



FOCUS

News Letter of The Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada

இலங்கைப் பட்டதாரிகள் சங்கம் - கனடா

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The Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada

Established in 1989, on the initiative of Sri Lankans with degrees from Universities in Sri Lanka, **the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada (ASGC)** is growing through its teen years now. The membership of ASGC is now open to all Canadians of Sri Lankan origin Graduates and Diploma holders.

Currently, every effort is being made by the ASGC to focus on organizing events and activities of specific interest to the high school students, and affording them an opportunity to interact and learn from both the academic achievements and professional experience of Sri Lankan graduates from Canadian Universities. It is our intention, through increased activities and promotional efforts, to expand the membership of the association to include more graduates from Canadian Universities.

Our goal is to bring together all Canadian Graduates of Sri Lankan origin, provide a forum to meet, learn and harness our collective experience, wisdom, charitableness and, above all, voluntarism to the benefit of the Canadian community in general and of the Sri Lankan community in particular.

Since the year 2001, ASGC has maintained a website www.asgc.ca where valuable information about the Association, including current activities are available. We have already started developing a Directory of Graduates of Sri Lankan origin living in Canada using the website- www.asgc.ca -and membership contacts. All Sri Lankan graduates are welcome to log in to the site, learn about our activities, and enter the details of their educational qualification and professional experiences in the Directory. It is our expectation that such a Directory will serve as a valuable source of reference for establishing and fostering contacts and networking among fellow graduates.

Activities for the year 2003

1. ASGC continue to send textbooks, journals and computers to the universities in the North and East of Sri Lanka. As part of this ongoing project, we seek donation of used university books, journals (published within the last three years), and computers. Those interested in further information are invited to contact Mr. Ramanathan at 416 438 2949 or Mr. Surren Balendran at 416 471 4145.
2. A benefit film show was organized for collecting funds in support of ASGC's charity programs, was held on May 11, 2003. Thanks to the support of the community and the owners, we were able to add \$ 1250 to the charity funds.
3. As part promotion of volunteerism among youths, ASGC has been organizing Car Wash as an annual event for many years. Funds collected are donated to the Centenary Hospital/Rouge Valley Health System Foundation. This year's Car Wash took place on August 09, 2003, at the parking lot opposite the Food Basics Store at the Neilson-Ellesmere intersection. We had the support of a number of volunteer students who, along with many of our own members, helped make the event a great success. All the student participants will be issued with certificates of appreciation, which are recognized by the Ontario School Boards for the volunteer work. The ASGC wishes to thank all volunteers and others.
4. The first Computer Program Contest and Seminar on Computer Technology, aimed at promoting computer skills and creativity among the youths, was organized by ASGC in 2002. This event proved to be both successful and popular among the students and the community at large. In response to the commendation and encouragement received from the community, it has been decided to make this an annual event. The Association is looking for sponsors in our community to support the second event in the series to be held in September. Business establishments and professionals are invited to support this event and be recognized at

the function. Those interested are invited to get in touch with either Mr. Theivendrarajah at 416 335 3453 or Mr. Ramanathan at 416 438 2949.

5. A request received from the University of Jaffna is appearing in our website. This request was conveyed to Mr S. Sivanesan, a senior member of ASGC, by Professor Kumarvadelu, Dean, Faculty of Science, University of Jaffna, at a meeting held in Jaffna late last year. It will be recalled that in 2002, ASGC extended financial assistance and helped those concerned to organize and conduct series of workshops and seminars for training of teachers in the North to prepare them to teach the recently revised GCE (A/L) syllabus. ASGC wishes to solicit the support and assistance of members and well-wishers to get actively involved in organizing and delivering of such assistance. For further details please contact Mr. Sivanesan at 416 293 4697, Mr. Theivendrarajah at 416 335 3453 or Mr. C Ramanathan at 416 438 2949.
6. The Career Counseling Workshop for High School Students and Parents, which is recognized as the most productive annual event being organized by ASGC, will be held in late October. As in the past, keynote speakers will include high-ranking officials from the Toronto District School Board, and professionals from Information Technology, Life Sciences, Applied Sciences, Humanities, including law, journalism and financial services. We encourage students and parents to make the best use of this opportunity and enroll in this free workshop. The exact date and location for this event will be notified later. For further information please contact Mr. Ramanathan at 416 438 2949 and Mr. Surren Balendran at 416 471 4145
7. Yoga Classes are conducted under the auspices of ASGC by an experienced Guru from 8am to 9am every Sunday morning, in the hall adjoining the grocery shop "Daily Needs" near the Finch and Pharmacy Avenue intersection. Those who wish to join the classes are invited to call V. Sathiyaraj at (416) 291 5853 for the details.
8. ASGC continues to provide assistance to new graduate immigrants to settle down in Canada by helping them to get their educational certifications evaluated by the relevant authorities, job referrals and job search programs. ASGC has organized a Workshop on August 24, 2003 at Scarborough Civic Centre for graduate immigrant for counseling them in finding jobs in Canada.

