

Why Searching for a Job May Feel Different in Canada

Introduction

Searching for a job in Canada may feel different from what you are used to. This does not mean your past experience is not valuable. It means that different countries, regions, and workplaces may use different expectations when hiring.

In Canada, employers may pay close attention to how applicants communicate, how they present their experience, whether they understand the job posting, whether they have local experience or references, and whether they show professionalism throughout the hiring process.

This module explains some of the reasons job searching may feel unfamiliar and gives you a clearer understanding of how to adjust your approach. The goal is to help you show employers your value more clearly.

Why Job Searching May Feel Unfamiliar

No matter where you are coming from, job searching in Canada may work differently than you expect. You may already have education, skills, work experience, or strong motivation, but you may still need to learn how employers in Canada evaluate applicants.

One reason job searching can feel unfamiliar is that employers may think about hiring in a different way. They may not only look at your qualifications. They may also look at your communication style, your resume format, your ability to explain your experience, your references, your availability, and whether your application clearly matches the role.

Communication and professionalism are especially important. Employers may form an impression of you before the interview, based on your email, resume, phone call, application form, or follow-up message. Small details can affect whether an employer sees you as organized, reliable, and ready for the workplace.

Local experience and references may also matter. Some employers may feel more confident when they see that an applicant has Canadian work, volunteer, placement, campus, or community experience. This does not mean experience from another country has no value. It means that local experience may help employers understand how you work in a Canadian workplace context.

Applying for jobs may also require a different strategy. In some cases, sending the same resume to many jobs may not be effective. Employers usually want to see that your application connects clearly to the specific job posting.

Networking and confidence can also affect your job search. Networking does not only mean asking someone for a job. It can mean learning from classmates, instructors, staff, employers,

community members, and professional contacts. Confidence also matters, but it should be balanced with respect and professionalism.

Key point:

Your experience matters, but learning how the Canadian job market works can help you show employers your value.

Communication and Professionalism

In Canada, evaluation does not only begin during the interview. Employers may begin forming an impression of you any time you interact with them. This can happen when you submit an application, send an email, speak to someone in person, attend a job fair, follow up after applying, or ask questions about a role.

Employers may pay attention to how clearly you communicate and write. This includes how you explain your skills and experience, whether you follow the instructions in the job posting, and how you write emails or messages. A clear, focused message can help an employer understand what you are asking for and why you may be a strong candidate.

Employers may also pay attention to how you behave socially. This can include your tone, attitude, confidence, and respectfulness. Confidence can be helpful, but it should not come across as disrespectful, demanding, or careless. Professionalism often means showing that you can communicate clearly while still respecting the other person's time and role.

Following up after applying or interviewing is also part of professional communication. A good follow-up can show interest and organization. However, following up too often or too quickly may seem impatient. Students should learn how to follow up in a way that is respectful and appropriate.

Professionalism is not only about formal situations. If an employer knows you through the community, campus, volunteering, or another setting, they may notice how you communicate and behave there too. Your reputation can matter.

Key point:

In Canada, employers often pay attention not only to how you communicate in formal applications, but also to how you communicate professionally in other settings.

What is Professional Communication?

Professional communication means helping others understand you clearly, respectfully, and with the right level of detail.

This does not mean you need to sound overly formal or complicated. In many cases, strong professional communication is simple, direct, respectful, and complete. The goal is to make it easy for the other person to understand your message and respond appropriately.

A good professional message should be clear about why you are communicating. If you are emailing an employer, instructor, staff member, or support service, they should be able to understand the purpose of your message quickly.

Professional communication should also be respectful, even when you are asking questions, raising concerns, or feeling frustrated. Respectful communication does not mean you cannot advocate for yourself. It means you communicate in a way that keeps the conversation useful and appropriate.

Your message should be complete enough that the other person can help you. For example, if you are asking about a job application, include the job title, your name, and the question you need answered. If you are asking for student support, include the relevant details needed to understand your situation.

Professional communication should be direct, but not rude or demanding. Being direct means saying what you need clearly. Being rude or demanding means speaking as if the other person is required to solve the problem immediately or without context.

It is also important to be timely. Responding within a reasonable time shows that you are organized and taking the situation seriously. If an employer asks for information and you wait too long, they may move forward with another applicant.

