International Opportunities & Finding Professional Work Abroad

Why work abroad?
- It’s a new adventure!
- Gain valuable professional and personal experience.
- Earn money ($/£/€/¥) and travel.
- Develop language and communication skills.
- Improved job prospects.
- Develop cultural awareness and sensitivity.

This is just a cross-section of ideas to why you would consider working abroad, but did you know:

85% of young Canadian professionals who work internationally do so with a US or Canadian-based employer according to MyWorldAbroad’s publisher and founder, Jean-Marc Hachey.

MyWorldAbroad.com goes on to say young Canadian professionals almost never work abroad directly with domestic foreign firms and that it is very rare for North American professionals to work abroad with local firms unless they are well-established in their careers, or perhaps if they are taking part in a short-term pre-arranged co-op program. The most common way to work internationally is through jobs based in your home country, where international work is undertaken with short-term visits abroad and through the other global communication methods, such as the internet. These opportunities are increasing given that many industries have to reach wider to stay competitive, and the ever-increasing methods of global communication. This of course makes it more difficult to predict which international markets you will be working with as it is your employer who determines the countries targeted based on business need.

So, how do you find a professional international job with an employer based in your home country?

If you’re serious about gaining professional international experience in your field, MyWorldAbroad.com suggests you need focus on conducting an industry/sectorial job search, targeting home-based companies working internationally in your field of interest.

Carry out an industry-specific job search. Your goal is to uncover the international hierarchy of organizations within your area of work:

- You must identify employers who regularly send employees abroad or employ staff who are based at home, but do international work.
- You need to identify organizations whose mandate is international, such as international engineering, health, finance, disaster relief, teaching or research firms.

Don’t ignore small and medium-size firms, since they often send junior workers abroad – it’s often better to be a big fish in a small pond that a small fish in a big pond!
Remember, there is an international aspect to almost every field of work, and if you do your research you can reach out to the companies and organizations operating at that level.

Once you have identified your target field and the type of organization you wish to work for, research exactly who the international players in your field are. It can be helpful to track down international experts in your field and ask for career advice.

**How to improve your chances of working abroad?**

If you are aiming to get a professional international job after graduation, there are certain things that you can do during your time as a university student to improve your odds.

> “While attending school, you must purposely seek out strategies to help you acquire the international experience and related skills that international employers are looking for.”

**MyWorldAbroad.com** suggests:

- A Masters qualification is a prerequisite for many international positions.
- When getting your first degree (BA, BSc), choose electives that broaden your skills inventory and choose internationally-focused subjects.
- Maximize your on-campus experience.
- Become socially active and knowledgeable in a culture other than your own.
- Study abroad for one or more semesters.

Your experience in Canada really counts too, so develop skills in leadership, entrepreneurialism and learning a new language won’t hurt too! Consider work and/or volunteer experience with an international group.

The most sought-after employees are those with multidisciplinary backgrounds, especially business backgrounds that include strong people skills. Employers seek scientists who can understand market research, engineers who can manage research teams and help commercialize products and political scientists who can work in trade promotion. There is a need to assess the business aspect in almost every field, such as strategic planning, financial management and systems analysis. And do not assume that these essential skills are all acquired incidentally, through classroom or thesis work. You need to interact!

**And Now – Go That Extra Mile!**

- Experience has shown that those who are successful at finding international work have all done something extraordinary to land their first job.
- You must now apply extra entrepreneurial zeal to your job search.
- Be bold and forthright when contacting employers.
Entry-level job seekers are most successful when they do a series of small extraordinary things during the job search process, finding jobs using alternative or back-door strategies.

Additional tips for finding work abroad:

- Look at the hidden job market as well as advertised posts. Around 20% of jobs are advertised so the other 80% are usually filled by word-of-mouth and networking. Start by asking family and friends and widen your search by doing informational interviews with companies that you are interested in working with. Some studies suggest that only one in 200 (several studies use a higher figure, up to 1,500) resumes sent result in a job offer but one in 12 informational interviews results in a job offer. *Which stats do you prefer?*
- Regularly review vacancies on Career Track - [https://bcitsa-csm.symplicity.com/](https://bcitsa-csm.symplicity.com/) as we anticipate more international jobs will be posted as the demand for these grows.
- Focus on your strengths – refer to the following blog article [http://www.bcitsa.ca/careers/2015/03/24/should-we-really-focus-on-our-strengths/](http://www.bcitsa.ca/careers/2015/03/24/should-we-really-focus-on-our-strengths/)
- If you don’t know where to start come and see a Career Specialist, that’s why we are here! We’ll help you target your job search to something that fits your strengths and interests.

When looking for work abroad use following websites:

**[www.myworldabroad.com](http://www.myworldabroad.com)**
A comprehensive resource that has 4,000 searchable resources, 300 expert articles and inspiring student stories (there is a cost to access the full site), however this is a link to [http://myworldabroad.com/Free-Go-Abroad-Advice](http://myworldabroad.com/Free-Go-Abroad-Advice) that can be accessed free-of-charge and includes some of the sites most popular, insightful and inspirational material that they have.

(Internship and Volunteer Opportunities)
Information on the International Youth Internship Program, for young Canadians aged 19-30, graduating from a post-secondary program and the International Aboriginal Youth Internship Program for Aboriginal youth between the ages of 18 and 35. *This site also has additional web links that may help you find an international opportunity.*

Find out about bilateral youth mobility arrangements and agreements with different countries around the world, where Canadians can travel and work in other’s countries for up to one year.
www.prospects.ac.uk/working_abroad.htm
The UK’s official graduate careers website.

www.teachabroad.com
Search for 189 organizations offering a total of 1067 Teach Abroad programs.

www.goingglobal.com
Find international jobs and internships. Expert advice on CV, resume, work permit and visa requirements for work abroad.