ASGC Executive Committee 2003

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Job Related Internet Sites

www.jobbank.gc.ca/
www.electroniclabourexchange.ca
www.workplace.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/
www.jobs.gc.ca/
www.publicservice.gc.ca/jobopportunities/
www.gojobs.gov.on.ca/
www.workopolis.com/
www.monster.ca/
www.jobbus.com/
www.jobstar.ca/
www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/
www.canada.careermosaic.com/
www.jobsat.com/
www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/recruit/
www.infojob.net/ontario/
www.ele-spe.org/
www.employmentnews.com/

Career Guidance/ Planning

www.workinfonet.ca/cwn
www.on.workinfonet.ca/
www.hrdc.gc.ca/hrib/hrp-prh/pi-ip/career-carriere/
www.possibilitiesproject.com/
www.worksearch.gc.ca/
www.jobfutures.ca/
www.careerkey.com
www.careerexperience.com/
www.careerpathsonline.com/
www.careercrusing.com/
www.careerbookmarks.tpl.toronto.on.ca/

Ten Must-Have Skills for A Job Seeker

(By Pan Kanagaretnam)

Communication Skills: Placed first in the list of skills by many job-search experts, the communication skills broadly refers to one-on-one verbal language skills, writing skills, presentation skills, and the ability to convey thoughts, opinions, suggestions, questions and answers in an appropriate and professional manner. Listening skills is also an important aspect of communication. Only those who listen intently to every nuance of every question that the interviewer asks could respond clearly and concisely.

Job-Related Skills: While it is important that one fits into a job description, to-day one has to recognize the fact that the whole area of job-related skills is being treated with more flexibility. It has been found that some organizations would be content with as low as 60-70% job-related skills in order to have a person who seems to fit the “personal chemistry” attributes and company culture.

Multiple Skills Sets: Unlike in the past when prospective employers were looking for people who brought one highly specialized skill to the company, to-day most employers are prepared to hire those who bring multiple skill areas with them such as for example, chemistry and computer science, engineering and biochemistry, science and business etc. In short, combination skills can really be an asset for hiring and promotion.

Willingness to Learn: Employers are attracted by job seekers who belief in “lifelong learning” not necessarily in hard skill areas that impact on one’s job. It could include attending even classes in “Yoga” or going back to school in the evening to learn say Tamil or English Literature, which goes to demonstrate one’s commitment to constantly improve and enrich his or her mind and knowledge which in turn would impact positively on one’s job.

Teamwork Skills: All Employers are looking for workers or employees who could fit into and work with a team. Therefore successful work experience in a team-based environment, even as a volunteer in a charitable or student organization, could be a great asset. Most of the companies consider such a successful experience a key determinant in a hiring decision.

Customer Service: Customers or patrons are the key to the success of a business and public service. They are the people who benefit from, and pay for the

services the employees and the companies offer. Therefore all employers are looking for people who have an excellent understanding of the importance of customers and customer services; the skills to understand their expectations and requirements; and, above all, the need to focus on timely and complaint free delivery of products and services. Several questions will be asked by prospective employers in order to determine one’s understanding of this critical skill area.

Initiative: Initiative is understood to mean one going beyond one’s call of duty, go beyond or exceed the expectations of those one support or work with, and the kind of work hours one keep. These attributes and qualities are usually determined on the basis of report and response to questions received from the references. It will be advisable to be fully prepared to talk about some examples showing important accomplishments, pointing out those situations showing he or she has “gone mile” in order to satisfy the needs of the project and those who are counting on his or her efforts.