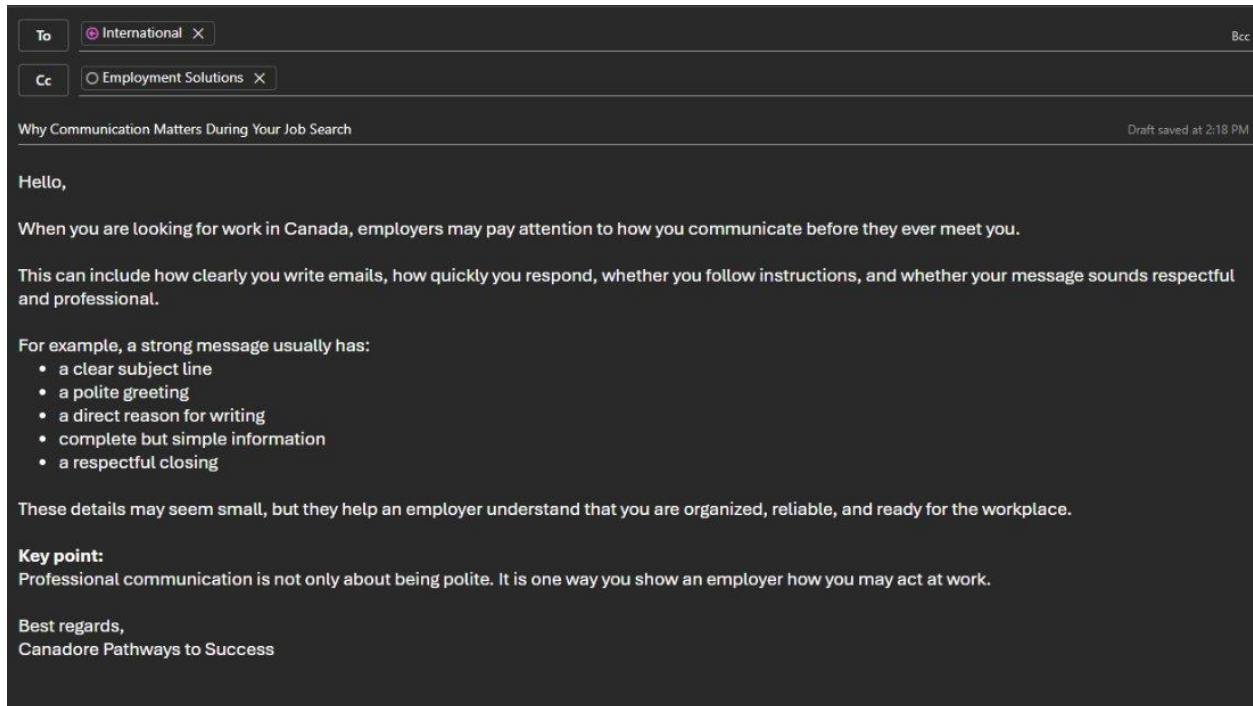
Accuracy matters as well. Names, dates, documents, attachments, and details should be checked before sending. Mistakes happen, but repeated errors can make you seem careless.

Finally, remember that your communication can affect how others judge your professionalism. Employers, staff, instructors, and supervisors may notice whether you are clear, organized, respectful, and reliable.

Key point:

Professional communication is not just about being polite. It shows that you are organized, reliable, and ready to work with others.

Example: Professional Communication



A professional message usually has a clear structure. It does not need to be long, but it should include enough information for the other person to understand and respond.

A strong professional message often includes:

- a clear subject line;
- a polite greeting;
- a direct reason for writing;
- complete but simple information;
- a respectful closing.

For example, if you are contacting an employer about a job posting, your message should make it clear which job you are asking about, why you are contacting them, and what information you need.

A weak message might only say, “Hi, I need job. Please help.” This does not give the employer enough information. They do not know what job you mean, what you are asking for, or how they should respond.

A stronger message might say:

“Hello,

I am writing to ask about the part-time customer service position posted on your website. I am currently a student at Canadore College and would like to confirm whether evening and weekend

availability would meet the schedule requirements for this role.

Thank you,
[Your Name]”

This message is short, but it is clear. It explains the reason for writing, identifies the job, asks a specific question, and uses a respectful tone.

These details may seem small, but they help an employer understand that you are organized, reliable, and ready for the workplace. Professional communication is one way you show how you may act at work.

Key point:

Professional communication is not only about being polite. It is one way you show an employer how you may act at work.

Tailored Applications and Employer Expectations

Employers usually expect your application to connect clearly to the job you are applying for. This means that a strong application should show the employer why your skills and experience fit that specific role.

Tailoring your application begins with reading the job posting carefully. The posting can tell you what skills, experience, certifications, schedule, and responsibilities the employer cares about. If you do not read it closely, you may miss important details.

After reading the posting, identify the skills and experience the employer wants. For example, a customer service job may mention communication, teamwork, problem-solving, reliability, and working with customers. A food service job may mention cleanliness, speed, safety, customer service, and working under pressure. A labour job may mention physical ability, safety, punctuality, and teamwork.

