

Q&A Column
Author: Mark Swartz

Email Subject Line: Long Distance Job Hunting

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Headline: Applying for a Job in a Different City

Summary:

I am trying to get a job in Toronto. I live in Ottawa at the moment, but my mother and brother live close to Toronto. What can I say in my cover letter to make the employers in Toronto call me for an interview?

Christine D., Ottawa, Ontario

[Landing Page copy](#)

Headline: Applying for a Job in a Different City

Dear Mark,

I am trying to get a job in Toronto. I live in Ottawa at the moment, but my mother and brother live close to Toronto. What can I say in my cover letter to make the employers in Toronto call me for a job, or even an interview?

Thanks

Christine D., Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Christine,

Here's the thing about long distance job hunting: if you happen to have unique skills or unmatched experience, and/or if an employer is having trouble finding suitable candidates locally, you stand a decent chance of securing at least a phone interview. A good case in point is the Maritimers, among others, who are now finding in work in red hot Alberta. Same goes for one of my current clients, a young IT worker who had been having trouble finding work with a big firm in Toronto but who is currently being wooed by an industry leader for a job in Halifax.

So how can you boost your chances of having employers show interest in you if you're an out of towners? By reducing the risk an employer takes in hiring you, for starters. It might help if you indicate in your cover letter that you're already in the midst of moving. This way potential employers won't feel the need to offer you relocation incentives (such as covering your moving costs), which might otherwise make it more expensive to hire you. It also means the employer isn't responsible if you get here and things don't work out as planned.

Mentioning that you have family in the vicinity can also work in your favour. It suggests that you already have some roots here and will be motivated to stick around for a while. As well, your family can provide both emotional and financial support for you should the need arise. Plus they can show you around the city, introduce you to people, and help you adjust to your new surroundings – all of which reassures an employer that you won't be overwhelmed by your move.

If you've ever worked in Toronto previously, this too will comfort an employer's fears. They don't want you ending up feeling like a stranger in a strange land. Or if you've moved to another city for work before and stayed for a reasonable length of time, mention this too.

Bear in mind that you will likely have to travel to Toronto in order to meet potential employers face to face before they'll hire you. Maybe you could plan to use a few weeks of your vacation to visit the city, meet with recruiters and potential employers, and network with people you and your family know here (so that you can tap into the hidden job market instead of relying only on the advertised jobs).

Given time and the proper effort, finding work in a new city is very possible. The key is to offer an employer something they can't find in their own backyard, and to make them confident you'll fit in to your new surroundings. All the best in your search.



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