

5 tips for Hong Kong fresh graduates to succeed in the evolving business landscape International Youth Skills Day

Hong Kong, 15 July 2019 - As the world prepares to celebrate International Youth Skills Day on July 15, employers in Hong Kong are preparing for a fresh wave of new university graduates who'll enter the job market in these few months.

According to the University Grants Committee¹, about 21,498 Hong Kong university undergraduates graduated in 2017-2018. With graduation around the corner, a large pool of new professionals is therefore expected to enter the employment market at a time when Hong Kong workplaces are navigating rapid business transformation. Companies are increasingly embracing new digital technologies and automation tools, allowing professionals to focus more on strategic, innovative and customer-focused work. This trend is expected to drive emerging job opportunities and growth in IT, communications, finance, insurance and professional services.

Here are five useful tips for fresh Hong Kong graduates:

1. Equip yourself with in-demand technical skills

According to the [2019 Robert Half Salary Guide](#), digitisation is transforming roles and processes across the finance and accounting sector. Companies are looking for finance and accounting professionals who can demonstrate skills in areas like Microsoft Dynamics 365, SAP/Oracle and CA/CPA. In the financial services sector, the top skills in demand include IFRS 17 reporting, fund accounting and regulatory reporting.

Around 1,070 IT/Computing and 4,829 Engineering/Technology students graduated in 2017-2019, allowing employers to tap into a new skills pool². Within the IT industry, candidates with backgrounds in especially Java, C#, C++, and in particular React are in high demand.

2. Soft skills matter

Alongside technical knowledge and digital prowess, emotional intelligence is becoming increasingly valued. Soft skills such as communication and negotiation, teamwork, creative problem solving and adaptability are now considered critical to career success, due to their role in influencing organisational stakeholders and making data-driven, strategic decisions.

To bolster their soft skills, new and upcoming graduates have a number of options available to compensate for the lack of professional experience. Internships, volunteering, temporary/part-time work, and adopting a 'constant learning' mindset can all help improve their employability in a thriving but highly competitive job market.

3. Prioritise professional development

The Continuing Education Fund (CEF)³ that subsidises adults (aged between 18 and 70) with learning aspirations to pursue continuing education and training is also a great choice for career starters who want to further enhance their skills in the in-demand areas.

The initiative's goal is to help develop a culture that supports and celebrates lifelong learning. In particular,

¹ <https://cdcf.ugc.edu.hk/cdcf/searchStatSiteReport.action>

² <https://cdcf.ugc.edu.hk/cdcf/searchStatSiteReport.action>

³ <https://www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/cef/en/preparation/overview.htm>

technology is evolving faster than ever before, making it necessary for professionals to upskill regularly throughout their careers.

Professionals entering the employment market would benefit from choosing an employer who values upskilling and makes professional development and training a part of their ongoing activities. Training staff in both technical and soft skill is not only beneficial to the graduates' careers, it also encourages retention.

4. Job for life is obsolete

While job-hopping has been traditionally frowned upon, many Hong Kong employers have taken a more favourable attitude towards professionals who change jobs frequently.

While the broad and diverse skills that come with multiple jobs can help accelerate career advancement, it's also recommended that Hong Kong professionals who are still early in their career find a comfortable balance for themselves, as taking time to 'grow into' a role shows a loyalty that employers may reward with promotions and pay increases later on. Generally, however, young Hong Kong professionals should not feel shy about seeking new opportunities if they feel they are lacking in their current workplace.

5. Consider temporary jobs

Graduates should also consider temporary or project work. Working on an interim basis can help people entering the employment market learn new skills and experience, and build their professional network. Through these employment opportunities, they can also determine what type of company they'd like to work for over the long term. Many employers are receptive towards hiring temporary staff as they realise the benefits offered by having a mix of both contract and permanent staff, with 72% of CFOs surveyed for the [2019 Robert Half Salary Guide](#) saying that contract workers are a key component of their department's long-term staffing strategy.

This positive turnaround is also having a direct impact on the career paths of temporary professionals as top performers are in turn being offered permanent positions by their employer if and when there's an available opportunity.

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