Once you understand what the employer is looking for, adjust your resume for that specific job. This does not mean making things up. It means choosing which real skills and experiences to highlight. If you have customer service experience, volunteer experience, group project experience, or previous work experience that connects to the role, make sure the employer can see it clearly.

Use examples that match the role. If the job requires teamwork, show an example of teamwork. If the job requires communication, show experience where communication mattered. If the job requires reliability, include roles or responsibilities where you showed commitment and follow-through.

It is also important to follow the employer's application instructions. If the employer asks for a resume and cover letter, provide both. If they ask applicants to apply online, follow that process. Ignoring instructions can make an employer think you did not read the posting carefully.

Your application should also show that you understand what the job requires. Employers want to see that you are applying intentionally, not randomly.

Finally, keep your resume honest and use verifiable experience. Do not add skills, jobs, certifications, or experience that you do not actually have. Employers may ask about your experience in an interview or verify your claims through references. If you cannot explain or demonstrate something on your resume, it should not be there.

Key point:

A strong application is not only about listing your experience. It is about showing the employer why your experience fits that specific job.

Local Experience, References, and Trust

Employers may look for signs that you understand the local workplace. This can make job searching in Canada feel different, especially for students who have strong experience from another country but little or no Canadian experience.

Local experience can include Canadian work experience, but it does not only mean paid work. It can also include volunteering, placement experience, campus work, class projects, student leadership, community involvement, or other activities that show you can operate in a Canadian workplace or community setting.

References are also important because they help employers build trust. A local reference can confirm that you are reliable, professional, and ready for the workplace. This person could be a supervisor, instructor, program coordinator, volunteer coordinator, community contact, or someone else who has seen your work habits.

Employers may also look for signs that you understand workplace expectations and schedules. For example, they may want to know that you can arrive on time, communicate if there is a problem, follow instructions, and manage responsibilities.

Knowing how to communicate with supervisors and coworkers is another part of workplace readiness. This includes asking questions when needed, responding professionally, giving updates, and understanding expectations.

Local experience can also show that you can adjust to a Canadian work environment. Different workplaces may have different expectations around communication, teamwork, customer service, time management, safety, and professionalism.

This does not mean your previous international experience is unimportant. Your experience matters. The challenge is helping Canadian employers understand it and showing that you can apply your skills in the local workplace.

Key point:

Local experience is not only about where you worked. It helps employers build trust that you are ready for the workplace.

Networking and Confidence

Networking can help students learn about opportunities and build professional connections. For many students, the word “networking” may sound uncomfortable or confusing. It can feel like asking people for favours or trying to get a job through personal connections. However, networking does not need to mean that.

Networking is mainly about building relationships, learning from others, and helping people understand who you are. It can happen through classmates, instructors, staff, employers, workshops, volunteering, job fairs, career events, LinkedIn, email, and community involvement.

Talking to classmates, instructors, staff, and employers can help you learn what opportunities exist and what employers may be looking for. Other people may know about job postings, volunteer roles, events, or resources that you have not seen yet.

Attending career events, workshops, volunteering opportunities, or job fairs can help you practice professional communication. These events can also help you become more comfortable introducing yourself and asking questions.

Asking questions about industries, roles, and workplaces is a useful networking habit. You do not need to begin by asking for a job. You can ask what skills are useful, how people entered the field, what employers look for, or what advice they would give to students.

LinkedIn and email can also be useful when used professionally. A short, respectful message is usually better than a vague or overly long message. Be clear about why you are reaching out and what you are asking.

Confidence matters because students need to be able to speak about their skills and goals. However, confidence should not mean exaggerating, being pushy, or acting as if you are entitled to a role. Strong confidence is calm, clear, and respectful.

Following up respectfully after meeting someone can help build the relationship. A short thank-you message or follow-up question can show professionalism and interest.

Key point:

Networking is not only asking for a job. It is building relationships, learning from others, and helping employers understand who you are.

What to Do Next

Before moving to the next video, think about which parts of job searching in Canada feel most unfamiliar to you.

You may want to ask yourself:

- Do I understand what Canadian employers may expect?
- Do I know how to communicate professionally with employers?
- Do I know how to tailor my resume to a job posting?
- Do I have local experience or references?
- Do I feel confident explaining my skills and goals?
- Do I know who I can ask for support?
- Do I need help understanding how to adjust my job-search approach?

The next video is **Common Barriers for International Students and How to Overcome Them**. That section will focus more directly on the challenges students may face during the job search and how students can respond to those challenges.

Final takeaway:

Your background, education, and experience matter. The goal is to learn how to present those strengths clearly within the Canadian job market. Strong communication, tailored applications, local experience, references, networking, and confidence can help employers understand your value.