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Let the job hunt begin

Need a job?

Each week, The Sunday Times' Jobs section will feature two readers who are looking for a job. We will get a recruitment expert to look through their resumes and suggest what they should do or aim for to increase their chances of getting employed. E-mail your resume (with photo) to suntimes@sph.com.sg

More than 700 readers have responded to an offer by The Sunday Times to help them find employment in our new Jobs section, which kicks off today.

Each week, we will get recruitment experts to help two job-seekers.

The selected candidates will get advice on, for example, how to improve their resumes and impress employers during interviews. They will also be matched with suitable jobs if these are available.

Those who have sent us their resumes in the past three weeks include fresh graduates, rank-and-file workers and mid-career professionals. Many have degrees, with some holding a master's qualification. Some have years of experience in their field of work. The youngest person is 18, and the oldest, 57.

Some said they have been jobless for months, others are housewives looking to re-enter the workforce, while a handful are opting for a mid-career switch.

There are also foreigners - mainly Malaysians, Filipinos and Indians - based here and abroad.

Most of the applicants are after jobs in the manufacturing, information technology (IT) and finance sectors.

Given these difficult times, some stated that they did not mind pay cuts, contract work or odd working hours.

Mr Dennis Tan, 50, a former IT sales executive who quit his job a year ago and is now looking for a new one, said: "The economy is so poor. It's good that the Government, the community centres and the newspaper are chipping in to help the jobless find jobs."

Stiff competition, but he remains upbeat

Marco Wong Yun Feng, 28

- His three-month contract position as a bank officer with Citi Private Bank ended last month.

Before that, he held a one-year contract with OCBC Bank's private banking division between his master studies, assisting the Indonesian team with service and marketing support.

He worked as a credit manager for Citibank's commercial banking division.

- He is looking for a position in wealth management, but is open to other banking and finance positions.
- He holds a Master of Science in Wealth Management and a Bachelor of Business Management in finance, both from Singapore Management University.

HE SAYS

"I've sent out about 15 job applications over the last three weeks, and so far only the recruitment agencies have responded. I'm still positive about my prospects in the long term, as well as the ability of Singapore to recover from the economic crisis.

"However, vacancies in finance are in short supply and there are a lot of very qualified candidates around now.

"My savings can last me a few months. I will apply to positions in other sectors if response remains dismal."

HR EXPERT RECOMMENDS

Ms Charnele Tan, branch manager of GMP Banking, a division of regional recruitment company The GMP Group, says: "Marco's curriculum vitae would be appealing to finance firms when the market is good, but right now, the competition in the banking sectors is very stiff.

"Private banks aren't looking for lower-cost, entry-level people but quality people with at least two to three years' of experience. Although most of Marco's relevant experience consists of contract positions of up to a year, he is consistent, focused on what he wants and has keen knowledge of the industry.

"It is an advantage that he has positive testimonials from his former employers because in a niche industry like private banking, reputation plays a big part.

"Also, he dresses well and is confident without coming across as arrogant.

"For Marco, the problem is timing. I would advise him to take up a contract position with a private banks as soon as any opens up, and wait to be upgraded to a permanent position when the market recovers."

Email: marco.wong@live.com.sg

Wealth of experience in fashion

Ophelia Lim Lilian, 38

- The fashion merchandiser was laid off three months ago when the merchandising company she worked for shrank its operations. She had been there for three years, and had worked in four merchandising companies before that.
- She is looking for a full-time position in fashion merchandising, but is open to jobs in fashion retail.
- She has A-levels from YMCA Education Centre

SHE SAYS

"I've sent more than 100 applications but have heard from only six companies so far. The merchandising industry is not doing well, so I am open to a career in another industry, preferably related to fashion."

HR EXPERT RECOMMENDS

Ms Nancy Oon, assistant manager of GMP Recruitment, a division of The GMP Group, says:

"Ophelia has 18 years of experience as a fashion merchandiser and has regional exposure from her past jobs, where she had to visit suppliers in China, Thailand and Vietnam to close deals.

"From the interview, she came across as a very proactive worker who has a never-say-die attitude.

"But because the merchandising industry is not doing well now, Ophelia may want to consider moving into retail instead, since she knows women's and children's fashion well.

"I will suggest that she sign up for government-funded training programmes first as sales jobs demand a different set of skills from merchandising."

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