

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN GEN Y ENTERS THE GLOBAL JOB MARKET?

By Nannette Ripmeester



There is a lot said about Generation Y. And as with every generation, comments have not always been positive. Gen Y has been described by some as a group of overqualified yet underexperienced individuals who are willing to work in teams whilst keen to make their own mark.

However, you'll also find counterarguments about this generation being self-aware and highly qualified, with a global outlook and a working knowledge of current technology. We take it for granted that IEEE members are high achievers, with a global mind-set and the ability to work in a diverse team.

GET OUT OF THAT CULTURAL COMFORT ZONE

Due to the economic crisis, finding work has become paramount to the minds of Generation Y. More than ever before, the mismatch between the number of

applicants and the number of jobs has underlined current changes in the labor market, where new growth markets may offer previously nonexistent career opportunities. Hence graduates are encouraged to expand their horizons and step out of their cultural comfort zone.

Looking for a job outside your home country requires several key skills. A good first step is realizing that finding a job nowadays comes down to persistence, preparation... and a bit of luck. Make sure you understand what you have to offer. What sets you apart from other recent graduates? The most

challenging part is "translating" your experiences into skills a recruiter is keen to hire. If the ad asks for an independent work attitude, make sure your CV shows you possess that skill, by giving examples to illustrate your level of coping skills and your tolerance for uncertainty.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN JOB HUNTING

Your next step to career success is being internationally minded. Prepare yourself for different job markets and understand how you can fit into the international workplace. Be aware that job hunting in Asia differs from job hunting in Europe or the United States. In Asia many organizations use online application forms asking about your parents and their background. Do not dismiss those questions as irrelevant, but try to under-

stand the cultural differences that cause this other way of looking at a potential new colleague. Whereas it is common to use action verbs and strong words underlining achievement in an American résumé, in Europe the term "résumé" is replaced by "CV," and too much performance-based wording is seen as bragging and will not gain you any points.

STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

It helps to understand that employers are keen to get to know you as a person before deciding to hire you. Simply having high grades is no longer the master key to any job; your extracurricular activities and experiences can be just as important. Try to understand what this organization requires and how you may be able to fill that gap. Perhaps

SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON FEMALE ENGINEERS

IEEE WOMEN IN ENGINEERING AIMS TO RAISE AWARENESS AND CLOSE THE GENDER GAP

By Kathy Pretz

you've been busy working the internship route or involved with charity work recently. If something can make you stand out as an individual, there is a good chance it can make you stand out as a job candidate.

Decision making is a crucial component for Gen Y. With seemingly limitless options, selecting one seems almost like a burden rather than a luxury. If you can opt for one particular career goal and follow up on it, though you will already be ahead of many people in your situation. Constructing a basic plan around this goal and starting some fact-finding will set you in good stead.

With so many countries and cultures to choose from, one may worry about getting the basics right: How is applying for a job in the U.K. different from, say, Singapore? Each culture is different, and that includes their job-hunting and recruitment principles. So make sure you prepare yourself thoroughly for the path you are intending to travel, understand what sets you apart from others, and be able to translate this into terminology that a recruiter understands. ■