Adaptability: Researchers have found that people in industry are subjected to constant change. Therefore a key part of one’s interview preparation should be to find some examples of how he or she has adapted to unexpected circumstances or totally new learning or working environments. The likely questions that may be asked at interviews include: What are your thoughts about why organizations have a need for change? And, Have you sought to maintain or exceed your results in the face of change?

Promotability: This refers to a gut-level instinct that an interviewer develops regarding an applicant’s ability to grow in an organization. They wonder as to whether or not the candidate demonstrates the overall behaviours, skills, knowledge and desire to grow. It is in order to determine one’s “promotability”, that questions are asked about one’s short-term and long-term career expectations by employers. People who are promotable are thought to have career plans in place, and they are on that plan at any point in time. Candidates at interviews should be prepared to explain such plans if the need arises.

Salesmanship: All employees are expected to have the ability to sell, and this becomes evident in the ways one describes his or her strengths in a job interview. This is an ability to sell one’s ideas, proposals or projects to others including to the company management.

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Interview Cheat Sheet

Carole Martin

Relax -- a cheat sheet is not really cheating. It's a checklist to make sure you stay focused before, during and after the interview. Creating a cheat sheet will help you feel more prepared and confident. You shouldn't memorize what's on the sheet or check it off during the interview. You should use your cheat sheet to remind you of key facts. Here are some suggestions for what you should include on it.

In the Days Before the Interview

1. Draw a line down the center of a piece of paper. On the left side, make a bulleted list of what the employer is looking for based on the job posting. On the right side, make a bulleted list of the qualities you possess that fit those requirements.
2. Research the company, the industry and the competition.
3. Prepare your 60-second personal statement: Your answer to the, "Tell me about yourself," question.
4. Write at least five success stories to answer behavioral interview questions ("Tell me about a time when..." or "Give me an example of a time...").
5. List 10 questions to ask the interviewer about the job, the company and the industry.
6. Research salary data and determine your worth.
7. Determine your salary needs based on your living expenses -- what is your bottom line?
8. Get permission from your references to use their names.

Before You Go to the Interview

1. Do you look professional? Check yourself in the mirror; part of your confidence will come from looking good.
2. Carry these items to the interview:
 - Several copies of your resume on quality paper.
 - A copy of your references.
 - A pad of paper on which to take notes (notes are optional).
 - Directions to the interview site.
3. Prepare answers to the 10 most common interview questions:
 - Tell me about yourself.
 - Why did you leave or are you leaving your last position?
 - What do you know about this company?
 - What are your goals?
 - What are your strengths and weaknesses?

- Why do you want to work for this company?
- What has been your most significant achievement?
- How would your last boss and colleagues describe you?
- Why should we hire you?
- What are your salary expectations?

Upon Arrival

1. Arrive early -- enter the building 10 minutes before your appointment.
2. Review your prepared stories and answers.
3. Go to the restroom and check your appearance one last time.
4. Announce yourself to the receptionist in a professional manner.
5. Stand and greet your interviewer with a hearty -- not bone-crushing -- handshake.
6. Smile and look into the interviewer's eyes.

During the Interview

1. Try to focus on the points you have prepared without sounding rehearsed or stiff.
2. Relax and enjoy the conversation. Learn what you can about the company.
3. Ask questions and listen; read between the lines.
4. At the conclusion, thank the interviewer and determine the next steps.
5. Ask for the interviewer's business card so you can send a follow-up letter.

After the Interview

1. As soon as possible, write down what you are thinking and feeling.
2. Later in the day, look at what you wrote and assess how you did.
3. Write a follow-up thank-you letter, reminding the interviewer of your qualities.



Useful Internet Sites

- Helping Foreign-Trained Professionals. www.contactpoint.ca
- Centre For Foreign-Trained Professionals and Tradespeople. www.cftpt.org
- Settlement Organization. www.settlement.org
- Skills for Change. www.skillsforchange.org
- Government of Ontario. www.equalopportunity.on.ca/english_g/apt/
- www.cdnbusinessdirectory.com/
- www.members.xoom.com/jobsearch/

