

MEDIA RELEASE**For immediate delivery****RECRUITERS OFFER TIPS TO STUDENTS TRYING TO TACKLE UNIVERSITY JOB FAIRS****- Insight into the psyche of potential employers could be key to landing a job -**

(TORONTO– AUGUST 24, 2009) – For financial service firms ‘back to school’ does not mean back to class, it signals the start of recruiting season. And as co-op and other students ready themselves to impress industry scouts, one firm is offering some insight into what employers at university job fairs are looking for.

Be yourself: Seasoned interviewers see through stock answers. “It’s about fit,” said Graham Williams, a partner at Stern Cohen LLP and the partner in charge of recruitment for his midsize Toronto accounting firm. “We’re looking for traits you can’t teach like character, attention to detail and work ethic.” Listen to each question and make sure answers demonstrate who you are beyond your technical skills.

Build your resume: Employers are looking for a pattern of jobs that show a track record of dealing in real world atmospheres. “Although camp counseling, life guarding and tutoring are good experiences, it doesn’t prepare them for a professional work environment,” said Williams. This lack of experience is often a result of students entering the workforce earlier than they used to, as well as parents who would rather their children focus on their school work than a part-time job. Adding non-work experience such as extensive travel, unique hobbies or passions is a good idea and can strike up conversations that help show strength of character.

Be prepared: Know who is going to be at the fair and read up about the companies you are interested in. Be sure to ask questions to show a level of engagement. Good questions to ask are: What is the culture of the firm? What will my typical day look like? What do you [recruiter] like about the firm? How long do employees typically stay with you?

Understand why you want the job: Regardless of the profession, understand why you want to do work in that particular field, better yet, that particular firm. “I look for people who know how to communicate well and show a genuine interest in entrepreneurship and owner-managed business. Accounting is just a means to an end, so being good at math is not what I’m looking to hear in an interview.”

Look and sound the part: It may be in a gym or convention hall but job fairs are still interviews. Look the part of a young professional who realizes a co-op position is more than a summer job. And be sure to speak clearly, the location may be loud or have poor acoustics.

Stern Cohen LLP was founded in 1963 and is now among the top 50 accounting firms in Canada serving clients in the Greater Toronto Area and beyond. Clients range from multi-million dollar owner-managed corporations to sole proprietorships in industry, finance, culture as well as the professions.

- 30 -

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Side Bar Suggestion:

What NOT to say and do is often just as important as what to do. Here are some of examples of the worst moves seen by Stern Cohen LLP:

- When asked why you want the job don't say "because it's good money."
- Do not bring your friends or parents (yes this actually happened) to sit in the lobby while you are having your interview because "you have plans afterward" or "because my dad won't let me drive downtown yet."
- Do not say your past job "was great because you didn't have to work too hard."
- Do not exaggerate experience on your resume. Cutting your neighbour's grass does not mean you were a sole proprietor of a landscaping company.
- Do not hand in samples of past work or documents that show lack of professional judgment...such as a resume with your Facebook page instead of email address.