

Transit Strike - How does it effect job searching? - Part I

A recent community survey estimated that in some areas close to 70% of job seekers depend on public transportation. What does this mean for the competitive job seeker?

It means that because of the local bus strike job searching is much harder. Other statistics show that in some areas 50% of job seekers are seriously affected by the strike. Not only do people have to find work, but now the issue of transportation acts as a barrier to landing a job. Fortunately, a key tactic for the job searching expert is the concept of "flexibility". Flexibility is by far the greatest and most sought after virtue of a job seeker. Becoming and remaining flexible is essential to weathering even the worst of times. When looking back on history, flexibility has always been one of the most important elements to the process of change, and a lack of flexibility can hamper progress, stifle creativity, and in many cases become a prime cause in the decay of downfall of any project !!!

Lao Tzu, one of the authors of the Tao Te Ching wrote extensively on the importance of flexibility. Here is an important excerpt:

"Stiff and unbending is the principle of death. Gentle and yielding is the principle of life. Thus an Army without flexibility never wins a battle. A tree that is unbending is easily broken. The hard and strong will fall. The soft and weak will overcome."

Since job searching is part of a process of change, being open to, and responding to challenges makes you a better job seeker. The true job seeker must be committed to getting a job. This requires learning to think of new ways to overcome this transportation barrier.

There are many ways to do this, and if you have a flexible outlook on life opportunities exist for those who persevere. During this strike I have also had to deal with problems of getting to and from work.

Here is a list of suggestions to help job seekers overcome this challenge:

- Do more job searching by phone and internet
- Call employers before attempting to drop off your resume in person. Even if they require that in the job posting, you may find out that they will accept it by fax
- Create a list of employers who need to be seen in person. Narrow this list to geographical area and then spend an entire day meeting with them
- Ask friends, family or contacts to give you a lift to meetings

- Share the costs of a cab with somebody else. Frequently people will stand at major intersections or SkyTrain stations waiting to share a cab fare
- Try and schedule meetings with employers at places that you can get to
- Create a cardboard sign with the name of your destination stenciled in large letters on one side and the return destination on the other. Carry it in your backpack / bag so if you get stuck you can hitchhike, although please note that in BC this can be dangerous and is illegal. However sympathetic motorists are more willing to give people lifts. Remember to use your head before getting into a car with a stranger.
- Make a list of the geographical locations you have no problem accessing, and then apply for jobs in those areas. Try to push the envelope, you may find that the employer will temporarily help with transportation costs once you are hired. Don't be afraid of applying for a job a little bit out of the way. You never know whether a fellow employee will give you a lift, or how easy it may be to get there
- Stop thinking inside the box. Don't let the bus strike give you an excuse not to look for work
- Remember, there are those who will give up on job searching at this time. This means that competition is less, and the fact that you persevere and are committed will make it easier to find work. Going that extra mile by literally getting up an hour earlier to walk to work will be a deciding factor in landing a job this summer
- Use the SkyTrain as a first stage towards your destination
- Review announcements for car pools on bulletin boards and in community information boards
- Dust off that old bike, or buy a cheap second hand or new one. Your investment of \$100 will easily give you more mobility and help in the job search process. If you are on income assistance, think about talking to your financial worker to finance this purchase. If you don't have the cash think of having a garage sale. Most times you can make up to \$50 - \$60 from stuff that you never use. Also, check out the options for bicycling in Vancouver and Victoria at the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition at: www.vacc.bc.ca and the Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition at: www.gvcc.bc.ca
- Learn more about Vancouver bicycle routes. You can see a map of them at: www.city.vancouver.bc.ca
- Join a car pool by calling, faxing, writing or signing up online. There are many different carpools, so try all of them.

Here is a basic list of BC carpools and suggestions on using them:

1. Research and join students' carpools at colleges and universities. You can check out UBC's Trek Program at: www.trek.ubc.ca/choices/carpool.html
2. Review car pool ads in the Vancouver Sun newspaper. The Vancouver Sun and Province are offering free classified ads for car pools to help out during the transit strike. Post a free ad by using the online registration system at: www.classifiedsbc.com or by calling 605-7355
3. Join commuter connections at: www.carpool.ca. You can find other who are going your way in both Vancouver and Victoria
4. Sign up with ValleyPool at: www.valleyimall.com/carpool for carpooling in Greater Vancouver and the Fraser Valley
5. Sign up with the Jack Bell Foundation's Vanpool at: www.vcn.bc.ca/vanpool and Carpool serving the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. You can also reach them via E-mail at jbf@istar.ca or call 879-RIDE / fax 875-5916 (Lower Mainland), 380-RIDE (Capital Regional District), (toll free) 1-888-380-RIDE / fax 743-8000 (Vancouver Island). You can also write to them at: The Jack Bell Foundation (260-575 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 1C6)

As you can see there are a number of different ways to overcome the transportation barrier. Next week we will look at the effects of the transit strike on businesses, on summer jobs, and on students looking for work.

I hope you all have a great week and that in between job searching you have time to enjoy the wonderful sunny weather we are having. If you have any suggestions or feedback in regards to these articles please don't hesitate to contact me at jakes@pepjob.com.