobs in Toronto region with an 8% turnover; 15,000 jobs in this area
- IT jobs are in manufacturing, public administration, etc.
- Professional and scientific services have dropped their IT jobs
- Skills requirements: communications skills essential
- English/French; Business Language; Group Work Capabilities; Presentation of Self; Technology Communications; Resume to be Noticed
- 800 to 1000 resumes per job advertised

John O'Grady

- Jobs in IT in Toronto region are NOT in IT sector
- Financial sector is by far the largest employer in IT in Toronto region
- Nature of skills in demand are biased to specialized skills (you should have good foundation skills), by programming language or by application
- Types of technology where one observes unsatisfied demand include security-related systems; enterprise resource planning; internet protocol; wireless technologies; and industry-specific applications (financial sector)
- Structuring of resumes important in IT sector—focused on experienced and problem-solving abilities
- Companies that are recruiting are looking for statements of your skills and the problems you have successfully solved, not looking for credentials or previous position titles
- Employers are probably databasing and scanning resumes – need to focus on keywords that are in the job ad

Sam

Trend today voice-over IP – send telephone voice to database applications (networking professionals)

Security issues are hot as well; probably five companies in Canada, with three in Toronto
Wireless is expanding very quickly; with lots of jobs in Peel region

CCIE – Cisco Certified Internet Experts are in demand

Abid

- 416 and 905 have a lot of the IT jobs
- Small employers
- Teaches at George Brown College, the feedback from employers indicated that graduates who were immigrants were lacking in communication and soft skills
- Social networking and communication skills are important
- GBC developed special program (one year) for IEPs in IT – communication, workplace and presentation skills as well as other soft skills
- 70% of graduates got bona fide jobs within six months of graduating
- Certification isn't the problem; the soft skills are lacking
- Some IEPs don't really try to immerse in the culture

- We need to speak English in the culture
- Networking is important
- Bioinformatics, healthinformatics and financial sector are needing IT professionals
- Employers are looking for Canadian credentials

Himanshu

- With globalization and internet, IT professionals don't face the same issues as ten years ago
- Over the years there has been an acceptance in Canada to immigration
- Networking important, use your contacts
- Keep up to date, know what you are doing, and network!

Cathy Tait

Formulate three questions for the panel, and then pick one to ask the panelists (in groups of eight)

You cannot ask for a job!

Questions for Panelists:

Subsidy program—what are the criteria for eligibility?

- Check the web site – it is a program for the companies (with restrictions, aimed at youth under age 30)

SHRC – could you organize seminars for networking, etc.

- Travelling across the country trying to put programs in local communities (from Halifax to Victoria)
- Doing this with employers
- The Canadian Information Processors Society (33 sections) – meet on a monthly basis to network in IT

Most are new immigrants, with most of the jobs are filled through networking? How do we establish a network into our field of specialization

- Important to be proactive. No one is going to knock on your door – you'll have to knock yourself. Join organizations and associations. Go to seminars and give your business card to whoever you can. Connect at peer level or with middle management. Newspapers advertise seminars on a regular basis. Network within your community. Go to your community centres, your churches, etc. to network. Real networks belong with people who connect with each other.

We've had to take survival jobs and have been out of the industry for some time. With such a competitive market, how do we stay current and gain practical experience?

- Volunteering is a good way to learn new technology. Canadianize your education and get Canadian credentials, especially those courses that offer you co-op programs or practicum.
Also, every product has a special interest group (SAP, ISO9000, etc.) that meet on a regular basis who will be looking for volunteers.
Training is expensive. Volunteering is important, yes. Self-learning can be very helpful on-line (OTN if you are looking at Oracle, etc.). Get memberships online and download the product for free for the first six months. Use the tutorials on-line. Look for organizations that use the technology to help (hospitals, community organizations, etc.).

One of the things that are asked of new immigrants is to research the companies that you want to work for – where do you find this information?

- Directories are available. PCPI has a great resource centre. Business directories are full of information on employers with the names of the managers. Use the internet, surf wisely. Many companies have a corporate page that lists information for their executives. Also, pick three areas of expertise, go to the web and do an “and” search on these things, doing an educated web search that represents your 90 second resume. Read the business section of the newspapers, keeping in mind what everything means to your area of expertise. When you see an ad in the newspaper, cut it out and start a file of companies that are hiring in your areas. Make as many resumes as companies you want to work for.

Many positions in IT are not filled, are there any government programs that bridge applicants to the employers, and is there any training available.

- CISCO training helps. Some certification schools will give you experience.

Companies are asking for a whole bunch of qualifications for a wide range of applications? How do you deal with this?

- One company will have a lot of technologies in the same place. Frame your job skills around your number one, and two and three skills. Then look for the companies who are looking for your numbers one, two and three skills. Often HR managers don't understand what the IT manager is talking about, and the IT associations are trying to change this. The company will have to come to its senses and lower their expectations. Research what the job really is and what they are looking for.

Last comments by the panel:

- Rewrite your resume and make sure it is crisp and to the point, and that highlights your key skills
- Learn the culture, social networking, soft skills, volunteer placement
- Skills that are out of date – keep in mind that the overwhelming majority of people who are working haven't updated their skills

- When you are finally getting the interview, be on time. If you are not on time you will not get the job
- Three page maximum resume, education at the end, first page has the profile that defines your skills, be very assertive and tell the future employers on the first page
- Network well to avoid HR department