

An IT career and a new life in Canada

by Heidi Riley

Georges Mardini arrived in Canada from his home country of Lebanon in February 2006. He came to Canada with the education and work experience necessary to build a good life here. It has taken time for him to adjust to a new country and find a job that matches his qualifications.



Georges Mardini has started a new life in Canada and has found a job that matches his skills and abilities in the IT field.

“I chose the IT field because it’s challenging,” says

Georges. “Technology is always changing, which makes the job interesting. In Lebanon, I earned a technical degree in Electronics and became an Electronics Specialist. I did IT work for three different companies.”

It took Georges a year to find a job in his field on PEI. He now works as a **Bilingual Technical Analyst** at the Atlantic Technology Centre (ATC) in Charlottetown. “I work for **Bulletproof Solutions Inc.** on full-time contract to **VisionQuest Inc.**,” says Georges. “They were looking for someone bilingual and experienced in the IT field. My work here is somewhat similar to what I was doing in Lebanon, but it’s on a bigger scale here because we deal with more customers with different setups and problems.”

“VisionQuest Inc. offers multiple services to companies, including application hosting, server management, desktop management, remote backup, e-mail and spam filtering. We recently opened a Network Operation Centre (NOC) at the ATC. The centre serves customers 24/7. All the NOC agents are bilingual.”

Help with job search in a new country

When Georges arrived in Canada, he contacted the **PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada**. The Association translated documents and helped him write a résumé that suited the demands of the PEI market. “They also helped me with interview skills,” says Georges. “They showed me job search websites and sent me some job postings that matched my qualifications.”

Impressions of living in Canada

“As a newcomer, I experienced quite a culture shock. It took me more than a year to adjust to the way of life here. It was not easy to find a job that matches my qualifications. I worked for a call centre for a year at minimum wage before I found the job that I have now.

“I received some tempting job offers in Toronto, but I decided to stay on PEI because people are friendly here, which reminds me of Lebanon. It has been my experience that you won’t find this friendliness in big cities. On PEI, people say hi in the street, even though I never saw them before.

“PEI is a safe place. The crime rate is low compared to big cities, and pollution is low. PEI is not a cheap place to live though. I suffered with my finances during the first year, but from my point of view, everything has a price, and it has been worth it.”

Future plans

“I enjoy my job, and the work environment is friendly and pleasant,” says Georges. “I am studying to earn certifications that will help me progress in my career. The company has offered to pay for the training, which is great.”

For more information about the **PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada**, call **628-6009** or visit **www.peiinc.com**



For more information about **Bulletproof Solutions Inc.**, visit **www.bulletproofsi.com**

For information about **VisionQuest Inc.**, visit **www.vision-quest.ca**

Website of the month: www.wowjobs.ca

by Heidi Riley



The Internet is becoming a more popular way to research careers and find job postings. There are thousands of websites that list available jobs, and it can be difficult and time-consuming to check each of those sites.

Two years ago, **Anuvinder Singh**, who lives in Edmonton, Alberta, created a website which aims to solve these problems. **www.wowjobs.ca** brings together job postings listed on sites from across the country, including **www.monster.com**, **www.jobbank.gc.ca**, **www.careerbeacon.com**, **www.workopolis.com**, and many more.

“I have a background in IT,” says Anuvinder. “I emigrated to Canada in 2001, and the job market was quite difficult at that time. When I was looking for work, I went through many websites looking for job postings. I eventually found a good job, but I realized that many people had the same problems I did. How do you find job postings when there are so many sources you need to check? Worrying about missing out on a job posting just adds to the stress of the job search.”

Using the website

When you go to **www.wowjobs.ca**, type in a key word and a location, and you will get a list of jobs matching those criteria. This website also allows you to customize your job search by company, by location, or by category. For example, if you are looking for a construction job, click on **category**, then on **construction**. You will be given a list of occupations related to the construction trade, and from there you can find available jobs in the province and city you choose.

The site also keeps a log of your recent searches, so you can easily find them again with just one click.

Other features include job search tools such as e-mail alerts which respond to your criteria. Also, an on-line forum is available to help readers communicate with each other.

You can even compare **job trends** to get employment statistics for different jobs you may be interested in pursuing. To come up with the results, the site uses a database of 6 million job postings from the last two years. For example, you can compare Canadian figures on the number of teacher jobs posted to the number of professor jobs posted. Then you can click to get more details about those jobs.

More features to come

The website is still being improved. “We are adding new features all the time,” says Anuvinder. “Salary research will soon be available. Based on traffic estimates, we are now among the top 10 jobsites in Canada. This site provides some great tools that will help job seekers find the job they are looking for.”